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**URBAN TEACHER'S BELIEFS AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT
LITERACY TEACHING AND LEARNING: AN EXAMINATION
FROM MECHANISTIC AND CONTEXTUALISTIC PERSPECTIVE**

presented by
Dannelle Stevens

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph. D. degree in Educational Psychology

Linda M. Anderson

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**URBAN TEACHER'S BELIEFS AND KNOWLEDGE
ABOUT LITERACY TEACHING AND LEARNING: AN EXAMINATION FROM
MECHANISTIC AND CONTEXTUALISTIC PERSPECTIVES**

By

Dannelle Diane Stevens

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ABSTRACT

URBAN TEACHER'S BELIEFS AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT LITERACY TEACHING AND LEARNING: AN EXAMINATION FROM MECHANISTIC AND CONTEXTUALISTIC PERSPECTIVES

By

Dannelle Diane Stevens

Helping urban children become literate participants in our society is an important goal for our schools. For a number of reasons, schools have had difficulty meeting this goal. Year after year urban teachers see most students fall further behind academically. Some suggest that classroom instruction needs to be changed. Yet, we know little about what urban teachers believe and know about literacy teaching and learning. Elucidating urban teachers' beliefs and knowledge would help staff developers and teacher educators design programs and activities that meet the unique needs of the urban classroom teacher and, therefore, would positively impact urban literacy instruction. The purpose of the study was to describe and explain the literacy beliefs and knowledge of seventeen urban elementary teachers in one school. Their beliefs and knowledge were compared to two perspectives on literacy teaching and learning- mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives. The mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives are theoretical points along a continuum of perspectives about how to address students' literacy learning. The study had three parts: 1.) administration of two group measures, the Modified Theoretical

Orientation Toward Reading and the Student Autonomy Scale, to seventeen teachers, 2.) structured interview with thirteen teachers, and 3.) two in-depth interviews with teachers whose views seemed consonant more with either mechanistic or contextualistic perspectives. Four broad literacy dimensions were used to analyze the data: academic content, teacher role, student role and social context. Results indicate: one, the teachers believed that students' had a limited vocabulary, deficient language knowledge and use, and a disorganized and unstructured life outside of school. Two, most teachers used skills-based, mechanistic methods to teach reading and writing, provided a consistent classroom structure, and, most of all, spoke highly of the need to care for the children. Three, to assess the effectiveness of their academic endeavor, most teachers seemed to echo the district concern for high scores on standardized tests, a measure that is external to the daily interactions in the classroom. Taken together, the results indicate that the teachers responded to teaching in an urban context by focusing on caring for the children within a skills-based classroom structure.

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Dannelle D. Stevens

1993

**Dedicated to Molly Melissa Stevens,
my daughter, my steadfast supporter,
and to the urban children and their future.**

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Helping urban, economically disadvantaged children become literate participants in our society is an important goal for our schools. Although schools alone cannot solve the complex social and economic problems in urban neighborhoods, their efforts can begin to break the cycle for the disadvantaged. Becoming literate reduces the risk of school failure and dropping out. When students learn to read and write well, schools become "risk breakers" not "risk makers" (Allen & Mason, 1989; Schorr, 1988). Even though recently there has been some improvement in urban students' standardized test scores (National Association of Educational Progress, 1989), teachers still find that the achievement of their students lags farther and farther behind grade level each year the children stay in school (Levin, 1988).

Classroom instruction is the point of contact between the society and the child. One solution to the continuing problem of urban children's underachievement is to improve current classroom instruction (Hopfenberg, Levin, Meister & Rogers, 1990; Wehlage, Smith & Lipman, 1992; Wehlage & Rutter, 1986; Allington, 1991; Garcia & Pearson, 1991). If we can help teachers change their literacy instruction, perhaps we can help children become better readers and writers and hopefully that will lead to success in the larger society.

Recent research points to the need to change academic tasks for urban children to a more authentic tasks applicable to children's lives (Wehlage, Smith & Lipman, 1992; Knapp & Needels, 1991;

Levin, 1988; Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989; Garcia & Pearson, 1991). Children need curriculum characterized as "authentic work" which emphasizes "production of socially useful, personally meaningful and aesthetically valuable knowledge" (Wehlage, Smith & Lipman, 1992, p. 86). When students are involved in a more authentic experience in school, students seem to actively produce knowledge rather than passively reproduce knowledge. Active involvement leads to more learning and more competent learners (Resnick, 1987).

For all the hope that has been pinned on improving the lives of urban children through changes in schooling, we know little about one of the key factors which affects the nature of that urban schooling: what the teachers themselves believe and know about instruction in urban classrooms. Understanding urban teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy teaching and learning is important for several reasons. First, teachers play a central role in shaping the overall social and cognitive context of classrooms which influences student literacy learning. More specifically current conceptions of literacy learning underscore the role of social as well as cognitive factors in promoting literacy. If we know what teachers believe and know, we more than likely will know more about the literate environment that the students are experiencing (Dahl, 1989). Second, recent research in urban schools has noted the dominance of a mechanistic orientation toward literacy teaching and learning (Knapp & Needels, 1991; Levin, 1988). Some have noted that there are alternative more contextualistic practices available which could improve urban literacy instruction (Allington & McGill-

Franzen, 1989; Garcia & Pearson, 1991). If the more mechanistic orientation seems to exist in an urban school, examining teacher beliefs and knowledge in a school will help us illuminate some of the reasons why teachers persist in using mechanistic approaches even though alternatives may be available. Finally, learning more about teacher beliefs and knowledge toward literacy instruction will help staff developers and teacher educators to tailor the messages of staff development programs to meet the needs of the teachers' in the urban school context. In turn, it is hoped that children will be the beneficiaries of change of teachers' practice. Let us look at each of these reasons for studying urban teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy instruction in more detail.

First, teacher beliefs and knowledge are important because of the role that the teacher plays in classroom learning. A significant responsibility of the teacher is to understand and shape the classroom social and instructional context (Florio-Ruane, 1989). What teachers believe and know about the classroom social and instructional context will influence what they say and do in classrooms (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Peterson, Fennema, Carpenter, & Loef, 1989; Anderson, Englert, Raphael & Stevens, 1992; Richardson, Anders, Tidwell & Lloyd, 1991). In turn, what teachers say and do in the classroom social and instructional context influences children's literacy learning.

More particularly, what teachers believe and know about literacy influences instructional decisions in a variety of contexts across the school day. Becoming literate is a socially-based activity. Being literate means the individual is able to read and

write and communicate in a variety of societal contexts. Resnick (1990) defines literacy as a "set of cultural practices that people engage in around texts." In classrooms, therefore, literacy teaching and learning goes on all day long in the social and cognitive classroom context and teachers play a major role in what happens all day long in classrooms. Whatever the teacher believes and knows about how children become literate is reinforced in a number of contexts. Students' ideas of what they have to do to be literate will be shaped in those contexts. Therefore, what teachers believe and know about literacy teaching and learning affects more than just the reading lesson. It affects what students do and practice all day long. It can play into students fundamental notions about literacy and literate behavior.

Second, recent research in urban schools has noted the dominance of a mechanistic, skills-based perspective in literacy teaching and learning (Applebee, 1981, 1984; Goodlad, 1984; Wehlage, Smith & Lipman, 1992; Collins, 1982; Stanovich, 1986). There is no clear consensus among educators about whether to focus on improvement of the mechanistic, skills-based instruction or opt for alternative contextualistic, progressive models. Yet, some people have criticized the mechanistic perspective because it is dominated by a task analysis and subskills approach to literacy instruction without attention to how people engage in the whole activity of literacy (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989). Others criticize the mechanical, skills-based instruction because it is decontextualized, narrow, technical and because it circumscribes children's learning (Poplin, 1988a, 1988b; Fetterman, 1981; Garcia

& Pearson, 1991). On the other hand, others believe that there are good reasons for teachers to continue using at least some aspects of the mechanistic-type instruction, especially with disadvantaged urban populations (Delpit, 1988; Reyes, 1991; Brophy, 1988). Since it is likely that this mechanistic orientation exists among teachers in an urban school, examining teacher beliefs and knowledge in that school will help us illuminate some of the reasons why teachers persist in using mechanistic approaches.

Finally, an understanding of urban teacher beliefs and knowledge will make it more likely that staff developers and teacher educators will tailor their messages to meet the needs of the teacher in an urban school context. Knowing more about what urban teachers believe and know will make communication and learning that much easier for all concerned. Staff development programs tend to be undergirded by either mechanistic or contextualistic approaches to instruction. Knowing more about what the teachers believe in terms of the mechanistic or contextualistic orientations will facilitate instruction during staff development programs.

What is the best way to investigate teacher beliefs and knowledge? One way to talk about teacher beliefs and knowledge is to compare different perspectives of teaching and learning. As stated above, previous research suggests that urban schools are dominated by a mechanistic orientation toward teaching and learning. The mechanistic orientation can be contrasted with a more contextualistic, holistic perspective toward teaching and learning (Heshusius, 1991, 1992, 1989; Poplin, 1988a, 1988b;

Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989; Gavelek & Palincsar, 1988).

Even though much of this conceptual work on perspectives toward teaching and learning has been done by those in the field of special education, the ideas are applicable across the broad spectrum of at risk student populations (Poplin, 1988a, 1988b; Heshusius, 1991, 1992). Mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives represent the philosophical underpinnings or paradigms which inform our ways of thinking, perceiving and acting. We all have paradigms which affect what we think, how we perceive the world and how we act in the world.

In line with this paradigmatic theory, it is assumed that people who create instructional programs for teachers operate out of one or the other of these paradigms. Staff development programs and instructional methods available for teachers, therefore, tend to be informed by one perspective over another. Although mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives are not the only conceptual frameworks that people use, they are representative of points on a continuum of perspectives on teaching and learning. Classroom literacy methods tend to be created and disseminated by those who are informed by one or the other of these world views- mechanistic or contextualistic. The newer instructional methods like reciprocal teaching, collaborative problem-solving and whole language literacy instruction come from the more contextualistic, holistic perspective. The more traditional methods like direct instruction, classroom recitation, and drill/practice are more closely associated with the mechanistic, decontextualized perspective. To understand how teachers persist in hanging onto the older programs, it would be

helpful to see how the teachers' ideas are consonant with or different from mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives. Recognizing and labeling world views helps us isolate some of the fundamental differences as well as similarities in these two perspectives in relation to instructional choices available for teachers.

The study examined urban teacher beliefs and knowledge in relation to the two alternative conceptions of teaching and learning literacy- the mechanistic and the contextualistic perspective (Gavelek & Palincsar, 1988; Heshusius, 1991, 1992). The two perspectives represent the major ideas and highlight the major issues around literacy education. It should be noted again, however, these are points along a continuum of perspectives on literacy teaching and learning. Even though the world is not really quite so simple, the separation of the conceptions of teaching into mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives provides a set of constructs which allow us to analyze and compare teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy teaching and learning with each other as well as in relation to instructional choices they have in the classroom. Yet, the constructs are limited by the fact that reality is not quite that simple. The two perspectives, however, provide us with a lens, a way to talk about what we see in classrooms. In addition, as stated above, many staff development programs are informed by either of these perspectives. For the purposes of the study, the two perspectives are compared and contrasted as distinct, discrete perspectives on teaching and learning.

The mechanistic perspective (Heshusius, 1991, 1992) on literacy teaching and learning emphasizes the importance of learning basic skills as the foundation for the learning of more complex processes later. Precepts in this perspective can be related to empirical/contextualism (Gersten, Carnine & Woodward, 1987), mechanistic orientation (Heshusius, 1991, 1992), interaction (Dewey & Bentley, 1949; Altman & Rogoff, 1987) and reductionism (Heshusius, 1991, 1992; Poplin, 1988a, 1988b). One of the key assumptions of the mechanistic perspective is the need for the teacher to predict and control all events in classroom teaching and learning. To have prediction and control, however, learning is conceived as and measured by the successful accumulation of a set of teacher-determined, discrete outcomes. It is assumed that through the successful accumulation of simpler skills and knowledge, one can handle complex learning processes. More complex behavior like problem-solving is explained by defining and analyzing these simpler processes. Phenomena are understood through an examination of their parts and the discovery of the lawful relationships between them (Heshusius, 1991, 1992). A set of standards external to the immediate context are used to gauge progress (Heshusius, 1991, 1992). Errors are a crucial source of information as the teacher modifies instruction to help students learn (Gerston, 1992). From the mechanistic perspective, learning can be defined as a relatively permanent change in behavior.

In classrooms, supporters of the mechanistic perspective on teaching and learning emphasize the study of discrete, observable and measurable outcomes as evidence of learning literacy.

Classroom practices often associated with an underlying mechanistic perspective would be drill and practice, classroom recitation (Mehan, 1986), direct instruction and Distar. All of these methods in one way or another focus on the successful learning of simpler processes as foundational on the path to more complex intellectual processes. According to Gerston (1992), "empathy for student success and understanding of the need for clarity" are two pillars of direct instruction which could be considered consonant with a mechanistic perspective. The importance of short-term success and clarity of instruction overrides the, at times, unsuccessful struggle and grappling with more complex learning tasks.

The contextualistic perspective, on the other hand, (Heshusius, 1991, 1992) emphasizes that complex learning processes are better developed and understood when one considers and uses the whole social context in which instruction occurs. The contextualistic perspective is most closely associated with social constructivism from the work of Soviet psychologist, Lev Vygotsky (1934/1986). Precepts in this perspective can be related to constructivism (Piaget, 1955, 1970), social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1934/1986), transaction (Dewey & Bentley, 1949; Altman & Rogoff, 1987) and holistic/constructivism (Heshusius, 1991, 1992; Poplin, 1988a, 1988b). A contextualistic perspective approaches learning from a cognitive rather than the behavioral orientation. Prediction and control of classroom events is less important than challenge and divergent activities. Cognitive theories, in general, highlight complex intellectual processes such as thinking, language, and

problem solving as major attributes and outcomes of the learning process rather than the learning of discrete, decontextualized knowledge. Cognitive theorists are interested in how the learner organizes experience in a situation and the ways in which she/he learns alternative or more appropriate kinds of organizing experiences in his/her mind. The contextualistic perspective is based on cognitive theories. Yet, cognitive theories can be more or less interested in the role that the social context plays in the development of thinking. The contextualistic perspective described here is closely aligned with the cognitive theory of learning which is called social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1934/1986). The role of the social context in supporting and contributing to learning is highlighted.

Two factors combined distinguish contextualistic perspective from other cognitive theories and from the mechanistic conceptions of learning and teaching: 1.) the inclusion and emphasis on the group dynamics in the social context of learning and 2.) the emphasis on individual thinking processes in the social context. In fact, based on the work of Vygotsky (1934/1986), social cognitive researchers Englert and Palincsar(1991) state that "society provides a critical influence on behavior and thought that guides participants as they engage in literacy interactions ... Literacy is socially constructed by teachers and students as they engage in holistic and authentic activities and participate in mutually-constituted discourse (p.1)." From the contextualistic perspective, learning can be defined as: "the construction of new knowledge through the process of transformation and self-regulation" which happens in a dynamic and

holistic psychological system and which is shaped by person and environmental influences (Poplin, 1988a, 1988b; Altman & Rogoff, 1987).

In classrooms, the contextualistic perspective on teaching and learning, therefore, emphasizes the social context in which literacy is learned. For example, classroom practices often associated with an underlying contextualistic perspective would be reciprocal teaching, process writing (author's chair, peer editing), language experience stories and collaborative problem solving. All of these activities involve several aspects of literacy learning- talking, writing, reading, listening. The activities are holistic in focus and engage the learner in authentic activities designed to embed literacy instruction in a meaningful social and academic context.

In the study, the two perspectives, mechanistic and contextualistic, were used to analyze urban teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy teaching and learning across four dimensions: (1) context; (2) teacher instructional role; (3) student learner role; and (4) context. These four dimensions are derived from several sources. First of all, Schwab (1978) writes of the four commonplaces of instruction: what is taught, who teaches it, who learns it and under what conditions. The four dimensions in the study correspond to these four commonplaces. Anderson (1989) uses a similar set of constructs to analyze instructional programs designed to improve instruction. Hewson and Hewson (1989) in a study of teacher beliefs and knowledge about science instruction use six conceptual categories to analyze teacher responses to a narrative describing a typical science lesson. These categories are:

nature of science, learning, learner characteristics, rationale for instruction, preferred instructional techniques, and conception of teaching science. What is valuable about all of these dimensions and analysis schemes is that they allow the teacher to include the contextual factors which influence instructional decisions.

The purpose of the study was twofold: (1) to describe and explain what some urban teachers believe and know about literacy teaching and learning, and (2) to relate what the urban teachers believe and know about literacy teaching and learning to contrasting perspectives: mechanistic and contextualistic perspective (Heshusius, 1991, 1992). Teacher beliefs and knowledge were used interchangeably in the study because recent work indicates that much of what a teacher knows is described in highly subjective terms (Kagan, 1990; Leinhardt, 1990). The research question was:

What are urban teachers beliefs and knowledge about literacy teaching and learning in relation to two perspectives on teaching and learning- mechanistic and contextualistic?

Theoretical Framework

To answer the research question and accomplish the purposes of the study, there were three areas of previous research that needed to be investigated. The first part of the theoretical framework describes the characteristics of the urban, at risk student population which can influence what teachers do in classrooms. The second part contrasts the perspectives of mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives which represent alternative conceptions of teaching and learning literacy. The third part describes the research on teacher beliefs and knowledge about

literacy learning and teaching. All three parts contribute to answering the research question. Together all three parts describe the parameters and the theoretical underpinnings which can influence and guide literacy instruction in the particular context, the urban school with an at risk populations. Let us now briefly look at each of these parts of the theoretical framework.

Characteristics of an urban at risk student population.

First, the urban child is more likely to be poor, be sick, be absent from school, and be exposed to more violence and crime than non-urban child (McLoyd, 1990; Allen & Mason, 1989). Any one of these indices alone might not necessarily spell trouble for a child in school and in the future. However, when these conditions converge as they often do for the urban child, the child is at risk of school failure, eventually dropping out of school, and experiencing a lifetime of economic hardship. In short, "(e)ducational deficiencies translate into poor life chances with respect to employment and income as well as [with respect to] political and social participation in our society" (Levin, 1988, p. 1, brackets added). The child who comes to an urban classroom comes with many social and economic disadvantages.

The society has the same expectations for urban teachers as it does for all teachers- teach the children to read and write. Yet, because the children are so disadvantaged, the urban teacher faces a different and in some ways more difficult path in meeting these societal expectations. There are strains put on a teacher's practice when, for example, students are continually sick and absent, when several students need to leave class for special attention like

Special Education or Chapter 1 classes, when students attempt to get much needed sleep in class, and when students are explosive and present behavior problems to the teacher.

Second, students not only bring social and economic disadvantages to school, they also bring a cultural knowledge which often contrasts with conventional schooling. To some, the mismatch between home and school knowledge contributes to lagging academic achievement. Urban children are at risk not only for dropping out but also for low academic achievement. According to NAEP (1989), the average proficiency for all 11th grade low income, urban students is at about the seventh-grade level. When students achieve at such a disadvantaged level, they are undereducated (Levin, 1988). Some researchers believe that the lagging achievement may be due to the cultural mismatch between schools and literacy events at home (Heath, 1986, 1989; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1989). Some would say that one of the reasons that schools have such troubles keeping students at school and helping them become literate is that schools do not incorporate the cultural knowledge the children already possess when they come to school (Auerbach, 1989; Heath, 1986).

The third influence on urban student learning could be the type and the quality of urban classroom instruction itself. Since urban school teachers tend to use a limited repertoire of teaching methods, often characterized as mechanistic, some wonder whether the children's needs are being met (Allington & McGill-Franzden, 1989; Smith-Burke, 1989; Knapp & Needels, 1991). Educators' and researchers' opinions differ over whether the skills-based,

mechanistic instruction actually meets the needs of at risk children in urban schools. To some, having some mechanistic, skills-based instruction provides a foundation for success in the larger society by making explicit those experiences that the disadvantaged child has missed (Delpit, 1988; Reyes, 1991). The supporters of the more mechanical, skills-based instruction believe that the focus on explicit instruction in skills allows the urban child to know the exact rules by which to compete in the larger society. (Delpit, 1988). To other researchers and educators, contextualized, authentic and problem-solving type of instruction works better for the low achieving students (Garcia & Pearson, 1991). They argue that precisely what the low achieving child needs is subject matter which is relevant, engaging and motivating.

Finally, even though the characteristics of students within one urban school certainly vary, the factors which influence a teachers' practice are consistent across a single school. By examining teacher literacy beliefs and knowledge in one urban school we held some variables constant. The administrative curricular pressures on teachers were the same. The expectations of the parents and the community were the same for that school. All of these factors- the administration, the parents and the community- impact literacy instruction. Although there was variance among the individual teachers, by studying only one school we were assured that there were some consistent factors. The variance that occurred between the teachers could be highlighted better when we know that the the administration, the parents and the community are similar.

There was another advantage in studying only one school. Many staff development efforts are delivered to teachers at the school level. A picture of teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy across a school will be helpful to staff developers to indicate the variance and the consistencies in one setting. Since staff development programs focus on school-wide change, it will be helpful to see the range and experience at one school. Restructuring efforts today often take place at the district level and do not filter down to the classroom (David, 1990; Elmore, 1990; Wehlage, Smith & Lipman, 1992). Knowledge of how teachers think about literacy in one school alone may help to fill in the details of restructuring efforts and allow these efforts to have more impact on classrooms themselves.

In sum, while the study of literacy learning and teaching could have been legitimately conducted in any school with any group of teachers, there are several reasons why it is important to study literacy teaching and learning in one urban school with at risk children, in particular. (1) The economic and social disadvantages in the urban neighborhoods strain the day to day operations in the classroom and the school and present continual challenges to teachers. Exactly how teachers think about their practice in this context may help us help them change what they are doing. (2) When a mismatch exists between the literacy experiences students have in their neighborhoods versus what they experience in school, literacy learning can be affected negatively. What teachers think about the literacy background that students bring to school may be reflected in literacy instruction. (3) Literacy learning for at risk

children seems to be problematic because there are several questions about the type and quality of that instruction. Mechanical skills-based instruction seems to dominate classroom interactions for at risk children in urban schools. There are some who question the predominance of this instruction in settings where the need is so great. There are promising alternatives available for urban teachers. If skills-based, mechanistic instruction exists in urban settings, it would be valuable to learn why teachers use these methods with at risk children. (4) Studying only one school limits the generalizability of the study, but allows us to see how one group of teachers at one school think about literacy instruction. Since staff development efforts are more often at only one school, describing teacher beliefs and knowledge at one school illuminates the problems faced by those teachers.

Mechanistic and contextualistic: perspectives on literacy learning.

The second part of the theoretical framework focuses on the two different perspectives on teaching and learning which inform staff development efforts. Mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives each represent different underlying perspectives about teaching and learning. Resnick (1990) indicates that these perspectives also represent contrasting viewpoints about what underlies literacy instruction, in particular. From the mechanistic perspective, education could be seen as a matter of organizing effective successful lessons. Literacy, then, becomes a "bundle of skills,....(where teachers are) diagnosing skill strengths and deficits, providing appropriate exercises, in developmentally felicitous sequences, motivating students to engage in these

exercises, giving clear explanations and directions" (p. 171, Resnick, 1990). On the other hand, from the constructivist or more contextualistic perspective, literacy education could be seen as a process of socialization. Literacy then, becomes a "a set of cultural practices" during which teachers converse, write, read, exchange, listen and create with children in an effort to introduce them into a community of literacy practitioners (Resnick, 1990).

Based on current research in literacy learning, the broader contextualistic notion of literacy is seen as the key to improving instruction for the urban at risk child (Garcia & Pearson, 1991). Some argue that, when literacy learning is narrowly conceived as in the mechanistic perspectives, it is reduced to abstract learning, rote memorization and drill. When literacy learning is conceived of broadly as it is in the contextualistic perspective, it is expanded to include the many activities a learner engages in during the school day. Literacy learning depends on many aspects of classroom practice.

Thus, the mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives were investigated using multiple dimensions of literacy teaching and learning: content, teacher role, student role and context. The four dimensions are derived from the work of Schwab (1978), Anderson (1989) and Hewson & Hewson (1989). Taken as a whole the four dimensions define teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy teaching and learning. In the next section the four dimensions used in the study are described.

Dimension #1: Content. The content dimension is defined as those goals and methods which are designed to impart a body of

knowledge and experience to students about literacy. The content dimension of literacy learning and teaching is divided into two aspects: goals and methods. Literacy learning and teaching reaches beyond the traditional learning to read and write. The listening, writing, speaking and reading goals and methods will be included in this dimension. There are two aspects in this dimension: goals and methods.

GOALS. What does the teacher value as an outcome of his or her reading and writing instruction?

A goal is any statement that refers to that which the teacher intends the student to learn. An instructional goal is an intended outcome of instruction. It is what the teacher expects the students to know when they walk out of the door. Teachers may state several reasons why they chose these goals. The reasons as well as the goals themselves will be included in this section.

Examples of literacy goals: knowledge of skills, strategies, phonics, comprehension skills; knowledge of purposes of reading, writing; knowledge of mechanics of reading, writing; knowledge of study strategies (ways to regulate own behavior); knowledge of need to communicate with others; knowledge of metacognitive strategies and knowledge of subject matter.

METHODS. What techniques, student activities and instructional practices does the teacher use in teaching reading and writing in the classroom?

An instructional method is any teacher statement that refers to strategies, techniques, activities and practices which a teacher uses in teaching literacy. Teachers often state several reasons why they use these methods. The reasons as well as the methods themselves will be included in this description. The methods might be evident in descriptions of: an activity or a series of activities that children would do; a type of instructional technique that the teacher uses; and the materials that would support accomplishment of the goals.

Examples of literacy methods are: daily oral language activities; typical reading/writing activities- use of basal, spelling, copying sentences; short-term activities (daily, repetitive); long-term activities and projects (over several days or weeks); teacher lecture-discussion; cooperative activities, peer tutoring; writing books, journals; use of the basal; use of literature; field trips and related activities.

Dimension #2: Teacher instructional role. The teacher instructional role dimension focuses on how teachers view their own role in literacy learning and teaching. The reasons that a teacher gives for having these qualities will also be included. There are three aspects to this dimension: personal qualities, teacher-student interactions and curricular expectations.

PERSONAL. What personal qualities should a good teacher should have?

INTERACTIONS. What kinds of interactions that a teacher should have with students over content and other aspects of students' lives?

CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS. How should a teacher respond to district curricular expectations?

Dimension #3: Student learner role. The student learner role is defined as those behaviors, attitudes, and orientations that the teacher describes which contribute to or hinder learning. The reasons that a teacher gives will also be included in this definition. There are three aspects to this dimension:

PERSONAL. What personal qualities does a student need to be a successful learner? What personal qualities hinder learning?

COGNITIVE. What kind of cognitive processes are children using as they acquire literacy? What kind of background knowledge do students bring to tasks?

INTERACTIVE. What kind of collaborative literacy activities does the teacher describe? What is the role of social interaction in students' learning literacy? What reasons does the teacher give for student participation in a peer's learning?

Dimension #4: Context. The context dimension focuses on two aspects of context which influence literacy teaching and learning- classroom social context and the neighborhood context.

CLASSROOM SOCIAL CONTEXT. What is the extent to which the teacher includes social goals in her/his talk about other goals? What is the extent to which the teacher describes methods and materials in terms of their contribution to the

social cohesion (communication, flow, predictability of human interactions) in the classroom?

The classroom social context includes the people, materials and setting in which instruction proceeds. The social context is created by combination of both the social and academic goals and methods in the classroom. In terms of teacher viewpoints, there are two sub-aspects of the classroom social context aspect: goals and methods.

NEIGHBORHOOD SOCIAL CONTEXT. To what extent do teachers include the parents in the classroom activities and experiences? How do the teachers describe the students' background knowledge, ethnicity and economic status?

The neighborhood context is the setting in which the children live. Since literacy learning and teaching includes the social and academic events during the day, it is important to note instances where the teacher describes the children's neighborhood background as influential in literacy learning. This dimension focuses on how teachers view the neighborhood context and how that context impacts their classroom literacy instruction. There are several sub-aspects to this dimension: background knowledge, ethnicity and parental influences.

Teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy teaching and learning.

The third part of the theoretical framework concerns teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy instruction. What teachers believe and know about literacy instruction is central to what happens in classrooms. The teacher organizes, plans and directs classroom activities. What happens in classrooms largely depends

on the teacher. What teachers believe and know mediates literacy instruction in the classroom. Exactly how teachers enact their instructional role has an effect on student literacy learning.

Embedded in mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives are assumptions about what literacy is. When teachers choose one perspective over another they are also choosing broader goals about the nature of literacy and the nature of learning to read and write. They are telling how to behave as an educated person in our society. They are telling, modeling for and demonstrating to children what it means to be literate. They are building children's conception of literacy and literate behavior. That conception of literacy seems to have an effect on children's reading success (Purcell-Gates & Dahl, 1991; Dahl, 1989). Because teacher beliefs and practices affect children's literacy learning, it is important to look at how teachers conceive of literacy learning and teaching in an urban setting. Let us look at several reasons for studying teacher beliefs and knowledge.

First of all, it is important to study teacher beliefs and knowledge because there is an interaction between teacher beliefs and teacher practices. Certainly, teacher practices do not come out of thin air. Instructional decisions that teachers make are mediated by their beliefs and knowledge. Research on teacher thinking has established some strong links between teacher practice and teacher thinking (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Clark & Yinger, 1987). Through their influence on teacher practice, beliefs not only influence what teachers and students do in classrooms, teacher beliefs also influence what students learn as well (Purcell-Gates & Dahl, 1991;

Peterson, Fennema, Carpenter & Loef, 1989; Anderson, Englert, Raphael, & Stevens, 1990).

Second, by understanding teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy teaching, staff developers and instructional researchers can assist teachers in making changes in their practice. Teachers like anyone else will understand new information in light of prior knowledge. Thus, it is incumbent upon teacher educators to think about how teachers with different views might respond to ideas offered about changing their practice. Researchers have found that instructional decisions that teachers make are influenced by their preconceived notions of content, instructional role, students and the social context. Research has shown that the teachers' practice in mathematics (Peterson, Carpenter, Fennema & Loef, 1989; Cohen & Ball, 1990); in writing (Raphael, Englert & Anderson, 1989) and in reading (Palincsar, Stevens & Gavelek, 1989) are influenced by the teachers' beliefs and knowledge. Thus, an exploration of those teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy learning will help us understand how teachers balance the complex elements considered during of classroom literacy instruction.

Significance of the Study

The study addressed questions about teachers beliefs and knowledge about literacy learning in an urban school. Exploration of teachers' thinking illuminated some of the issues and concerns that teachers have when teaching urban students to become literate participants in the larger society. Teacher educators, instructional researchers, educational psychologists, and staff developers can

benefit from an analysis of how urban teachers think about and address the literacy needs of their students.

The classroom teacher is the final selector and arbitrator of the events in her or his classroom. Whatever goals, methods, curricula and types of teacher-students interactions that a teacher selects are driven by her or his beliefs and knowledge about what is important to learn, what role the teacher should play, what role the students play and what the urban child needs to know to become a literate participant in the society. The study examined teacher beliefs in relation to two perspectives about teaching and learning literacy. Since there is no consensus about the best way to promote literacy in urban classrooms (Brophy, 1988; Jones & Friedman, 1989; Delpit, 1988; Reyes, 1991), how to help the low achieving student become literate is the context in which teacher beliefs and knowledge were examined.

The study took place in one urban school. By examining teacher literacy beliefs and knowledge in one urban school some variables were held constant. The administrative curricular pressures on teachers were the same. The expectations of the parents and the community were the same. All of these factors-the administration, the parents and the community- impact literacy instruction. Although there was variance among the individual teachers, by studying only one school we were assured that there were some consistencies over these important factors. There was another advantage in studying only one school. Many staff development efforts are delivered to teachers at the school level. A picture of teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy across a

school is helpful to staff developers as an indication of the variance and the consistencies in one setting.

Finally, by studying urban teachers' views regarding literacy learning and teaching, it is hoped that the children who attend these schools will become better readers and writers. Knowing how teachers balance curricular demands with the student needs in this one urban school might eventually help teachers help students. It is only a step along the path toward helping those urban economically and socially disadvantaged students become literate participants in the larger society. Yet, it is a step.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

This chapter elaborates the theoretical framework for the study by reviewing the relevant research literature. In the first section of the chapter, research on the social and neighborhood contextual influences on urban classroom teaching is described. In the second section, mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives on literacy teaching and learning are contrasted as alternative views of literacy instruction for urban at risk child. In the third section, the research on the importance of understanding teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy learning and teaching is described. The three sections together comprise the parameters and the theoretical underpinnings of the study.

Contextual influences on urban literacy instruction

The first section of the literature review describes the research on the contextual influences on urban literacy instruction by addressing three questions. First, regarding the urban, out-of-school contextual factors the question is: What are the economic and social conditions of the urban child life that can affect the teachers' daily interactions with children in the classroom? Second, regarding the school-home contextual factors, the question is: What is known about the interaction between the urban child's literacy knowledge from home and the school knowledge that is presented? Third, regarding the within school contextual factors: What is known about current instruction of at risk children in urban schools?

The economic and social conditions of the urban child.

The urban child is more likely to be poor, be sick, be absent from school, and be exposed to more violence and crime than non-urban child (McLoyd, 1990; Allen & Mason, 1989). Any one of these indices alone might not necessarily spell trouble for a child in school and in their future endeavors. However, when these conditions converge, as they often do for the urban child, the child is at risk of school failure, eventually dropping out of school, and experiencing a lifetime of economic hardship. In short, there are a series of educational problems which are associated with poverty and the urban setting. As Levin (1988) stated, "Educational deficiencies translate into poor life chances with respect to employment and income as well as (with respect to) political and social participation in our society " (p.1, Levin, 1988, parenthesis added).

There are an array of studies which point to the interactions between economic disadvantages and schooling. Poverty alone can be a predictor of dropping out of school. Yet, school dropout rates for children from poor families are typically twice those of population averages; dropout rates often exceed 50 percent for the poorest youngsters (NAEP, 1985; Fine, 1986). Drop out rates have risen to nearly one million students per year (Smith-Burke, 1989). A disproportionate number of students who drop out of school lack strong literacy skills (Carbo, 1987). Students who drop out of school tend to put strains on state and federal social services as well. In a national logitudinal study, each added year of secondary schooling was shown to reduce by 35% the probability of public

welfare dependency during young adulthood. Attainment of a diploma has been shown to reduce by more than 50 percent the probability of having an out-of-wedlock birth (Mitchell, 1990). Low education among mothers is a risk factor for various infant health problems. What we do know is, if we could just keep these students in school, they would do better in the long run.

The process of dropping out starts long before the day that the child actually walks out of the school door, never to return. For many, it begins with poverty. For others, it begins with isolation from mainstream opportunities and poverty. As Anglo-Americans and middle class African-Americans move to the suburbs and urban structural economic conditions worsen, our major cities are becoming populated by the poor who are mostly poor African-American. African-American's are 17% of the nation's public school population, yet 41% of the special education population. In comparison to their Anglo-American counterparts, African-American students are twice as likely to be suspended from school and three times more likely to drop out (Edelman, 1987).

The society has the same literacy expectations for urban teachers as it does for suburban teachers- teach the children to read and write. Yet, the urban teacher faces a different and in some ways more difficult path in meeting these societal expectations because she or he teaches an at risk population. There are strains put on a teacher's practice when, for example, students are continually sick and absent, when students need to leave class for special attention like Special Education classes, when students are

explosive and present behavior problems to the teacher, and when students fall asleep in class.

Interactions between urban child's literacy knowledge and school literacy expectations.

Second, students not only bring social and economic disadvantages to school, they also bring a literacy knowledge which often contrasts with conventional schooling (Heath, 1986). Urban children are at risk not only for dropping out but also for low academic achievement. Some researchers and educators associate the contrast between home and school literacy knowledge with lagging academic achievement (Heath, 1986; Moll, 1991; Auerbach, 1989; Delpit, 1988). Some researchers and educators say that if teachers paid more incorporated more of the knowledge that children bring to school from their African-American culture, perhaps the students would do better in school. The teachers would be bridging from what the children know to what the school can teach them.

Although definitions of literacy have changed over the years, literacy can be defined as the ability to communicate, problem solve and achieve within a culture (Resnick & Resnick, 1977). This definition notes the culturally specific nature of literate knowledge (Vygotsky, 1934/1986; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Palincsar, David, Winn, & Stevens, 1991). This definition of literacy is broad; it includes many aspects of social interaction as well as the application of mind to problem-solving. Becoming literate is dependent on the acquisition of a repertoire of skills which are learned somewhat easily, especially if one's culture matches the culture of the larger society. If one's culture and experience do not

match the larger culture, coming to school and meeting the literacy expectations of schools can be difficult for students (Heath, 1986). What can happen for the urban African-American child is that his or her literate knowledge is different from the school's expectations for literacy. Schools present children with experiences which lead to literacy in the larger society; yet, these experiences may contrast with literacy experiences in child's daily life outside of school. The schools' way with words, the schools' definitions of literacy, may not map onto or take advantage of the urban African-American child's way with words (Heath, 1983; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988).

Heath (1986) noted that there is a tendency for schools to promote literacy from a "faulty" conception of language development. There is an assumption of a single developmental literacy learning model for all children. This simple developmental model could be called the "accumulation model" of learning where children are expected to start at a simple level and then move to a more cognitively complex model. This single model assumes a linear progression for learning in which simpler, more fundamental stages need to precede later stages. In subjects such as reading, for example, children would not be expected to answer comprehension questions without first knowing how to adequately decode the words on a page. Similarly, they would not be expected to know how to write without knowing about the mechanics of writing-- spelling, punctuation and capitalization. A single developmental model does not account for differences in children's learning which may be due to cultural factors or due to the

knowledge that children bring to the learning task. All children are expected to follow the same path to literacy. For African-Americans this model does not include the social and verbal aspects of their culture. "The insistence of the school on individualizing literacy and separating it from its social and oral roots has ignored traditional oral and literate habits of Black Americans" (Heath, 1989).

In a study of differing access to comprehension practice in classrooms, Collins (1982) found that the lower reading groups in two urban classrooms had less practice in comprehending text and more practice in decoding exercises. One school was in Chicago; the other was in California. In both classrooms, through a longitudinal study of verbal interaction during reading lessons, Collins found that the high ranked students received qualitatively different comprehension training than the low-ranked students. Others have found that much less time is devoted to the actual task of reading in low-ranked groups (McDermott, 1976; Allington, 1983).

For at risk children described in the Moll and Diaz (1987) case studies, the Latino children were stuck in the lower levels of the curriculum with more rote memorization than their Anglo peers. They were doomed to failure just because they never got out of the lower level curriculum. These curricular arrangements did not capitalize on children's talents, resources and skills (Diaz, Moll & Mehan, 1986). Moll and Diaz ask- It appears that we can socially organize failure? Why can't we socially arrange success? Moll and Diaz did just that. In the two cases described, Moll and Diaz (1987) intervened in classroom instruction by including more of the Latino

students' cultural background and, then, the students were more successful readers and writers. It is difficult to generalize from the Latino experience to the African-American experience in schools. Yet, both groups of students find themselves at risk of school failure in schools that are remarkably similar. Some researchers and educators attribute at least part of this problem to the miscommunication between teachers and students due to cultural mismatches. In this way, the Latino and the African-American experience in schools is similar.

When teachers can integrate the communities' ways with words into the literacy curriculum, students seem to do better in school. In Kamahamaha school with native Hawaiian children who were experiencing difficulty in learning to read, Au (1980) incorporated a Hawaiian tradition called a "talk story" into the literacy curriculum. The children were familiar with the talk story format from their home culture. Au used the same talk story format in teaching the children to read and talk about reading in their small reading groups. After changing the classroom experience for the children so that it more clearly matched their home cultural experience, Au found that the Hawaiian children learned to read better. The results indicate that when the school more closely incorporated the literacy experiences of the Hawaiian students' culture, the students learned to read. Au cautions on the limited generalizability of the findings of the study because it only dealt with the cultural practice of the native Hawaiian culture and how the practice could be appropriated for teaching students to read. Yet, the study points to the advantages of incorporating the literacy

knowledge that students bring to school into the teaching of literacy at school.

James P. Comer began working in New Haven, Connecticut, schools in 1968 to "advance the social, emotional and academic growth and development of students, and to produce successful citizens" (p. 19, Stocklinski & Miller-Colbert, 1991). A major thrust of his program was to involve the community in the education of its children through shared decision-making (Comer, 1988). To that end, there are planning and management teams of teachers, parents, students and support staff. This program has led to an increase in student achievement among the several schools that are involved in the program. Parents are encouraged to volunteer in the classroom, to serve on subcommittees and to attend school activities. The Comer Process seems to be most beneficial in schools "where the community is different racially, ethnically or socioeconomically from the school staff. Because administrators and teachers may fail to recognize that a student's academic and behavioral lapses reflect cultural gaps between home and school, the process provides a framework for schools to work closely with parents in building relationships with one another....(It) allows the schools to respond creatively to their students' academic and social needs" (p. 19, Stocklinski & Miller-Colbert, 1991),

In sum, at risk children's literate knowledge may not easily map onto the school's way with words. The mismatch between what many schools present as valued knowledge may be different from what the child already knows. This mismatch between the literacy events in many urban schools and the literacy experiences children

have in their homes may contribute to children's underachievement in reading and writing (Cuban, 1988). Schools that are incorporating the community into the decision-making seem to have more success.

Current classroom instruction for urban at risk children.

The third influence on urban student learning could be the type and the quality of urban classroom instruction itself. From the research cited in the last section, it seems that the quality of urban school literacy instruction seems to suffer when there is a mismatch between the culture that students bring to school and the culture that the school provides. When parents get involved and when teachers adapt curriculum to student cultural knowledge, students seem to do better on achievement tests. Some researchers would say that there are other, non-culturally based reasons for the lagging literacy achievement of the urban child. On one hand, some researchers believe that basic-skills instruction is what the children need, but the teachers need to learn how to deliver that instruction better (Brophy, 1988). On the other hand, others believe that at risk urban children suffer precisely because the narrow, basic skills orientation that exists in urban schools doesn't give students the opportunity to deal with sustained text and to experience challenging learning situations (Allington, 1986; Smith-Burke, 1989).

In the context of the study, skills-based instruction means that learning occurs through the application of a discrete skill or set of skills to a task. Skills-based instruction usually follows a pattern of whole class instruction, recitation and seatwork. The

teacher teaches the skill. Then the teacher presents content where students can practice the skill. The teacher directs the students' use of that skill and controls all of the instructional interactions related to development of the skill. The classroom activities often require memorization of discrete, decontextualized, teacher-presented information where the student can practice the skill. After the skill is well-learned then, the skill is applied to a learning task.

In skills-based reading instruction, for example, students learn the skill of decoding words to gain meaning through phonics and isolated practice on word sounds. The teacher presents phonemes and words where the phonemes occur. Students memorize the sounds and the words associated with the sounds. The words may be presented in sentences or the students may look up the meaning of the words in a dictionary. However, the skill is to learn to pronounce the word and the phonemes associated with the word and to learn the dictionary meaning. After the pronunciation and the meaning of words are learned one day, the story that the words relate to might be read the next day.

Educators' and researchers' opinions differ over whether skills-based instruction meets the needs of low achievers. Several researchers support the notion that low achieving students benefit the most from whole class instruction where students learn, even overlearn, the skills associated with successful performance (Brophy, 1988; Baumann, 1986; Guskey & Gates, 1986). According to Brophy (1988), Chapter 1 students, who are considered low achieving students, would benefit from the structured format that

skills-based instruction can provide. The recommendation of two leading educational psychologists is:

low-SES, low-achieving students need more control and structuring from their teachers; more active instruction and feedback, more redundancy, and smaller steps with higher success rates. This will mean more review, drill, and practice, and thus more lower-level questions. Across the school year, it will mean exposure to less material, but with emphasis on mastery of the material that is taught and on moving students through the curriculum as briskly as they are able to progress (Brophy & Good, 1986, p. 328).

Skills-based instruction as described by Brophy and Good seems valuable, successful and doable for children at risk. In addition, skills-based instruction lays the foundation for success in the larger society. The supporters of skills-based instruction believe that the focus on explicit skills instruction allows the urban child to know the exact rules by which to compete.

Delpit (1988) writes that it may be too soon to totally abandon skills-based instruction in favor of more process-oriented instruction especially with African-American students. She does not advocate totally discarding the more contextually-oriented conception of literacy. However, she strongly recommends the need to continue to be explicit in our skill instruction with African-American students because they have not and will not ever learn these skills in any other way. Their culture does not help them succeed in less skill-based classrooms whereas the child from the larger culture child has the tools to succeed when she or he walks in

the classroom door. Delpit believes that one way for African-American children to make the leap from their world to the larger society's world is to have the cultural capital that they lack. If we do not provide them with the explicit skills, we rob them of the opportunity to understand the explicit details and the power dynamics in the larger culture which underlie this skill-based knowledge. Without explicit instruction in the underlying skills in reading and writing, the urban child will not have the "cultural capital" to succeed in the larger society (Delpit, 1988).

To others, skills-based instruction is decontextualized, narrow and "technical" and circumscribes children's learning (Poplin, 1988a, 1988b; Allington, 1991; Garcia & Pearson, 1991; Moll, 1991). They argue that precisely what the low achieving at risk child needs is instruction which requires problem-solving on authentic tasks not more drill and practice and skill-based learning. The content of the subject matter must be relevant to the students' lives, challenging to their minds and highly motivating.

In a study of remedial reading instruction for low achieving students, Allington (1986) found that, indeed, instruction for the low achieving, Chapter 1 students tends to emphasize mechanical, rote-learning rather than cognitive growth and thinking. According to Allington, students in these settings are subjected to a daily diet of drill and practice with activities that bear no relevance to their lives. Occasions for extended reading, writing or talking on a sustained topic are relatively few and far between in urban schools (Applebee, 1984; Goodlad, 1984).

To Heath (1989), the urban at risk students' exposure to literate activities is limited and circumscribed by the standardized measures of achievement and instructional materials as well. Those urban schools who receive the most pressure to improve their instruction, rely on these standardized and limited teaching materials and evaluation forms to measure learning. The teaching materials used with students who are low achievers and at risk often reflect the skills-based orientation. The urban students learn to read and write alone and display their knowledge in "prespecified and limited form of worksheets, standardized tests, brief academic essays and answers to teacher and textbook questions" (p. 371, Heath, 1989). In contrast, at the heart of literacy are such activities as "sharing knowledge and skills from multiple sources, building collaborative activities from and with written materials, and switching roles and trading expertise and skills in reading, writing and speaking" (p. 371, Heath, 1989). The broader notion of literacy is active, motivating, dynamic and relevant to the student's lives.

Dahl's (1989) research offers an insight into the effects of different types of literacy curricular practices on students' views of literacy. The study emphasizes the potential consequences of the curriculum on children's conception of literacy. Emergent literacy practices were studied across three kindergarten classes with an economically disadvantaged population. Based on the results of interviews and observations, it appears that students concentrated on becoming literate depending on what the curriculum taught. If the curriculum led them to think about letters as the path

to literacy, they experimented with writing letters. The focus on the simpler learning of letters as the path to literacy is more consonant with the skills-based perspective. If the curriculum provided a variety of literacy experiences in the real context of books and the classroom, students explored the print around them and made various reading attempts using environmental print. The focus on the variety of literacy experiences is more consonant with the alternative perspectives on literacy. The study concluded that disadvantaged children benefit the most from programs which allow engagement in authentic reading and writing activities.

Some criticize urban schools because the skills-based instruction represents a technocratic conception of schooling which contrasts with a more Deweyian notion of creating knowledge through practice and reflection (Rogers & Polkinghorn, 1990). Schools promote a traditional definition of school literacy, consisting of merely learning skills and content knowledge about people, places and things. Typically, content knowledge is transmitted from those who know to those who don't (Harste, Woodward & Burke, 1984). Teachers in urban classrooms keep control over content and method. Content is not criticized or made problematic for students. Students are not given a chance to get involved in the process and to benefit from interactions with other students over meaningful content.

In sum, while the study of literacy learning and teaching could have been legitimately conducted in any school with any group of teachers, several reasons indicate why it is important to study teacher beliefs about literacy teaching and learning in an urban

setting with at risk children. (1) The economic and social disadvantages in the urban neighborhoods seem to strain the day to day operations in the classroom and the school and present continual challenges to teachers. Learning how teachers think about their practice in the urban context may help us help them improve the literacy learning of their students. (2) When a mismatch exists between the literacy background experiences students have in their neighborhoods versus what their experience in school, literacy learning can be affected negatively. What teachers think about incorporating the literacy background that students bring to school may be reflected in the classroom literacy instruction. (3) Another way that literacy learning for at risk children can be problematic is in the type and quality of literacy instruction they receive. There is not agreement about what instruction is best for the at risk, urban population. However, skills-based instruction seems to dominate classroom interactions for at risk children in urban schools and does not seem to be very successful in helping children achieve. For some, there are good reasons to continue with some form of quality skills-based instruction (Brophy, 1988; Delpit, 1988). For others, there are many questions about continuing to use skills-based instruction with at risk populations. Since skills-based instruction seems to persist in urban settings, it would be valuable to learn what reasons the teachers have for continuing to use these methods.

The perspectives on literacy instruction

In the last part of the preceding section, existing patterns and trends in skills-based literacy instruction were described. There are some contemporary calls for changes in urban instructional

patterns (Heath, 1989; Allington, 1991; Moll, 1991). Some researchers and educators suggest that urban at risk children would benefit from an alternative approach to classroom literacy learning. In this section of the literature review, the theoretical foundations of two alternative perspectives of literacy teaching and learning are discussed- a mechanistic perspective and a contextualistic perspective. Both of these lie along a continuum of perspectives on literacy learning and teaching. Comparing and contrasting two theoretical perspectives on teaching and learning allows us to analyze urban teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy instruction.

In this second section of the literature review, the two theoretical perspectives on teaching and learning are compared and contrasted. Although in many ways, these two perspectives are too simplistic for the complex activity involved in teaching students to become literate participants in the society, using two perspectives provides a framework by which to analyze the data. In addition, it can be argued that certain staff development activities are informed by theoretical perspectives which tend to be more consonant with one perspective or the other.

Resnick (1990) indicates that, what we shall call, the more mechanistic, skills-based perspective and the more contextualistic, cognitively-based perspective represent contrasting viewpoints about what it means to educate someone to be literate. From the mechanistic perspective, literacy education could be seen as a matter of organizing effective lessons. Literacy, then, becomes a "bundle of skills,...(where teachers are) diagnosing skill strengths

and deficits, providing appropriate exercises, in developmentally felicitous sequences, motivating students to engage in these exercises, giving clear explanations and directions" (p. 171). On the other hand, from the contextualistic perspective, education could be seen as a process of socialization into a literate community. Literacy becomes a "a set of cultural practices" during which teachers converse, write, read, exchange, listen and create with children in an effort to introduce them into a community of literacy practitioners (Resnick, 1990).

Mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives also are associated with the teaching and learning theory underlying recommended instructional practices (Gavalek & Palincsar, 1988; Heshusius, 1991, 1992). From educational research, teaching and learning theories get transformed into practical classroom applications and become staff development programs within schools. Mechanistic or contextualistic perspectives on teaching and learning, therefore, inform many different staff development efforts. If researchers know more about how urban teachers view literacy learning and teaching in relation to the two perspectives, it is more likely that communication with teachers would be refined in the design of programs that meet the instructional needs of urban at risk children. We will now turn to a comparison of each perspective within each of four dimensions of literacy teaching and learning.

The mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives will be discussed in terms of four dimensions: (1) the content dimension; (2) teacher instructional role; (3) student learner role; and (4) context of instruction. As stated earlier, these four dimensions are

distilled from four sources (Schwab, 1978; Anderson, 1989; Hewson & Hewson, 1989). There are several reasons why it is important to use the four dimensions of teaching and learning to understand teacher beliefs about literacy instruction in an urban school. First, several people have argued that instructional practices do not make sense unless they are understood as a response and interaction with the context in which they occur (Cuban, 1988; Moll, 1991). To isolate instructional practices and content from the larger neighborhood, school and community in which they are nested, is to ignore any effects that the context can have on instruction. Second, the definition of literacy teaching and learning used in the study includes the influence of many aspects of classroom experience. Therefore, it is important to compare and contrast teacher views of literacy teaching and learning perspectives using broader, more inclusive dimensions.

(1) Content: academic goals and instructional methods.

For the purposes of the study, the content dimension of instruction includes two aspects: the academic goals and instructional methods associated with the content. This dimension describes what kinds of things students should know when they walk out the door of the classroom (goals) and what are the best ways to impart that knowledge (methods). Examples of classroom literacy goals would be knowledge of the purposes of reading and writing, knowledge of skills, strategies and phonics. Examples of classroom methods are daily oral language activities, journal writing, drill and practice of phonemes. Goals and methods are interrelated and

interdependent and are considered together when contrasting the mechanistic perspective with the contextualistic perspective.

In reference to the goals of literacy instruction, mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives share some similarities and some differences. From the mechanistic perspective, learning is the accumulation of discrete, decontextualized skills. Decontextualized means that the skills are taught separate from engaging with extended text. Skills are not taught when students are engaged in reading texts which are longer and may have personal meaning for them. A more mechanistic-type goal of literacy learning is the accumulation of discrete units of language. The units of language are letters, letter/sound relationships, word and word meanings. For the mechanistic models, however, to promote transfer, students need to learn, even "overlearn", small, discrete pieces of information. Transfer of knowledge is best accomplished through well-timed practice and repetition of information (Gove, 1983; Gerston, Carnine & Woodward, 1987; Brophy, 1988).

The content dimension of literacy teaching and learning also includes the instructional methods used to accomplish the academic goals (Anderson, 1989). From the mechanistic perspective, the teacher more than likely will use the basal reader. Drill and practice on discrete isolated skills predominates. Classroom instruction is dominated by clear, unambiguous presentations, a predominance of lower order questions, structuring of content and specificity of feedback through guided and independent practice (Brophy, 1988). The mechanistic perspective on the literacy learning in particular promotes instruction in phonics, decoding

skills, vocabulary learning and skills-based comprehension strategies (Chall, 1967; Gove, 1983). This perspective views learning as a "bottom-up" process where over time the accumulation of small, well-practiced pieces adds up to improved comprehension and literacy development (Harste & Burke, 1977; Gove, 1983).

The more mechanistic-oriented side focuses on assessing the product. Learning could be defined as a permanent change in behavior. It has to be measurable, observable and permanent. Although the methods and processes by which students learn the skills are important, they are not nearly as important as assessment of the product. The processes that children employ to accomplish the goals are not as important as what children learn. Activating background knowledge facilitates learning but is not essential. After all, literacy is achieved from the learning of discrete, isolated skills which are applied to content. Lack of background knowledge does not necessarily play a key role in learning. To become better comprehenders, children need to learn the subskills associated with reading fluency and apply these to worksheets first and then to whole stories (Gove, 1983). Learning of discrete, isolated skills also helps students be more immediately successful in learning.

From the contextualistic perspective, literacy goals include learning not only the content but also the processes involved in learning (Anderson, 1989). The goal of literacy instruction is for students to learn to handle a variety of problems with a repertoire of internalized learning strategies. The processes of learning, the interactions with peers and the teacher foster internalization of knowledge. Conceptual knowledge is built up, challenged and

sustained through "shared understandings" (Edwards & Mercer, 1989). These shared understandings are created in a classroom context of books, objects, experiences, discussions, manipulatives, and/or experiments so that the student develops "richly contextualized knowledge" (Englert & Palincsar, 1991).

From the contextualistic perspective, the student needs to learn complex thinking processes in the context of authentic, whole tasks. The units of language emphasized are sentences, paragraphs, whole stories, books, chapters, songs, poems, etc. Transfer from the more contextualistic perspective may be best accomplished through practice with the whole task of reading a story. Transfer only occurs when students have this broad experiential base to relate and integrate the old ideas with the new (Gove, 1983).

From the contextualistic perspective, sometimes we cannot only assess the outcomes of learning through observation of behavior, we also need to look and assess the processes involved. Learning is not the mere accumulation of facts which are repeated back to the teacher as the products of learning. Real literacy teaching involves attention to the processes of learning. Students are learning when they construct knowledge while in a problem-solving situation. It is only in the application of information that all the nuances of literacy learning have an opportunity to develop. Reading and writing are intertwined and should not be separated as instructional events (Wong, 1991). It is important to remember that learning is not just saying the words. It requires a fundamental reorganization, a construction of information in the mind. What is important to learn and how best to learn it are

important differences between the mechanistic and the contextualistic perspectives.

From the contextualistic perspective, instructional methods focus on the processes by which one learns the problem-solving content. Learning results from the shared, knowledge gained from asking questions, tackling problems, and discussing solutions. The development of mind is a process promoted through the internalization of dialogue. The teaching methods which present opportunities for guided conversation are the key to cognitive development (Palincsar & Brown, 1986). Thinking becomes an "internalized version of conversation" (Vygotsky, 1934/1986). According to contextualistic perspective, the teachers' instructional methods support the construction of meaning through classroom processes like debate, questioning, clarifying, rereading, summarizing, analyzing and/or critiquing. Even though the teacher may use the prescribed textbook, it does not stand alone. Literacy learning is enriched by other activities and immersion in text. Learning is a "top-down" process where dialogue about meanings among students and between teacher and students promotes comprehension and literacy (Palincsar & Brown, 1986; Edwards & Mercer, 1989). For example, students may collaborate in heterogeneous groups on long-term projects. Learning becomes an active process of construction which is influenced by what the child brings to the task, who the people are in the environment and what kind of environment it is. Activation of background knowledge is essential from the contextualistic perspective because new learning is always shaped by and integrated with old learning. It is not the

teacher presenting information for the students that is important. It is the students interacting with each other and with the teacher that promote construction of cognitive structures which facilitate comprehension and interpretation and understanding over time.

(2) Teacher instructional role.

The teacher instructional role dimension focuses on how teachers view their own role in literacy learning and teaching. There are three aspects to this dimension: the personal qualities that a good teacher possesses, the kind of interactions that a good teacher should have with students over content as well as other aspects of their lives and the obligations that a teacher feels are important in performing their instructional role. Mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives view the personal qualities that go into the teacher role quite similarly. In both perspectives the teacher plays a central, active and vital role in classroom learning. Differences in the two perspectives can be found, however, from where the teachers derive their conceptions of teacher-student interactions and teachers' response to curricular expectations. According to both perspectives, the teacher is strong, positive and in charge of the classroom. All teachers need to have high expectations for their students. From the mechanistic perspective, however, those expectations might be based on the teachers' goals for the student whereas from the contextualistic perspective, the teacher would be responding to the expectations derived from interactions and consultation with the student.

The two perspectives can be contrasted also in the type of classroom interactions between teacher and student which would be

used to accomplish the teacher's goals. On one hand, supporters of the more mechanistic perspective would see the teacher's role as more directing. It is the teacher's job to be unambiguous about what he or she expects the students to learn. As Baumann (1986) notes the teacher is at the real heart of any direct instructional paradigm, which we are assuming is more mechanistic. In this perspective, the teachers' role can be described thus:

In direct instruction, the teacher, in a face-to-face, reasonably formal manner, tells, shows, models, demonstrates, teaches the skill to be learned. The key word here is teacher, for it is the teacher who is in command of the learning situation and leads the lesson, as opposed to having instruction "directed" by a worksheet, kit, learning center, or workbook. (p. 287, Baumann, 1983)

Supporters of the contextualistic perspective, on the other hand, would view the interactional aspect of the teacher's instructional role differently. The teacher becomes a negotiator of meanings and a mediator of content. The students and teachers share responsibility for learning. "Teachers and students are viewed as active meaning-makers who continually give contextually based meanings to each others' words and actions as they interact" (p. 88, Cobb, 1988). Students participate with teachers, deciding what is important to learn as well as what is the best way to learn. "Classroom routines engender shared understandings about meaning, forms and uses of literacy" (Rogoff, 1991). Teacher and students share control over events in the classroom. Authority does not rest with the teacher alone. From this perspective students are

encouraged to voice their opinions and try out their ideas. Therefore, teachers are likely to get more feedback about the differential impact that the instruction is having on the students .

Consonant with contextualistic perspective, Vygotsky (1934/1986) wrote that the forms of cooperation between adult and child were the central element of the education process. It is those forms of cooperation like how students and teachers interact with one another that determine how much learning takes place and what kind of learning takes place. His concept of the zone of proximal development refers to the importance of these forms of cooperation. He stressed how one gets a qualitatively different perspective of childrens' abilities by contrasting what they do when working alone to what they do when working in collaboration with others. To be effective, instruction must lead students. Similarly, Moll and Diaz (1987) see the more contextualistic-based instruction as aimed at the child's strengths observed in collaboration with others not the child's weaknesses demonstrated in individual standardized assessments. The teacher with a contextualistic perspective values the interactions in the classroom to actually form those cognitive structures which would not be learned without the interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1934/1986).

The two perspectives also differ in reference to the third aspect of this dimension in how teachers respond to external curricular expectations. External here means those expectations that are imposed by the principal or the district, such as using a standardized test as a gauge of instruction. These external expectations appear in the form of curricular guidelines on scope

and sequence charts, in lesson plans that are monitored by the principal, and in the continued practice of yearly standardized tests. Internal (to the classroom) expectations would be those expectations that arise out of the day-to-day interactions with children in the classroom. These internal expectations are derived from interviewing and observing children in the classroom, working every day with the children, doing dynamic-type assessments, and writing and administering teacher-made tests.

Supporters of a more mechanistic perspective measure progress and growth by a set of externally-constructed and externally-controlled standards (Heshusius, 1991, 1992). The selection of what is included and excluded from the lesson plans and classroom instruction is determined by external indices of appropriate developmental and grade level expectations. The sequenced lesson plan is vitally important because a teacher can compare his or her progress with the externally-constructed guidelines. In order to gauge progress of his or her students, teachers use standardized tests such as the California Achievement Test. Teachers are concerned that their students attain grade level expectations.

Supporters of a more contextualistic perspective, on the other hand, measure progress and growth by a set of internally constructed and internally determined standards (Heshusius, 1991, 1992). The internal expectations in different classrooms at same grade level might vary from classroom to classroom. Teacher lesson plans would be created in response to needs of these particular students. Problems that are studied by the students are

selected and evaluated on the basis of classroom goals and expectations (Englert & Palincsar, 1991). Evidence for what the students need would be gathered from various sources- observations, interviews of students, dynamic assessment, teacher-made tests, and portfolios.

(3) Student learner role.

The student learner role is defined as those student behaviors, attitudes and orientations that the teacher believes the student needs to be a successful learner. There are three aspects to this dimension: the personal qualities that a student should have to be a successful learner, the nature of the cognitive processes that students should engage in as they become literate and the role that peers play in student learning.

The mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives differ in the conceptions of what qualities a student needs to be a successful learner. From the mechanistic perspective, the personal qualities that a student needs are to listen, absorb information and give the teacher back what he or she has taught (Gerston, Carnine & Woodward, 1987; Brophy, 1988). Student autonomy is not necessarily an explicit concern of those with a mechanistic perspective. After all, students are dependent on teacher feedback for evidence of learning. Students are seen as motivated by external rewards, extrinsic motivators like stars, treats and grades. From the contextualistic perspective, the personal qualities that a student needs to learn are to listen and reconstruct meanings given his or her background knowledge and then apply that knowledge (Richardson, Anders, Tidwell & Lloyd, 1991). Student autonomy and

independence are explicit concerns of those with a contextualistic perspective. After all, students need to become self-reliant and develop their own standards of success and failure. Students are seen as motivated by a challenging environment which builds intrinsic motivation to do complex tasks.

Mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives also differ in what kind of cognitive processes are important for the learner engage in. Cognitive process are the thinking and observable activities that a teacher might use to accomplish his or her goals. On the mechanistic side, students need to engage in recitation, copying, memorizing, drill and practice of small, discrete and undisputed information (Brophy, 1988). Learning is segmented into parts through task analysis. Meaning is in the text, not in the person-text interaction (Richardson, Anders, Tidwell & Lloyd, 1991). Textual meanings are stable and generally definitive. Background knowledge is important because it facilitates comprehension of a given text. However, comprehension can still occur without activation of background knowledge because it facilitates but does not have an overall affect on what students learn.

On the contextualistic side of the cognitive processes aspect, students converse, exchange ideas, debate, discuss, create, and grapple with large, sometime unwieldy problems. Learning is considered to be a holistic experience, difficult to segment into parts (Shuy, 1981). Meaning is in the person-text interaction. Textual meanings are unstable and subject to interpretation. Background knowledge is central because it interacts with the text to construct new, individualized meanings. Background knowledge

not only facilitates comprehension; it also interacts and reshapes with what is and can be learned (Richardson, Anders, Tidwell & Lloyd, 1991). From the contextualistic perspective, the cognitive processes that are important require the student to actively contribute to her or his own learning through dialogue, problem-solving and decision-making. It is essential for cognitive development that the child converse with others over meaningful content (Wood, 1988; Rogoff, 1990). It is not enough to respond to teacher-directed questions, the student learns through a variety of processes. The ability to guide one's own learning, to recognize when one goes astray and monitor learning methods become the outcomes of instruction. Students are active constructors of their own meanings. In fact, real learning only occurs when students are actively involved in the assimilating, evaluating and creating meaning for themselves out of what they learn.

Another difference between the mechanistic and the contextualistic perspectives lies in the third aspect of the student learner dimension: the interactive aspect. The interactive aspect is defined as the role that peers can play in student learning. Both perspectives tend to value peer-to-peer learning because it can help students learn to get along with one another. The two perspectives differ in the type of acceptable peer learning and the outcomes possible with peer learning. From a mechanistic perspective peer tutoring is acceptable because one, more informed student works with another less informed student. The purpose of their interaction would be to teach the content presented by the teacher.

Other interactive forms might be acceptable as long as the groups were formed to learn content presented by the teacher.

From a contextualistic perspective, on the other hand, there might be a variety of interactive forms- peer tutoring, cooperative groups, editing groups and collaborative groups whose purposes might be to manipulate, integrate, create, grapple or even reshape ideas and information. These more contextualistically-based peer learning methods accomplish a different set of goals than the more mechanistic set of methods. The teachers' attention is not only on the product of learning but the processes involved in learning that content among peers. From the contextualistic perspective, learning how to learn from others while learning is just as important as learning what to learn.

(4) Social context of instruction: The classroom and the neighborhood.

The context dimension includes two aspects of teachers' views about the context of instruction. Teachers do not teach in a vacuum. Every day teachers enter a certain school and cope with and pay attention to the special aspects of the context which can impact their instruction. Since our definition of literacy is broad, it is assumed that students' literacy learning will be affected by the classroom and neighborhood context in which literacy learning is embedded (Moll, 1991). In turn, teachers' views of how to include or exclude important factors in the context could impact students' literacy learning. Thus, context is the fourth dimension of literacy teaching and learning that is included in the study.

The context dimension includes two aspects of teachers' views about the context of instruction: the classroom social context and the neighborhood context. The aspect of the classroom social context refers to the extent to which the teacher talks about social goals in relation to other classroom goals. For the study, the social context is defined as social and behavioral environment of the classroom and the influences of the neighborhood on instruction. The classroom social context includes the interactions and patterns that teachers and students share in that particular classroom in that particular school. The second aspect of context, the neighborhood context, refers to the extent to which and the manner in which the teachers consider the parents, the economics of the neighborhood and student's cultural knowledge in her or his talk about teaching students to be literate.

From a mechanistic perspective on the classroom social context, the teacher would be concerned with prediction and control over learning outcomes (Altman & Rogoff, 1987; Brophy, 1988; Poplin, 1988a, 1988b). Learning is most efficient under tightly controlled social and academic conditions. Thus, the classroom social context would be organized to insure that academic tasks get done in a timely and efficient manner. Social and affective goals from the mechanistic perspective might exist for the teacher but these goals would probably be unrelated to their influence on academic outcomes.

From a contextualistic perspective, the classroom social context is vitally important to the accomplishment of both academic and social goals. The teacher would be concerned with the quality

of the interactions in the classroom social context (Poplin, 1988a, 1988b). Prediction and teacher control of events and outcomes are not as important as the development of supportive social context. A supportive classroom social context helps students become self-regulated learners who act autonomously and independently. Learning from the contextualistic perspective is the result of mutual engagement between the learner and the people in the classroom context (Piaget, 1978). The classroom social context from the contextualistic perspective becomes much more important in contributing to student literacy learning. What a teacher says and does is important and contributes to student literacy learning. The contextualistic perspective is consonant with the viewpoint that the people in the classroom environment make mutual transactions when learning (Vygotsky, 1934/1986; Altman & Rogoff, 1987). This follows the Vygotskian notion of inner speech. The social context can actually affect and transform the nature of mind (Vygotsky, 1934/1986). Social goals can be integrated with, reciprocal to and intimately connected to academic goals (Poplin, 1988a, 1988b; Heshusius, 1991).

The second aspect of context, the neighborhood context refers to the extent to which and the manner in which the teachers consider the parents, the economics of the neighborhood and student's cultural knowledge in her or his talk about other goals. Classroom instruction involves students who bring their experiences and knowledge from their neighborhood and from their culture to school with them (Cusick, 1992). From the mechanistic perspective, teachers might or might not consider the parents, the

economics and students' cultural knowledge. A proponent of a totally mechanistic perspective would endorse parental involvement only as it furthers and supports teacher-determined outcomes. Parents would be trained to help teachers accomplish their goals. Parents need to be informed of school expectations. Literacy learning is only important as it prepares students to succeed in the regular society. Students need to correct the neighborhood literacy they bring to school to succeed in the larger society.

From the contextualistic perspective, teachers need to consider and adjust their literacy teaching and learning in reference to the parents, the economics and students' cultural knowledge (Moll, 1991). A proponent of a totally contextualistic perspective would endorse parental involvement to encourage them to help their children become literate. However, the school and the teacher need to form a partnership with the parents to listen to them. Teachers need to determine the parental and community expectations for literacy learning. Literacy learning is important as it is personally and culturally relevant to the child (Poplin, 1988a, 1988b). Students need to be aware of standard English and know how to bridge from the language they know to standard English. However, the literate knowledge they bring to school is valued by the school and incorporated into the lessons of the school.

The proponents of the mechanistic perspective have argued that the skills-based instruction maximizes learning, maintains student attention and provides success experiences, especially for those who so badly need the security of success (Brophy, 1988). The teacher-determined content of the lesson becomes the focal

point of classroom interactions. The goal is to use the best methods available to get the student to learn the content of the lesson, to achieve the objectives of the lesson. The low achieving student can become literate through skill-based activities like phonics, vocabulary development, drill and practice. This controlled and predictable classroom social setting meets the special needs of low achieving students. Students can be grouped within the classroom according to their needs at a particular time. The best instruction, however, is whole class instruction (Good & Grouws, 1977; Rosenshine, 1983). The mechanistic-based models supporters conclude that by carefully guiding the students' learning over small plots of information and providing timely feedback on learning activities, skills-based models work (Brophy, 1988). Students learn the content of the lesson.

Contextualists, on the other hand, question the impact of the narrowly defined social context for learning that mechanistic perspective promotes. From the contextualistic perspective, the interactions between and among students and teachers determines the content of the lesson (Vygotsky, 1934/1986). The content and the lesson itself emerges out of a mediation and negotiation process between student and teacher. Learning occurs through the interactions among the participants. Dialogue, discussion and interactions are vital for learning (Englert & Palincsar, 1991). Supporters of more contextualistic methods question the learning goals and the long term effectiveness of mechanistic-based models, especially for low achieving students (Arter & Jenkins, 1979; Heap, 1985; Palincsar & Brown, 1986; Cuban, 1988; Moll, 1991). Low

achieving, at risk students need to know the often subtle and complex processes underlying effective learning not the isolated, easily forgotten fact or the out of context skill. These underlying processes can only be learned through social interaction, through attention to the quality of interactions in the classroom. Low achieving students should be grouped with higher achieving students to facilitate dialogue, discussion and collaborative problem solving. The more contextualistically-based methods help the low achieving student build a solid foundation of learning strategies and conceptual knowledge through collaboration with others. Students learn from one another. This solid foundation is the key to improved comprehension and the development of literacy. Appendix A summarizes each of these perspectives across the four dimensions. Summary of two perspectives.

Mechanistic-based models of instruction like direct instruction have been the dominant model in classrooms for many years (Durkin, 1978-79). The key assumption of the mechanistic-based models is that children learn best when the teacher directs the learning of well-practiced pieces of information through classroom recitation (Rosenshine, 1983; Brophy, 1988). Supporters of mechanistic-type methods argue that they are the most efficient way to teach.

Mechanistic, skills-based literacy instruction models like direct instruction have come under criticism for reflecting a reductionist view of teaching and learning. Teaching is criticized as more conducive to a well-managed but uninteresting and unchallenging classroom rather than a literate, intellectual

community (Cuban, 1988; Poplin, 1988a, 1988b; Moll, 1991). To the critics, this type of instruction leads to the imposition of information rather than the construction of meaningful information (Cobb, 1988). In addition, others have criticized the mechanistic model for merely helping students exercise already developed skills, such as finding the main idea, rather than helping students attain analytical skills associated with higher-order thinking (Arter & Jenkins, 1979; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1989).

Others argue that the contextualistic perspective remedies some of the problems associated with mechanistic perspective (Gavelek & Palincsar, 1988; Heshusius, 1991, 1992; Marshall, 1992). The key assumption of the contextualistic model of teaching and learning is that children learn best when teacher and student construct knowledge together through dialogue over meaningful content (Vygotsky, 1934/ 1986; Cobb, 1988). The teachers' role is to plan instruction so that students have the opportunity to develop broad conceptual understandings. Students learn from each other as well as the teacher. Ideally, learning becomes a social construction of negotiated meanings (Brufee, 1987). Critics of contextualistic methods argue that methods based on the contextualistic perspective limit the successful learning of at risk child and can lead to insecurities because the student does not know what is expected of her or him (Brophy & Good, 1986). The methods informed by the mechanistic perspective, on the other hand, allows all students to learn some things very well. The skills-based, mechanistic perspective provides the foundation for higher-order

problem solving (Brophy, 1988). Both mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives describe different ways of helping students become literate. For the mechanistic perspective, the teacher has a greater control over the knowledge learned as well as the methods by which it is learned. The learning outcomes tend to be simple processes and skills that can be easily measured. Students learn that which can be easily measured and observed. As the argument goes, supporters of the mechanistic perspective would assume that students need to learn exactly what the curriculum states. There is no room for student choice over what should be learned.

For the contextualistic perspective, the teacher has less control over exactly what students learn. The teacher may mediate and negotiate what students learn with students themselves. The teacher and students together are engaged in constructing meaningful and authentic dialogue about topics of concern to the students. Students are involved in more cognitively complex problem-solving activities.

Many instructional programs offered to teachers would have components that would be consonant with only one or the other of these perspectives. Staff developers who seek to change teachers' practice must attend to teachers' beliefs and knowledge that underlie that practice. In the next section, results on teachers' beliefs about teaching and literacy instruction are reviewed. In the conclusion to the literature review, this literature is related to staff development efforts that are based on the two perspectives.

The teachers' beliefs and knowledge about literacy instruction

The teacher organizes, plans and directs classroom activities. Even though the teacher may feel constrained by the district curriculum, how the curriculum is enacted, which parts of the curriculum are stressed and where the class deviates from the curriculum is largely determined by the teacher. Behind classroom events are teacher decisions based on what teachers believe and know about teaching and learning. While the relationship between teacher beliefs/knowledge and teacher practice is not exact, insight into teachers' thinking illuminates some of the issues and concerns that teachers have when instructing. In this study, we are concerned especially with the beliefs and knowledge that shape literacy instructional practices in urban settings.

Some would say, "Isn't it more important to study what teachers do in classrooms than what teachers believe and know? After all, what affects student learning is what teachers do, not what they believe?" There are several reasons to study what teachers believe and know about literacy teaching and learning, each of which is discussed in this section of the literature review. First of all, teacher beliefs and knowledge contribute to practice which in turn affects student learning. Second, suggested changes and innovations in classroom practices are mediated by teacher beliefs. Any improvements of practice are built upon the foundation of current teacher beliefs and knowledge.

This study rose out of an enduring problem, the literacy underachievement of many, urban at risk children. It is assumed that more knowledge of all factors including teacher beliefs and

knowledge might improve the education of the at risk child. And that is the ultimate goal of the study- to gather some information about what urban teachers believe and know which could then be used to impact current urban literacy instruction. Armed with the knowledge about urban teacher beliefs and knowledge, staff developers' and teacher educators' can converse and communicate better with those same teachers building rapport which increases respect and understanding among the teachers.

Teacher beliefs and knowledge in relation to teacher practices.

The relationship between what teachers believe and know and what teachers do in classrooms is not exact. However, research on teacher thinking has established that teacher practices are substantially influenced by what teachers think and their thinking is grounded in their assumptions and beliefs (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Clark & Yinger, 1987; Richardson, Anders, Tidwell & Lloyd, 1991; Driscoll, 1992). Teacher beliefs have also been related directly to what students learn (Kagan, 1990; Purcell-Gates & Dahl, 1991).

For example, in a year-long interview-observational study, Bussis, Chittenden & Amarel (1976) interviewed and observed 60 teachers regarding the use of children as resources for instruction. Teachers' beliefs ranged from those who viewed children as primary resources for instruction to teachers who reported that children have deficits that teachers needed to remediate and, therefore, were not resources for instruction. The variability in teacher's theories about children's knowledge played itself out in teachers' instructional practices. Teachers who regarded children as sources of knowledge engaged in more inquiry teaching and dialogue with

their classes. Teachers who regarded their children as lacking knowledge and needing to be remediated engaged in more direct instruction in skills and strategies. The teachers' classroom practices were a mirror of their beliefs about children's knowledge contribution to the ongoing flow of classroom activities.

Teacher's beliefs and knowledge about teacher control show up in teacher practices and are related to student attitudes. In the Socialization Outcomes project from classroom observations (Anderson, Stevens, Prawat & Nickerson, 1988), researchers found that those teachers who believed more in student autonomy also seemed to create a social context which fostered self-regulation and positive independence whereas those who believed more in teacher control created a more dependent and controlling atmosphere. There was a correlational relationship between teacher beliefs about the need for the teacher to control events in the classroom and student perceptions of control over their own learning (Stevens & Anderson, 1987).

The relationship between affective outcomes and teacher beliefs about control demonstrates the many different ways that teacher beliefs impact classroom practices. Deci, Schwartz, Sheinman & Ryan (1981) found a relationship between teacher control and student intrinsic motivation. When teachers were focused on increasing student autonomy in the classroom, their students developed more intrinsic motivation toward learning. Some have suggested that classrooms need to foster a central affective goal of internalization and integration of values which

support learning that can lead to cognitive outcomes (Ryan, Connell & Deci, 1985).

Previous work has shown that teacher beliefs and knowledge about a specific subject matter are associated with teacher practices in that specific subject matter. Research on the relationship between teacher beliefs and knowledge and teacher practices in mathematics (Peterson, Fennema, Carpenter, & Loef, 1989), in science (Neale & Smith, 1989; Smith & Neale, 1989) and in reading (Harste & Burke, 1977; Gove, 1983; Johnson & Duffy, 1986; Johnson, 1988) has indicated that teacher's preconceived notions of subject matter influence teacher practice.

Research shows that teachers hold implicit theories about how students should learn to read and often behave in ways which validate these beliefs (Harste & Burke, 1977; Gove, 1983). Teachers who support a more mechanistic perspective of reading instruction, focusing on phonics and vocabulary, tend to also behave in ways that reinforce that students need to decode before they can comprehend. Through classroom observations, Deford (1985) in her validation of the instrument Theoretical Orientation toward Reading (TORP) found that teachers who scored higher on the phonics-based orientation toward reading on the TORP actually had more phonics activities in their classes and, similarly, teachers who scored higher on the holistic end of the TORP had more activities related to reading books and writing.

Literacy learning in particular may be susceptible to teacher beliefs and knowledge, precisely because literacy is a social phenomena and social tool. It is developed within social settings.

Teacher beliefs inform the decisions they make which, in turn, affect that social setting. Dahl (1989) found that what children experience in classrooms becomes how the children view literacy. We know that the conception of literacy that children hold affects childrens' reading success (Purcell-Gates & Dahl, 1991). Children who view learning to read as the problem of making sense out text are more successful readers and writers in school. Conversely, children who view learning to read as the sounding out of words, who view learning to write as spelling correctly, capitalizing and making complete sentences are not as successful readers and writers in school (Smith, 1977; Dyson, 1982; Dahl, 1989; May, 1991). Teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy teaching and learning then may ultimately affect the classroom literacy practices which, in turn, affect how children become literate.

Studies of teacher beliefs and knowledge in urban settings with at risk children are few. Why might urban teachers' beliefs about instruction be different from teacher beliefs in other settings? For one thing, there is a concentration of children in urban settings who are at risk for school failure. The specialness of the population and the challenges of the setting may impact how teachers think about helping the children become literate participants in the society. Previous research on teacher beliefs and knowledge did not address the issues of the impact of the setting and the children on teachers' thinking and practice. The assumption seems to be that the social context of instruction is neutral or at least less important than direct questions about instruction, learners and teachers' roles.

Teacher beliefs and knowledge in relation to teacher response to innovations.

Throughout this literature review, issues of changing instructional practice in urban schools have been addressed. In this section, several studies are reviewed in which changing instructional practice was the focus. Researchers asked teachers to implement a new teaching method or strategy or try out a new textbook. At the same time that the researchers observed the effect of the innovation on classroom practice and/or on student learning, they also measured teacher beliefs and knowledge about the innovation and teaching in general. These studies provide some insights into how teacher beliefs and knowledge mediate recommended innovations. In addition, some of the studies make the next step and measure how teacher beliefs get into practice and how that practice affects student learning.

Teacher willingness and receptivity to adopting and sustaining the use of a new thinking skills curriculum seem to be influenced by teacher's preconceived notions of student learning as well as the exigencies in the context. Four classroom teachers in an urban elementary school with an at risk student population participated in an ongoing staff development program over two months. The purpose of the staff development program was to provide support for the teachers as they implemented a thinking skills curriculum using cooperative groups. Observations in the four teachers classrooms indicated that, by the end of two months, all the teachers had made some changes in their classroom teaching to accommodate the new

curriculum and cooperative learning groups. However, one year later only one teacher had continued the changes. From the beginning of the project this teacher believed that cooperative learning strategies were an answer to other social problems she had in that context. The other three teachers did not continue with the curriculum and there were no vestiges of cooperative learning one year later. The booklets had been lost. It was just too much work and too noisy to rearrange the desks. From the beginning of the project these three teachers had not found a way to integrate and to transform their thinking to support the new methods. The new methods did not address any current problems that they had. In essence, the three teachers had layered the new practices onto their current methods and did not integrate them into their instructional repertoire. The one teacher who originally saw the new practices as a way to solve a current problem continued the practices one year later (Stevens, 1991). Although this study includes a small sample of teachers, it suggests that teacher beliefs about the context mediated continued use of new practices.

Teacher response to reciprocal teaching strategies was influenced by teachers' view of what students needed to know to be successful learners (Palincsar, Stevens & Gavelek, 1989). Primary level teachers participated in staff development activities designed to teach them how to use reciprocal teaching strategies with their students. The teachers were involved in listening comprehension activities. There have been many studies where reciprocal teaching has been shown to have a positive effect on student learning. Yet, in this staff development work the student learning gains were not

as encouraging. In a follow-up interview of the teachers, it was found that the teachers' implementation seemed to be limited because the beliefs that they teachers held were in contrast with the beliefs presented in the staff development activities. The teachers held mechanistic notions of how one learns to read and write. These were in direct contrast with the staff development efforts which focused on a more contextualistic, social constructivist model of student learning as represented in the staff development work through reciprocal teaching methods.

In a year long study of teacher implementation of mathematics initiative in California, Cohen and Ball (1990) found that the classroom practices were mediated by teacher beliefs about the nature of mathematics. The move to a practice which stressed "understanding, explanation, cooperative work and extended discourse with students was apprehended through the lens of older policies that stressed learning skills and facts, didactic teaching, individual work and highly focused recitation" (p. 252, Cohen & Ball, 1990). The result in classrooms was a curious blend of direct instruction and teaching for understanding (Ball, 1990).

Olson's (1981) analysis of teacher redefinition of a curricular reform in science illustrates once again how teachers redefine new ideas to meet the daily needs of practice. The teachers transformed the new science material into the more comfortable and familiar traditional form. Because of the propensity of teachers to transform curricula, this study raises questions about "the effectiveness, as instruments of change, of centralized curriculum

projects remote from the practical problems of schools" (p. 259, Olson, 1981).

Another study of mathematics teacher knowledge also indicates the role that teacher beliefs played in their implementation of newer mathematics practices, defined as Cognitively Guided Instruction (Peterson, Carpenter, Fennema & Loef, 1989). Researchers divided teachers into those who held a more or less cognitively oriented view of mathematics learning. Those who held the more cognitively oriented view handled new mathematics instructional ideas more easily and their students seemed to benefit. Those who held the less cognitively oriented position reinterpreted the changes in light of their more skills-based views. Teacher beliefs again mediated the new instructional practices presented in the research projects to the teachers.

In a study of the beliefs and knowledge of the treatment group teachers regarding writing instruction, Anderson, Englert, Raphael and Stevens (1991) found that, even among the treatment group teachers, there were differences in the effects of their treatment. There were effects on student learning for all the treatment teachers. Indeed, treatment students outperformed control group students. However, on some measures, there were differences in student performance within the classrooms of the treatment group itself. For the writing measures that were directly taught, the treatment students' performance did not differ by classroom. However, for those writing measures which were considered to be transfer measures, the teachers whose practice was more consistent with the constructivist-based treatment, had significant

effects on the transfer measures. The link between teacher beliefs was established through the interviews of the teachers. Those who espoused a more constructivist viewpoint at the beginning of the intervention implemented the program more consistently and had a wider range of effects on student learning.

Understanding how teachers mediate recommended innovations may be compounded when teachers are dealing with an at risk population. The teachers themselves may be adjusting their instruction to this challenging situation. Even district supported reforms can be interpreted and adjusted according to interpretations of the needs within the urban social context. Wilcox (1989) made a year-long study of a staff developer who was attempting to reform mathematics instruction in a large, urban school district. The mathematics reforms were more progressive than current practices. The reforms encompassed suggestions that teachers use manipulatives and focus their teaching on conceptual frameworks. This model was more constructivist and contextualist than current district models of mathematics instruction. The staff developer reinterpreted the mathematics reform frameworks into a more mechanistic model. The staff developer noted that these ideas had to be adapted across the district. She felt that in this urban district, it was necessary to simplify the reform efforts because of the large population of schools she was dealing with. In addition, she knew that the school population was mobile with as many as one-third of the population in one school moving elsewhere within the district within one year. It was important for there to be articulation of curriculum across the schools. That meant that

teachers needed to be teaching the same topics across the district at the same time. Attempts to reform mathematics instruction to a more progressive model ran into a staff developer who believed that coverage of the topics was more important than flexibility and adaptability that is implied in a thinking skills curriculum. These reform attempts were stifled by the staff developers interpretation of the needs of the at risk urban population.

Staff development programs which suggest changes in practice which are more compatible with what the teacher already knows are implemented more easily. Those changes in practice which seem foreign to the teacher are reinterpreted in the teachers' existing framework and, even though they may look like new practices, they are not and as time passes, teachers tend to revert to the old ways. Therefore, any attempts to change classroom practices should be informed by what teachers already know and how they perceive the children and the community in which they are teaching.

Summary of teacher beliefs and knowledge research.

In sum, understanding teacher beliefs and knowledge is important because what teachers do in classrooms is mediated by what teachers believe. If we can know a teacher's reasons, rationales, beliefs and knowledge, staff developers are more likely to communicate with teachers and to tailor the messages of their programs more precisely to teacher interests, motivations and needs.

Schools are expected to help students become literate participants in the larger society. At the very least schools should teach students how to read and write well enough to basically

communicate with others. At the very most schools should teach students how to read and write well enough to be successful participants and contributors to the larger society. With increasing poverty and associated crime and violence, urban schools, in particular, face greater and greater challenges in meeting these societal expectations. It seems obvious that one solution to the continuing problem of urban children's underachievement is to improve classroom instruction (Garcia & Pearson, 1991; Knapp & Needels, 1991; Moll, 1991). Some suggestions for change in classroom instruction for at risk children would include a challenging and stimulating curriculum, taught at a faster pace to maintain interest and motivation. The person who teaches this new curriculum, obviously, is the classroom teacher. Anything new that happens in classrooms education is mediated every day by the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher is central to any change efforts (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978). Thus, if we expect change in the instruction of at risk children, we need to understand and work with the teachers themselves and find out how they are interpreting the task of educating the at risk child.

What teachers think about teaching children to read and write in the urban school may illuminate some of the issues that are central in changing urban classroom instruction. Wisdom dictates that assessment of what is precedes an analysis of what is possible to change. Comparing what teachers believe and know with mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives will help us hammer out sensible and sensitive classroom restructuring efforts. Including the social and neighborhood context of the urban school in

a study of teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy instruction gives us a chance to account for the influence and the role that the unique urban setting can play in creating a foundation for teacher beliefs. Knowing how teachers view what happens in their classrooms in relation to the urban setting will help us communicate better with urban teachers.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

This chapter describes the research methods used in the study. Data were gathered from seventeen teachers in one urban elementary school on their beliefs and knowledge about literacy teaching and learning. Teachers' beliefs and knowledge were examined using four dimensions of literacy teaching and learning: 1.) content, 2.) teacher instructional role, 3.) student learner role, and 4.) context (derived from Schwab, 1978; Anderson, 1989; Hewson & Hewson, 1989). Three sets of instruments were used to investigate teachers' beliefs and knowledge. One set of instruments was subject to quantitative analysis, whereas the other two sets of instruments were subject to qualitative analysis. The results of the data analysis provided a description and explanation of teachers' views regarding literacy teaching and learning across the four dimensions. In addition, teacher views were compared to two perspectives on teaching and learning: mechanistic and contextualistic (Heshusius, 1991, 1992).

Teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy teaching and learning were examined using three different instruments. One set of data sources was (1) a survey of teacher's theoretical orientation toward reading (adapted from Deford, 1985), and (2) a survey of teacher's responses concerning student autonomy (Deci, Schwartz, Sheinman & Ryan, 1981). These measures provided quantitative data on content, teacher instructional role and student learner role, that is, three of four literacy dimensions. The two measures did not provide data on context, the fourth dimension. On the other hand, the other set of data sources were teacher interviews- a

series of structured, open-ended individual interview questions with probes designed to extend and elaborate responses. The interviews provided qualitative data on all four dimensions of teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy instruction.

There are two reasons for examining teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy teaching and learning using several measures and four dimensions. First, by using several instruments and analyzing over four dimensions one can tap teachers' beliefs about a broader range of practices that the teacher might see as contributing to literacy teaching and learning. Resnick (1990) defines literacy as "a set of cultural practices that people engage in around texts". Csikszentmihalyi (1990) echoes Resnick's broad definition of literacy by describing the foundation of literacy thus: Literacy presupposes the existence of a shared symbol system that mediates information between the individual's mind and external events. By extension, one becomes literate when one shares the symbol system with another and that sharing influences intellectual expression. Resnick and Csikszentmihalyi underscore the breadth and depth of experiences which influence literacy learning.

What teachers believe and know about literacy can influence instructional decisions in a variety of contexts across the school day. The data for the study were gathered from teachers using several instruments designed to ask teachers about literacy teaching and learning in several different ways. It is more likely we will capture the range of activities that are relevant to a teachers' conception of literacy instruction if we use a variety of instruments.

Second, using several measures increased the trustworthiness of the findings. Using several data sources to analyze the same phenomena is called triangulation of data (Kidder & Fine, 1987; Merriam, 1988; Ely, 1991). When the same phenomena are examined from two or more data sources, then, there can be more confidence that the description of the phenomena under investigation is reliable. Whether the descriptions are consistent with each other or incongruent, using several sources allows us to paint a richer, fuller and more reliable picture of the construct. Both congruencies and incongruencies can be explored and examined.

In sum, there were two reasons for using several methods to describe teachers' views of literacy teaching and learning. One reason is related to the nature of literacy itself. Using several instruments tapped teachers' conceptions of literacy instruction. The second reason for using several methods was trustworthiness of the results. Confidence and trust in the descriptions of literacy teaching and learning can be increased through triangulation of the data. Both sets of measures gave us information about what teachers' believed about the content, the teachers' role and the students' role in literacy teaching and learning. The structured interview added additional descriptions of the context of instruction. Gathering data on these dimensions with several instruments helped us build a detailed and reliable description of literacy instruction.

Methods

There were three parts to the study.

Research questions and methods for Parts 1, 2 and 3 of study.

Part 1. Research question and methods. What are teachers' beliefs and knowledge about three dimensions of literacy teaching and learning: content, teacher instructional role and student learner role? Subjects were 17 volunteer teachers in an urban elementary school.(Demographics, Appendix B) Instrument used were group administration of (1) Modified Theoretical Orientation Toward Reading (M-TORP, derived from Deford, 1985, Appendix B; M-TORP, sorted by phonics-holistic items, Appendix G). and (2): Group administration of Student Autonomy-Teacher Control Scale (Deci, Schwartz, Sheinman & Ryan, 1981; Appendix C).

Part 2. Research Question and Methods.. What are teachers' beliefs and knowledge across four dimensions of literacy teaching and learning? How do the teachers' beliefs and knowledge relate to two perspectives on teaching and learning: mechanistic and contextualistic? Subjects were 13 volunteer teachers from the 17 teachers who participated in Part 1 of the study. The researcher conducted hour-long individual structured interviews with each volunteer teacher (Appendix D)

Part 3. Research Questions and Methods. What are the similarities and differences in beliefs and knowledge about literacy instruction between two teachers whose scores on the modified theoretical orientation toward reading measure (M-TORP) seem to represent different orientations- mechanistic and contextualistic? Subjects were 2 volunteer teachers from the 13 who participated in Part 2. These two were selected based on their scores from Part 1 instruments and other criteria. Observe teachers in classrooms to select literacy practices for discussion in the structured interview.

Conduct individual structured interview with each focal teacher.
Create a list of questions from the classroom observations for one section of the final interview. (Appendix E)

Sample.

For Part 1 and 2 of the study, the researcher solicited volunteers at a staff meeting at an urban elementary school in a large midwestern city. After an explanation of the participants' rights of voluntary consent and withdrawal, seventeen full-time, certified teachers volunteered for the study and signed permission slips (Appendix F). The teachers were assured that throughout the study and throughout the reporting of the study pseudonyms would be used for the school name, location and staff names. Anonymity was guaranteed.

The school had two to three teachers per grade level from preschool to sixth grade with a total of twenty-two full-time, certified elementary teachers. Except for the third grade, the final sample included at least one teacher at each grade level. In the school, 71% of the full-time certified classroom teachers were African-American. Seventy-seven percent of the teachers who volunteered for the study were African-American. The average number of years that the 17 teachers in the sample had been at the school was 14.67 years; the range of experience for this group was 4 to 27 years. The average number of years that the teachers had been teaching both at the school and at other schools was 18.29 years; the range of total classroom teaching experience for the volunteer group was 4 to 30 years. Eight of the seventeen teachers in the sample had been at Washington Elementary School for over 20 years. The number

of years of teaching experience overall and the number of years of teaching experience at Washington were the data used from the demographic survey. The other data on the survey were not used because over half the teachers did not finish filling out the form (Appendix B).

The design of Part 3 of the study required the selection of two teachers. The selection of the teachers followed Goetz and LeCompte's (1984) criterion-based sampling or Chein's (1981) purposive sampling. By selecting two teachers who contrast on the continuum of theoretical orientation toward reading (derived from Deford, 1985), the researcher sought to describe in depth "the variety of elements available in this population" not to generalize to a larger population (Chein, 1981, p. 440). The reason for the using the sample of two teachers is that the teachers' scores on the M-TORP seemed to represent two different theoretical orientations toward literacy teaching and learning- mechanistic and contextualistic. Mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives on teaching and learning are two different points on a continuum of possibilities for classroom instruction. Two in-depth interviews, one to a teacher who scored high on mechanistic orientation and the other to a teacher who scored high on a contextualist orientation, provided a sample from which we could build two contrasting cases descriptions of urban literacy instruction.

Selection of the sample was nonrandom during the three parts of data collection. This presents problems of generalizability of the results to other urban teachers and schools. Because the researcher studied only one school, the results from the study will not be

generalizable to urban teachers or urban schools. The goal was to document carefully teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy instruction at one urban elementary school. However, there is no reason to believe that this school is atypical within the district in reference to literacy instruction. There is no evidence that this school would be much different from other urban schools with high populations of at risk children. There are 167 elementary schools in the district. The reading sections of the California Achievement Test places the subject school in the lower third of the district schools. There are large American cities who have a number of schools with a majority of at risk students. The findings of this study might help those seeking to improve literacy instruction understand more about the contextual constraints and opportunities that teachers face in urban schools with at risk populations.

Setting.

The site for the study was one urban elementary school, Washington Elementary (a pseudonym), in a large Midwestern city. Washington Elementary shared some similarities with other elementary schools in the district. The school qualified as a Chapter 1 school along with all of the 167 elementary schools in the district except for three schools. Being a Chapter 1 school meant that the families of the vast majority of students at the school qualify as having incomes at or below the federal poverty line. The school had the highest number of free lunches in the district's elementary schools. Two years ago the principal and staff created modified-tracked classrooms so that teachers would have fewer reading groups. This meant that one classroom at each grade level had a majority of

students considered to be middle and high achieving in that grade level. However, a comparison of the mean classroom scores on the California Achievement Test at Washington Elementary indicated that there were only two classrooms where the majority of students were at or above grade level at the end of the year, kindergarten and first grade. Following those two years there was a declining trend of student scores at or above grade level with as low as 15% of the students at grade level in the fifth grade and 20% in the sixth grade at the end of the school year, 1990 (Stevens, 1990, September, field notes).

Out of over 600 students at the elementary school, 98% were African-American. According to the principal approximately one-third of the children moved into or out of the school in any one year. Twelve out of 20 houses three blocks either side of the street in front of the school were burned-out and boarded up. All that remained of the houses were exterior walls and, in some cases, the walls and the roof. Due to a history of frequent absences, an important goal for the administration of the school was to get the children to come to school. Therefore, from Chapter 1 money the principal had hired a full-time truant officer to visit homes, get the children to attend the school as well as keep the staff informed about the home situation. Attendance at the time of the study was up to 95% daily.

There are several reasons for doing the study in one school. First of all, teachers at one school share similar experiences and are working under the same constraints. Doing this study at one school, meant that several within-school variables were considered constant;

for example, the neighborhood, the staff development programs, the curriculum, the principal, access to resources, school preparation time and the student group characteristics. Differences in these within-school variables can influence literacy instruction. For example, principals play a key role in helping teachers develop and in making resources available to teachers. Since teachers at one school share the same principal, other variables which might be relevant to literacy teaching and learning could be contrasted. Knowing that the teachers share a common experience in some areas allowed the researcher to contrast teachers along other theoretical dimensions. In the study, it was assumed that teacher differences cannot be attributed to differences in resources, curricula, preparation time and parental involvement. It was assumed that teachers at one school have access to the same resources, curricula, preparation time and parental support; at the school level the constraints of resources, curricula, preparation time, and parental involvement affect literacy instruction (Durkin, 1978-79). If we know that some school variables which might interact with literacy beliefs were constant, variance of teacher beliefs and knowledge about content, teacher instructional role, student learner role and the social context would show up more clearly.

A second reason for studying one urban school was the similarity of the students' background experience. As determined by the percentage of students who have free lunch and the percentage of parents who receive AFCD, students at this school share a remarkably similar economic situation. The whole school qualifies for Chapter 1 special funding. Having a similar economic experience, students may

be exposed to similar experiences which influence the development of literacy. Knowing that there is some consistency in the children's neighborhood context helped to focus the research on how teachers may think similarly or differently about the effects of the neighborhood context on literacy instruction.

Further, another advantage of studying one school was that staff development programs are often designed and presented to teachers as a group at a single school. Studying teachers' beliefs and knowledge about literacy teaching and learning at one school created a description of teacher views in that one context. Knowing the variance of teacher's beliefs and knowledge about literacy in one urban school could help staff developers address the teachers' needs in one urban school setting. After all, good instruction is based on knowledge of those being taught. At this point, there is very little research available that informs staff developers and teacher educators about urban teachers views of literacy teaching and learning in one school.

There are several reasons why Washington Elementary in particular was the school selected for the study. The researcher had access to this particular urban elementary school because of past staff development work at the school. Access means that the researcher did not have to call ahead of time to visit the school. Access meant the researcher could wander in and out of classrooms virtually unnoticed by teachers and students alike. Access meant the researcher put up bulletin boards in the hallway, ate lunch in the cafeteria and visited teachers in the faculty lounge. In addition, the teachers, the staff and the principal were generally available when

the researcher visited the school and seemed to converse easily and openly with the researcher. Access allowed the researcher to interview the teachers' about their beliefs and knowledge regarding literacy instruction in an open and nonjudgmental way.

The researcher gained this open and easy access to the school in several ways. First, over the year and a half prior to the study, the researcher worked at the school as a staff developer. The researcher was the only school-level staff developer who worked with the teachers during this period of time. During this time the researcher developed a rapport with the teachers. The teachers and students had never had a researcher in their school before. Most of the teachers had never even had peer observers or any kind of outside observers in their classrooms before the staff development efforts. Prior to the researcher's contact with the teachers, classroom observation by outsiders was considered a sign of trouble for the teacher in relation to administrative expectations. As a rule, classroom observation in the district only occurred when a teacher was in danger of going "UNSAT" (unsatisfactory). As the researcher gave classroom demonstrations and staff development workshops, the teachers gradually shared their concerns and opened up their classrooms to observations. It took several months before some of the teachers invited the researcher to observe them and to discuss pedagogical issues with them.

The sequence of staff development activities at the school began in the winter of 1989. At the request of the principal in March 1989, Dr. Annemarie Palincsar and the researcher provided an after-school seminar on Reciprocal Teaching (Palincsar & Brown, 1986).

Five teachers were willing to have demonstration lessons in their classrooms with their own children the next day. Over the next few months the researcher provided 25 demonstrations of reciprocal teaching in eight out of twenty-two classrooms throughout the school (Stevens, field notes, May 24, 1989). Only one teacher, however, decided to implement Reciprocal Teaching and invited feedback from the researcher after observation of the teacher's lesson.

The researcher continued to develop rapport with the teachers in subsequent staff development work during the summer of 1989 and fall of 1989. The researcher followed a collaborative model of staff development with the theme: "The methods that I am sharing with you at the staff development program have been researched in other settings. We are not sure how they will work in your setting. So let's try them out and talk about it."

For the summer 1989 workshop, the researcher changed the substantive focus of staff development from reciprocal teaching to cognitive strategy instruction, especially concept mapping in cooperative groups. This change was a response to the shortened staff development time a summer workshop could provide. The researcher gave five classroom demonstrations and provided a four-day summer workshop on concept mapping and cooperative learning. In the fall of 1989, the researcher conducted two after school, all-staff workshops on classroom implications of the Michigan definition of reading. In the winter of 1990, the researcher conducted a scaffolded staff development program with four teachers using a collaborative problem-solving curriculum in

collaborative student groups (Stevens, 1991). Over time more teachers allowed the researcher to observe and consult with them on their lessons using concept maps, cooperative grouping and a problem-solving curriculum. The rapport that the researcher established over the year and a half of staff development work made this subsequent interaction possible.

Having access to the school increased the validity of the interview responses. The validity of the interview responses depended on the researcher having a good rapport with the teachers. Teachers' self-reports during the interview of literacy practices are central to the study. Self-reports are susceptible to several negative influences which can call into question the reliability and validity of the findings. A major impediment which strains the validity of the interviewers' responses is the nature of the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. When a strained and untrusting relationship exists between the interviewer and interviewees, self-report data is highly suspect. Having good rapport with the teachers who were interviewed enabled the researcher to collect the information easily. The teachers did not seem to resent or resist being interviewed. Having good rapport also strengthened the reliability of the interview results. The study is strengthened precisely because the researcher had prior experience with the teachers in the urban setting.

Some may question that the teachers and the school could be so open and friendly so that the demand characteristics inherent in the interview process would also bias the results. Demand characteristics are the cues available to the subject regarding the

nature and expectations of the research (Borg & Gall, 1983). The interviewees, that is, the teachers, might want to please the researcher and give socially desirable responses to the questions asked. The researcher accounted for this problem in the interview by stating at the beginning of the interview that there was no right or wrong answer to the questions. In addition, in her staff development work the researcher was always consistent in her insistence that the new instructional ideas were something for the teachers to consider and to implement but the teachers would not be publicly evaluated or criticized. In fact, the researcher stressed that we know little about literacy instruction of at risk students. We know little about working with some of these new instructional methods in urban settings. The researcher and the teachers became collaborators investigating the suitability, success and appropriateness of new ideas in this urban setting. By taking a more collaborative stance in the staff development efforts and by telling teachers during the interview that there was no right or wrong answer to their responses, the demand characteristics in an interview were lessened.

The researchers' prior experience with this school may create another disadvantage to conducting a study at this site. Having background knowledge of the school and access to the classrooms could bias the researcher about literacy teaching and learning at the school. The researcher could be blind to some very interesting aspects of literacy teaching and learning at the school. Another person might be more neutral and, presumably, more objective. On the other hand, if a stranger to the teachers had conducted the study,

the teachers might have been suspicious and reluctant to let the person talk to them about their teaching. An unknown researcher might have caused more of an interruption in the school day which might have influenced teacher response to the interview questions. Teachers might have not been willing to give the time for interviews to an outside researcher nor allow observation of their lessons. In sum, having access to the teachers and the school enabled the researcher to gather data with minimal interruption to the school day and teachers' schedules. The rapport the researcher had with the teachers allowed them to express their beliefs and knowledge more openly.

The third advantage to the study of the researcher having prior experience with the teachers at the school is that the researcher was aware of some of the elements of the contextualist perspective to which the teachers had been exposed so that some questions in the interview could focus on these topics (Stevens, 1991). Impetus for the staff development work originally came from the principal who was interested in improving reading instruction at the school and was concerned about how his students performed on the statewide standardized educational test. The staff development programs conducted at the school emphasized methods and activities based on the contextualist perspective. At each staff development session, the new 1986 Michigan definition of reading was presented as a rationale for the program and as a foundation for the new focus in reading instruction that was presented to the teachers. The Michigan definition of reading is considered to be more congruent

with the contextualist perspective than with the mechanistic perspective. The definition states:

Reading is a process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among the reader's existing knowledge, the information suggested by the written language, and the context of the reading situation.

Because of the involvement with the staff development programs at the school, the researcher knew that the teachers were aware of some of the methods associated with the contextualist perspective. The teachers had some opportunity to implement these activities on their own. Some of the teachers may have internalized some of the instructional activities demonstrated in their classrooms and in the staff development efforts. However, even if some of the teachers seem to have beliefs and knowledge that may be labeled contextualist, those beliefs and knowledge cannot be attributed to the staff development programs because no pre-staff development data were collected. However, questions in the structured interview could be used to elicit teacher knowledge about the more contextualist instructional strategies.

All teachers attended at least four of the staff development programs. The various topics of the staff development sessions were: reciprocal teaching; concept mapping and cooperative grouping; classroom implications of the Michigan definition of reading; and collaborative learning using a special problem-solving curriculum (Stevens, 1991). The whole staff attended the program on Reciprocal Teaching in January 1989. Following the program on reciprocal teaching, eight teachers allowed the researcher to

demonstrate reciprocal teaching in their classrooms over four days in the next two months in 1989 (Stevens, field notes, May 26, 1989). A subset of 12 teachers attended four days of summer workshops on concept mapping in cooperative groups in 1989 (Stevens, field notes, July 26, 1989). The whole staff attended the half-day workshops on implications of the Michigan definition of reading in the Fall of 1989 (Stevens, field notes, September 24, 1989). Four volunteer teachers worked with the researcher in January and February 1990 using a problem-solving curriculum in their classrooms with collaborative groups (Stevens, 1991).

Instruments.

There were four different instruments used to gather data. During Part 1, at the introductory meeting, after providing some demographic information (Appendix A) all volunteer teachers at the school took two group measures: a Likert-type measure on teacher's orientation toward reading instruction (M-TORP, Appendix B); and a measure of student autonomy (Deci et al. 1981, Appendix C). During Part 2, the researcher used the third instrument, a structured interview on literacy beliefs and knowledge (Appendix D). During Part 3, the researcher used another structured interview with the two focus teachers (Appendix E). The interview for focal teachers selected for Part 3 consisted of two parts: in one part the questions were based on critical classroom incidents observed in the teachers' classroom which were related to literacy learning, and in the second part the questions were related to literacy teaching and learning in general. Appendix E also includes the list of questions for each

focal teacher based on the observed lesson. Appendix F is the permission slip that the teachers signed to participate in the study.

Instruments. Part 1: Group measures- M-TORP. Student Autonomy Scale. In Part 1, seventeen teachers completed two written instruments: (1) a modified version of the Theoretical Orientation toward Reading originally designed by Deford (1985), herein referred to as M-TORP; and (2) the Student Autonomy Scale (Deci, Schwartz, Sheinman, & Ryan, 1981). The purpose of the first instrument, the M-TORP, was to measure teacher beliefs and knowledge about the content dimension of literacy instruction. The purpose of the second instrument, the Student Autonomy Scale, was to measure teacher beliefs and knowledge about the teacher instructional role and the student learner role, that is, the second and third dimensions of literacy instruction.

The demographic survey (Appendix B) was used to gather information to be used to describe the teacher sample. The demographic survey focused on years of experience, grade levels taught, type of curriculum used in teaching reading and writing (basal, trade books, language arts books), and typical types of writing/reading experiences the students have in the teachers' classroom.

The M-TORP (Appendix B) measured teacher's theoretical orientation toward reading on a Likert-type scale in two categories: phonics and holistic. With expert advice, the phonics and word strategy items of the TORP (Deford, 1985) were grouped into a "phonics" category and the whole language items of the TORP and newly-created contextualist items were grouped into an "holistic"

category. The 36-item M-TORP measured the teachers' theoretical orientation toward content, i.e., teaching goals and instructional methods, the first dimension of literacy teaching and learning. A summary contrast score was created by subtracting the phonics score from the holistic score. Teachers were then ranked according to their score on the summary contrast scale. The higher (more positive) score on the summary contrast scale indicated a stronger preference toward holistic reading goals and methods; conversely, the lower (more negative) the score on the summary contrast scale indicated a stronger preference toward a phonics orientation in reading goals and methods. Those teachers whose scores were at a higher rank on the summary scale were considered to hold ideas that were more congruent with the contextualist perspective. Whereas those whose scores were at a lower rank on the summary scale were considered to hold ideas that were more congruent with the mechanistic orientation.

The M-TORP was based on the original TORP (Deford, 1985), Theoretical Orientation toward Reading Profile. The TORP (Deford, 1985) was a measure which summarized teacher's orientation toward reading instruction. Teachers indicated the degree to which they agree/disagree with statements related to reading orientation. This instrument used a Likert 5-point scale response system to 28 items to determine teacher beliefs about practices in reading instruction. The scores derived from the TORP indicated teacher's preferred style of reading instruction from phonics-based orientation through a skills-orientation to a more whole language orientation. In the process of validating the TORP, Deford found that

the phonics and whole language groups were separated by the greatest scoring differences with the skills-orientation scores exhibiting the greatest variance in total score. The original TORP had 28 items which were divided into three categories: phonics, strategy (word), whole language. The reliability of the original TORP was .98.

For the study, eight items were added to the TORP to represent the contextualist perspective. These eight items were suggested by several reading experts (including Palinscar and Englert, personal correspondence, April, 1991). These items were intermingled with the other items when the modified version of the TORP, the M-TORP was created for the study.

The second instrument, the Student Autonomy Scale (Appendix C), was designed to measure teacher responses to eight vignettes. Each vignette described a situation to which an adult could make a response to a child about an appropriate behavior. Appendix C contains the Student Autonomy Scale. There were four subscales in the Student Autonomy Scale: highly controlling, moderately controlling, moderately autonomous and highly autonomous. In the Deci et al. (1981) research, split half reliabilities were calculated for each of the four subscales of the Student Autonomy scale. The values of Cronbach's alpha for standardized scores for the four subscales, respectively, were .73, .71, .63 and .80. The four subscales were designed to measure points along a continuum extending from an orientation toward teacher control to an orientation toward student autonomy.

The Student Autonomy Scale provided information on teacher beliefs and knowledge about the second and third dimensions of classroom practice: teacher instructional role and student learner role. The mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives seem to differ in conception of the roles teacher and student play in learning. The mechanistic perspective is more consistent with a view that the teacher as the initiator and decision maker in classroom instruction. The mechanistic perspective seems to be consonant with the idea that the student role is to master teacher-guided, teacher-determined outcomes. Thus, it is assumed that the teacher here would want to be in control of events and outcomes in the classroom and would not allow students much opportunity to make their own decisions. Teachers who scored low on the Student Autonomy Scale were considered to hold views more congruent with the mechanistic orientation. The contextualistic perspective, on the other hand, is more consistent with a view that students should have more voice in their own learning and develop more autonomy over their own learning outcomes (Heshusius, 1991, 1992). Thus, it is assumed that the teacher who appears to be more contextualistic would value the student voice in classroom decision making and would promote student self-regulation and independence from the teacher. Teachers who scored high on the student autonomy scale, therefore, were considered to hold views more congruent with the contextualist orientation. The Student Autonomy Scale was scored according to guidelines developed by its creators (Deci, Schwartz, Sheinan, & Ryan, 1981).

Instruments. Part 2 and Part 3: Structured individual interviews. The structured open-ended interviews in Part 2 and Part 3 are considered more qualitative data sources. The type of qualitative research with open-ended questions used in the study can be distinguished from the more traditional qualitative research. Kidder and Fine (1987) refer to the structured open-ended interview as qualitative with a small *q* compared to the more traditional qualitative work with a big *Q* represented by ethnographies and participant observations. In interviewing there is ample opportunity to probe for clarification and to ask questions appropriate to the respondents' knowledge, involvement and status (Merriam, 1988). The interview also provides for "continuous assessment and evaluation of information by the inquirer, allowing him to redirect, probe and summarize" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p.187). However, the questions for the interview used in the study were derived from the literature review and previous work by the researcher. If the study had been more ethnographic, that is, qualitative with a large *Q*, then, the questions would have arisen more out of the context in which they were asked. In the interview used in the study, the researcher asked her own set of questions which did not necessarily arise from having prior contact at the school. The questions were chosen to gather data on the four dimensions of the study used to define literacy teaching and learning.

There are several reasons why an interview was a good method for eliciting teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy instruction. The format of an open-ended structured interview allowed teachers to express the reasons behind the instructional

decisions they make. Interview data in general provides information that cannot be directly observed. Patton (1980) states: "We want to find out what is in and on someone else's mind.... We cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions.... We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world-we have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective" (p.196). Thus, one way to find out what teachers believe and know about literacy instruction was to ask them in an interview.

An interview illuminated the decisions that teachers make in the day-to-day operation of the classroom. According to Schwab (1978) teachers are confronted continually with situations wherein they must make practical decisions: What knowledge should be included in the curriculum; why; how it should be taught and to whom? Schwab stressed that educational decisions are always made for concrete classroom situations, for real schools, and for ever-changing contexts. An interview was an excellent way to get the teachers to reflect on the decisions behind the scenes, so to speak, to listen to the kind of knowledge that teachers used to make decisions in the complex, multidimensional classroom.

Certainly, an interview suffers from the issues related to self-reporting. Teachers may say one thing and do another. What they say may not represent what they actually do in the classroom. However, as Clark and Peterson (1986) stated asking teachers what they think about what they do is a good place to begin. Teachers' actions are informed by something. Asking about their beliefs and

knowledge opened the door to what particulars in the situation the teachers noticed and what may have had a strong influence on their actions in the classroom.

The structured individual interview for Part 2 of the study had three sections, each of which was designed to elicit different aspects of teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy instruction through different formats (Appendix D). Section 1 of the structured individual interview (questions 1 to 7) contained a series of open-ended questions with probes centered on teacher views about the four dimensions of literacy teaching and learning- content, teacher role, student role, and the social context. Section 2 of the structured individual interview (question 8.1 to 8.3) contained a series of statements which reflected value-laden beliefs regarding instruction in the urban schools with economically disadvantaged African-American children. For example, this is question 8.1:

Some people have suggested that the economically disadvantaged African-American children in urban settings need direct, explicit instruction in reading and writing that focuses on phonics and vocabulary development. Only after teachers have provided this fundamental direct instruction, then, should the teacher consider other things like having students read literature or participate in cooperative groups. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?

In Section 3 of the Part 2 structured individual interview (Question 9), teachers read two hypothetical dialogues between teacher and students which represented two contrasting teaching methods used

to teach main idea comprehension of a paragraph of text. In both dialogues, the teaching objective was for students to comprehend and develop the main idea about the same piece of text. This is the text used in both dialogues:

My father can cook bacon and eggs real well. He can also bake cakes that taste wonderful. He cooks excellent popcorn and pizza. The thing he cooks best of all, however, is hamburgers-barbecued on the grill.

Even though the text was the same, the way the teacher interacted with the students in helping them to develop the main idea was different. Dialogue 1 for the more contextualist lesson was patterned after a social constructivist dialogue in Tharp and Gallimore (1988) whereas Dialogue 2 for the mechanistic perspective was patterned after Baumann's direct instruction lesson (1986). Dialogue 1 describes a more contextualist-type interaction between teacher and students; Dialogue 2 describes a more mechanistic-type interaction between teacher and students. Both dialogues were read by experts to assess their face validity (personal communication with Palincsar, Englert, April 1991) as representative of the respective viewpoints. Interview respondents read the dialogues and answered three questions about the relative value of each dialogue in teaching students how to read and comprehend.

The final interview protocol used in Part 3 with the two focal teachers was designed to elicit in-depth reflections of the two focal teachers on their views of literacy instruction (Appendix E). Since the selection of the focal teachers was limited to those who

volunteered in Part 2, the focal teachers had already been interviewed using the Part 2 structured individual interview.

For the selection of the two teachers for Part 3 of the study, the study was designed so that the scores on the M-TORP and the Student Autonomy Scale and several other factors would be used as part of the selection process. It was important to use several indicators of classroom practices in order to highlight the potential contrasts between these two teachers before the final observation and interview in Part 3. The factors used to identify the teachers were: the teachers' raw scores on the M-TORP and the Student Autonomy Scale, their ethnicity and the principal's perception on their classroom management ability.

The actual selection procedures for Part 3 were as follows. The first step was to calculate a single summary contrast score for each teacher from the Modified Theoretical Orientation toward Reading (M-TORP, derived from Deford, 1985). The 36 items in the M-TORP were divided into two subcategories- holistic and phonics. To calculate the single summary contrast score, the holistic subscore was subtracted from the phonics subscore. This created a scale where phonics positive scores were on one end of the scale and phonics negative scores were on the other. The summary contrast score was interpreted as follows: the more positive the M-TORP summary contrast score, the more the teacher was oriented toward phonics reading instruction whereas the more negative the summary contrast score, the more the teacher was oriented away from phonics instruction toward holistic-based reading instruction. The phonics orientation was considered to be more congruent with a mechanistic

perspective on literacy teaching and learning whereas the negative phonics, that is, more holistic-based orientation, was considered to be more congruent with a contextualistic perspective on literacy teaching and learning. From the fourteen out of seventeen teachers who completed the M-TORP, several teachers were identified whose scores contrasted so that they were on opposite ends of the M-TORP scale.

The second step in selecting the teachers for Part 3 was to rank all of the teachers' scores on the Student Autonomy Scale (Deci et al., 1981). Teachers' scores on this scale indicated their preference to control student learning versus to provide opportunities for students to become more autonomous and self-regulating. The second and third literacy dimensions were teacher instructional role and student learner role. The perspectives of mechanism and contextualism differ in the role the teacher and the student play in learning (Heshusius, 1991, 1992). Because the contextualistic perspective is more consistent with a view that the student role is to contribute to his/her own learning and to become an autonomous learner by determining many of his/her own learning outcomes, teachers who scored high on the Student Autonomy Scale were considered more congruent with the contextualist orientation. The mechanistic perspective is more consistent with a view that the teacher is the controller and initiator in classroom instruction. Because mechanistic perspective is more consistent with a view that the student role is to follow teacher-guided instruction and to master teacher-determined outcomes (Baumann, 1986; Brophy, 1988), teachers who scored low on the Student Autonomy Scale were

considered to be less congruent with the contextualist orientation and more congruent with the mechanistic orientation.

The Student Autonomy Scale assesses adults' orientations toward control versus autonomy with children. According to Cognitive Evaluation Theory the controlling aspect of the scale focuses on bringing about a particular behavioral outcome in children, whereas the informational aspect of the scale focuses on providing information to the child so that he or she can autonomously choose the best response. This suggests that if teachers are more concerned with control they are likely to be more mechanistic in their instructional orientation. Whereas, if teachers are more concerned with providing choice and encouraging student autonomy, then, they are likely to be more oriented toward a contextualistic orientation.

When the scores of the thirteen teachers who completed the Student Autonomy Scale were calculated, the two teachers initially identified in Step 1 from their scores on the M-TORP, were found to be at the same end of the Student Autonomy Scale. Both scored high on student autonomy. One other teacher scored low on student autonomy and was at the other extreme on the M-TORP; however, even though that would have been an interesting case to consider, that teacher was not selected for Part 3 of the study because this teacher lacked the requisite management abilities, which could confound the results. Thus, it was decided to select the two teachers who were on opposite ends of the M-TORP but who both scored high on student Autonomy. One advantage to this was that issues of student autonomy and teacher control would not confound the results. We

could not say the differences in the teachers' viewpoints about literacy were attributable to their views on student autonomy.

The third step in selecting the teachers for Part 3 of the study was to compare the teacher's scores on the two quantitative measures. In Step 1 and 2 the summary contrast score on the M-TORP and the Student Autonomy Scale score were used to identify the teachers. Both teachers selected had the highest raw scores on the Student Autonomy Scale, whereas on the M-TORP, one teacher, Teacher B, had the lowest summary contrast score (more mechanistic) and the other one, Teacher C, had one of the highest summary contrast scores (more contextualist). A further criteria for selection of the two teachers was that they were both African-American since the population at the school is largely African-American. If both teachers were African- American, then, the teacher's ethnicity would not confound the results. Therefore, both teachers selected through Step 1, 2 and 3 were African-American.

The final factor used for teacher selection was that both needed to be good classroom managers. Poor classroom management could confound the results. It was assumed that classroom management concerns could overshadow teachers' views about literacy teaching and learning. Therefore, the school principal was contacted and asked about the classroom management practices of two teachers selected from Steps 1,2 and 3. The Washington Elementary School principal considered both teachers identified from the previous steps to be good classroom managers (Stevens, field notes, May 9,1991). In sum, the two teachers selected for Part 3 contrasted on the perspectives of contextualism and mechanism as measured by the M-TORP in Part

1, shared a similar score on the Student Autonomy Scale, were African-American and were considered to be good classroom managers.

There were two sections to the Part 3 structured individual interview for the focal teachers. In both sections, the interviewer used a classroom observation of reading instruction to ask more direct questions about literacy instruction. In Section 1 of the Part 3 interview, the researcher developed a list of questions based on a single classroom observation of a reading lesson. The researcher referred directly to events observed in the classroom asking the teacher to explain her rationale behind the literacy events observed. This allowed the researcher to probe very specifically into classroom practices which seemed to shape students' literacy knowledge. In Section 2 of the Part 3 interview, the researcher asked more questions about the observed lesson but established how representative the lesson was in the teacher's practice.

The purpose of making classroom observations was to identify classroom examples to stimulate teachers' explanations of their beliefs and knowledge about literacy instruction. The development of Section 1 of the Part 3 structured interview based on the observations followed this pattern. The researcher observed one reading lesson in each of the focal teachers' classrooms. The researcher wrote an observational narrative of the observation and made an audiotape transcription of the reading lesson. The researcher then reviewed the notes and listened to the audiotape to identify teacher or student statements or behaviors which seemed critical to teaching students about comprehending text. Critical

incidents were those during which the teacher told students how to comprehend text, during which the teacher directed students to rethink or reread what they had read and during which the teacher asked a series of questions without giving an direct answer to the students.

In the Section 1 of the Part 3 structured teacher interview, the researcher asked 8 specific questions regarding observed critical incidents in the reading lesson (Appendix E). This is an example of the type of question the researcher asked the focal teacher based on the lesson observations:

During the reading lesson, there was a long student discussion on the meaning of the idiom "face as hard as stone". There were several student answers like "they all face different directions", "he never moved his face around". The students gave a number of different responses. After 5 or 6 students responded, one answered correctly. You let the students discuss this for several exchanges without giving them an answer. What reasons did you have for doing this?

In Section 2 of the focal teacher interview, the researcher asked more general questions about the lesson and its implications for helping students become literate. The type of questions asked in the Section 2 of the Part 3 structured individual interview were:

Although I observed the lesson and have a general idea of what it was about, I would like to hear in your own words how you would describe this lesson to someone.

What was it about?

What methods did you use?

How do you account for children's different responses to the lesson?

What did you want the children to learn?

Procedures

Schedule. A pilot interview of the Part 2 structured interview took place two weeks before the project started. The researcher interviewed two African-American teachers not in the selected school district. Following the interview, the researcher solicited the teachers' feedback on the appropriateness and clarity of the questions and the ease of answering the questions. Their feedback was incorporated into the final interview.

All the data for the study were gathered over a period of five weeks at the end of the school year. Doing the study at the end of the school year created some problems. The teacher observations and interviews had to be scheduled around assemblies, field trips and end of the year activities that occur in May and June. Even though this slowed down data collection, because of the rapport the researcher had with the teachers, all the interviews and observations were accomplished by the last day of school. The positive aspect of conducting the study at the end of the school year was that the teachers were acquainted with what they taught and accomplished in one school year in this complex urban setting. They had recent experience with literacy teaching and learning in this context.

Pilot of interview protocol for Part 2. Two African-American teachers from another suburban elementary school were interviewed with the draft interview protocol for Part 2 of the study two weeks prior to the initiation of

the project. Following the interview, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and asked the teachers for their comments about interview questions and method. Their comments were used to refine the questions for the final interview protocol used in Part 2.

Part 1: Day 1 at Washington Elementary School. All-school, after school staff meeting. Announcement of the project. Recruitment of volunteers. Signing of consent form. Administration of demographic survey, M-TORP, and the Student Autonomy Scale.

Part 2: Week 1, 2, 3, & 4: Distribution of interview protocol to all teacher volunteers to be read prior to the interview. All teachers indicated that they had read the interview prior to the actual interview. Individual interviews with teacher volunteers during school hours. Interviews conducted during school hours either during teacher preparation periods or when a building-level substitute could take over the classroom. Two teachers refused to have interviews audiotaped so the researcher wrote down the teacher responses. The researcher immediately wrote up their responses and returned to the teachers within the next week to check with the teachers about the accuracy of the researchers' notes. In all interviews the researcher took brief notes on the teacher responses. All other interviews were audiotaped and transcribed for analysis. Selection of two focal teachers for Part 3 of the study.

Part 3: Weeks 4 &5: Observation of one classroom reading lesson for each of two focal teachers. Interviews of each focal teacher using incidents from the classroom observations as springboard for specific and general questioning. The focal teacher interviews took place during noon hour and after school. Each observation and focal teacher interview was audiotaped. The researcher took narrative notes during the observation periods. In both classrooms the researcher was in the classroom for the observation from the beginning of the morning (8:30 a.m.) to mid-morning break (10:30 a.m.). The researcher kept a running log of classroom events and conversations. After the observation, the researcher listened to the audiotape to fill in the observational notes to have a narrative description of the major, teacher-directed events in the classroom. The researcher noted the text and materials used, academic and social conversations between teachers and students, what was on the chalkboards and bulletin board, and where activities took place. During the lesson, the researcher assigned numbers to the students according to their seats. No real student names were used in the recording of the observation.

Analysis of Results

Teacher responses to the two group measures and the individual structured interviews were analyzed to describe and explain teacher beliefs and knowledge. Analysis of the data involved the use of the four dimensions of literacy teaching and

learning and then, the collapsing of the four dimensions to write summaries of each teacher and summaries across the school. There were two types of summaries: one summary for each of the thirteen teachers interviewed in Part 2 and one overall summary of teacher beliefs and knowledge at Washington Elementary School. The steps used in analyzing the data and writing the summaries follow.

Analysis of Part 1 Data

The first step in data analysis required compilation of the data collected during Part 1 at the all-school staff meeting. During this first meeting, teachers filled in the demographic data sheet (Appendix A) and responded to two instruments: 1.) the Modified-Theoretical Orientation toward Reading (Appendix B); and 2.) the Student Autonomy Scale (Appendix C).

Analysis of Modified Theoretical Orientation toward Reading

Analysis of the Modified Theoretical Orientation toward Reading (M-TORP) followed the pattern used by Deford (1985) for the TORP. The original TORP had 28 statements which respondents rated on level of agreement using a 5-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The main difference between the TORP and the M-TORP was that the researcher added 8 items to the measure. These 8 items assessed a more contextualistic orientation toward reading instruction. The total number of items in the measure finally was 36. In the final M-TORP all items in all four sections were presented in random order. Appendix G lists the items in the M-TORP sorted by the four subsections.

Analysis of Student Autonomy Scale

The analysis of the Student Autonomy Scale followed the same pattern set up by the originators of the instrument. The directions for the Deci et al. (1981) Student Autonomy Scale included asking each respondent to read each of the eight vignettes and then rate each of the four possible responses to the vignette on a scale of 1 to 7. The respondent indicated how appropriate the response was in handling the situation described in the vignette. A response of 1 indicated that the response was highly inappropriate; a 4 indicated that the response was moderately appropriate and a 7 indicated that it was highly appropriate. Each vignette had 4 possible responses which meant that the respondent had to rate 32 items- four responses to each of eight vignettes. A high score on each of the four responses was representative of either highly controlling, moderately controlling, moderately autonomous or highly autonomous. Eight of the possible responses across the eight vignettes, therefore, were considered to be highly controlling, eight were moderately controlling, eight were moderately autonomous and eight were highly autonomous; this created four subscales- highly controlling, moderately controlling, moderately autonomous and highly autonomous. Within each vignette, the four responses were counterbalanced for order across the eight vignettes. In calculating the final score, a total score was calculated by weighing the highly controlling subscale score with a -2, the moderately controlling subscale score with a -1, the moderately autonomous subscale score with a +1 and the highly autonomous subscale score with a +2 and then, summing the weighted values.

Correlation of M-TORP and Student Autonomy Scale.

There is reason to believe that a teacher's theoretical orientation toward reading might include his or her perception of how much autonomy the student should have in the classroom. Contextualistic perspectives on teaching and learning highlight the importance of giving students opportunities to self-regulate in the classroom. Mechanistic perspectives on teaching and learning highlight the importance of teacher control in the classroom over teaching students how to be more autonomous from adults. The M-TORP focused on the content, that is, the goals and methods of classroom literacy instruction. A more mechanistic orientation toward literacy instruction allowed for more control by the teacher in determining what is important to learn and how one should go about learning it. A more contextualistic orientation toward literacy instruction allowed students more independence and autonomy when making decisions about their own learning. The Student Autonomy Scale measured teacher responses to the adult role in insisting that students follow adult-determined rules (highly and moderately controlling) or the adult role in helping students become more autonomous and self-regulating (highly and moderately autonomous). From a theoretical viewpoint there is a logical relationship between the teacher orientation toward reading content as measured by the M-TORP and teacher role as measured by the Student Autonomy Scale. In the study, the scores from the M-TORP and the Student Autonomy Scale were correlated in order to determine the statistical strength of the relationship between teachers' beliefs about student autonomy and a theoretical orientation toward reading.

Analysis of Part 2 & 3 Data

During Part 2 & 3 of the study, data were collected on teacher beliefs and knowledge about literacy teaching and learning using individual structured, open-ended interviews. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. The actual steps will be described below. Overall the analytical method of analyzing this qualitative data involved several readings, taking notes and, then, rereadings of each structured interview with the dimensions' definitions in mind. Using the Part 2 data the researcher read, took notes and reread each of the thirteen interviews and wrote a summary of each of the teachers' beliefs and knowledge about literacy teaching and learning. Then, the researcher read across the summaries of the interviews to create a summary of literacy teaching and learning across the school. Using the Part 3 interview data from the two focal teachers, the researcher followed the same pattern of reading and rereading and taking notes according to the four dimensions. The end result of the analysis of the Part 3 data was a more in-depth description of two different classrooms where the teachers initially seemed to contrast on their scores on the M-TORP. In sum, the results of the study included thirteen interview summaries of teachers' beliefs and knowledge regarding literacy instruction in one urban elementary school, one school case description of literacy instruction, and two more detailed descriptions of two teachers whose scores on the M-TORP initially seemed to indicate that they held contrasting perspectives on literacy teaching and learning. Details of this procedure are provided below.

There were five steps in creating summaries of teacher interviews

Step 1. CLASSIFYING AND MARKING

Read the definition and examples for each dimension. For each teacher interview, highlight in the margin all the questions and responses that were designed to solicit responses for one dimension. Use a different color marker for each dimension. If the interviewer probes and interviewee responses extend beyond the original question, include the whole response with the color codes with that original question. Some questions and answers will apply to two or more dimensions. Those questions will be marked in the margins with both colors and included in the summarization of both dimensions.

Step 2. READING WITH DIMENSION FOCUS.

Reread the definition for one dimension. Read the entire interview, especially noting the questions and responses that apply to that one dimension. Take notes in the margins of answers which illustrate the teacher's beliefs and knowledge about that one dimension. Repeat this step with each dimension so that the interview transcription is read four times, once for each dimension in this step.

Step 3. WRITING SUMMARIES FOR EACH DIMENSION FOR EACH TEACHER.

Reread the definition for the dimensions. Reread the entire interview to see if any other teacher responses belong under any other dimensions. Make notes of any changes. Write a summary of the teacher's beliefs and knowledge about each dimension.

Wherever possible include the teacher's exact phrases to convey the expressed meaning as much as possible.

Step 4. WRITING A SCHOOL SUMMARY.

Reread the definition for each dimension. Read all thirteen summaries across each of the dimensions. Look for ideas that seem to be repeated across the interview summaries. Note how many teachers seem to support one practice or belief. Reread these summary statements, noting the strength of support across the school and write a description of the school. This description will not be confined to the four dimensions but will include the four dimensions.

Step 5. COMPARING THE SCHOOL SUMMARY TO MECHANISTIC AND CONTEXTUALISTIC PERSPECTIVES ON LITERACY TEACHING AND LEARNING.

Read the description of the dimensions of teaching and learning as each applies to mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives. Compare the school summary with the two perspectives. Write a description of the school in relation to the two perspectives.

The methods used to create the summaries of the structured interview follow procedures developed for analysis of qualitative data of this type. The researcher must become acquainted with the data through numerous readings and rereadings (Merriam, 1988). Each interview was read six times: an initial reading to get the overall picture of the interview and, then, a rereading for each dimension, and then, a final reading before writing the teacher case. Attention was paid to those answers which initially might not be

classified as belonging to one dimension but should be appropriately included in that dimension. As the researcher read and reread the interview with the dimensions in mind, the researcher took notes and developed summaries which represented the recurring regularities in the data (Merriam,1988). The goal of the numerous readings was to isolate the regularities in the data to write accurate, representative summaries across the four dimensions for each teacher and for the school as a whole.

Two outside experts also read some of the structured interviews from Part 2. The purpose of the outside reading was to provide feedback on the clarity of the dimensions. In addition, the summaries of the researcher and the outside readers were compared to check whether the two readers came up with substantially the same summary. One reader read two interviews whereas another read three interviews. Using the guidelines developed by the researcher , each outside reader made her own summary and themes for that teacher. The independently-produced summaries were compared with those developed by the researcher. All parties agreed that there were no major discrepancies in the summaries.

The goal for Part 3 of the study was to describe and explain two different ways of approaching literacy instruction as represented by the two focal teachers and to compare their approaches to two perspectives- mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives on literacy teaching and learning. The teachers' scores on the M-TORP indicated that their perspectives on literacy teaching and learning may have contrasted. Teacher C's scores seemed to represent a more mechanistic perspective toward literacy teaching

and learning. Teacher B's scores seemed to represent a more contextualistic perspective toward literacy teaching and learning. The dimensions used in the analysis of the Part 3 interview data were the same as the dimensions used for Part 2. The teacher responses from Part 3 were added to their interview responses from Part 2. In the final steps in the analysis of the focal teachers' interview, the researcher referred to the interview and created a description of the teachers' practice in relation to mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives on literacy teaching and learning.

There were questions which guided data analysis under each dimension:

DIMENSION #1 CONTENT

GOAL: What does the teacher value as an outcome of his or her reading and writing instruction?

METHOD: What techniques, student activities and instructional practices does the teacher use in teaching reading and writing in the classroom?

DIMENSION 2: TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE

PERSONAL: What personal qualities should a good teacher have?

INTERACTIONS: What kind of interactions should a good teacher have with students over content as well as other aspects of students' lives?

RESPONSES TO DISTRICT CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS: How should teachers respond to district curricular expectations?

DIMENSION 3: STUDENT LEARNER ROLE

PERSONAL: What kind of personal qualities does a student need to be a successful learner? What personal qualities hinder learning?

COGNITIVE: What kind of cognitive processes are children using as they acquire literacy? What kind of background knowledge do students bring to tasks?

INTERACTIVE: What kind of collaborative activities does the teacher describe? What is the role of social interaction in students' learning literacy? What reasons does the teacher give for student participation in a peer's learning?

DIMENSION 4: CONTEXT

SOCIAL CONTEXT OF CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION: What is the extent to which the teacher includes social goals in her/his talk about other goals? What is the extent to which the teacher describes methods and materials in terms of their contribution to the social cohesion (communication, flow, predictability of human interactions) in the classroom?

IMPACT OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD SOCIAL CONTEXT ON

INSTRUCTION: To what extent do teachers include the parents in classroom activities and experiences? How do the teacher's describe the student's background knowledge, ethnicity and economic status? How do the teachers view the literacy experience the children bring to school? What is the extent to which teacher's modify their instruction in relation to the student's background knowledge, ethnicity and economic status?

CHAPTER 4: Part 1

Results

This chapter presents the results of the study of the seventeen teachers' beliefs and knowledge about literacy teaching and learning in one urban elementary school. There were four sources of data in the study: the Modified Theoretical Orientation toward Reading (M-TORP, Modified from Deford's TORP, 1985), Student Autonomy Scale (Deci, Schwartz, Sheinan & Ryan, 1981), transcriptions of one-hour individual interviews with thirteen volunteer teachers, and transcriptions of extended individual interviews with two teachers selected from the thirteen volunteers. The data provided descriptions of teachers' views of literacy teaching and learning in one urban school.

The results are reported in four sections. Section 1 includes a description of literacy teaching and learning using the group measures as data sources from Part 1 of the study. Section 2 includes a description of literacy teaching and learning using the individual interviews of thirteen teachers from Part 2 of the study. Section 3 includes a description the two focal teachers' beliefs and knowledge from Part 3 of the study. The two focal teachers were selected for third part of the study because their scores on the M-TORP indicated that their responses were more consonant with either a contextualistic or mechanistic perspective on literacy instruction. Section 4 includes a summary of all the results about literacy teaching and learning at Washington Elementary School derived from Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the study.

Section 1: Description of the Results from Two Group Measures

Seventeen teachers out of twenty-two full time certified staff in one urban school volunteered to participate in the study. In Part 1 of the study, the seventeen volunteer teachers were administered two group measures: the M-TORP (Modified from Deford, 1985) and the Student Autonomy Scale (Deci et al., 1981). The scores on both the M-TORP and the Student Autonomy Scale were calculated according to the methods described in Chapter 3. On both measures teachers answered a number of Likert-type items so that they received an item score and then a total score. For each measure the teachers were then ranked according to their scores.

Table 1

**Mean teacher scores on the
Modified-Theoretical Orientation toward Reading
Ranked by Orientation toward Phonics-based Goals and Methods**

Rank	Teacher	Summary score
1.	D	147.
2.	L	129.
3.	G	128.
4.	C	127.
5.	A	125.
6.	N	123.
7.	P	120.
8.	K	117.
9.	Q	116.
10.	H	112.
11.	E	109.
12.	F	107.
13.	M	107.
14.	B	106.

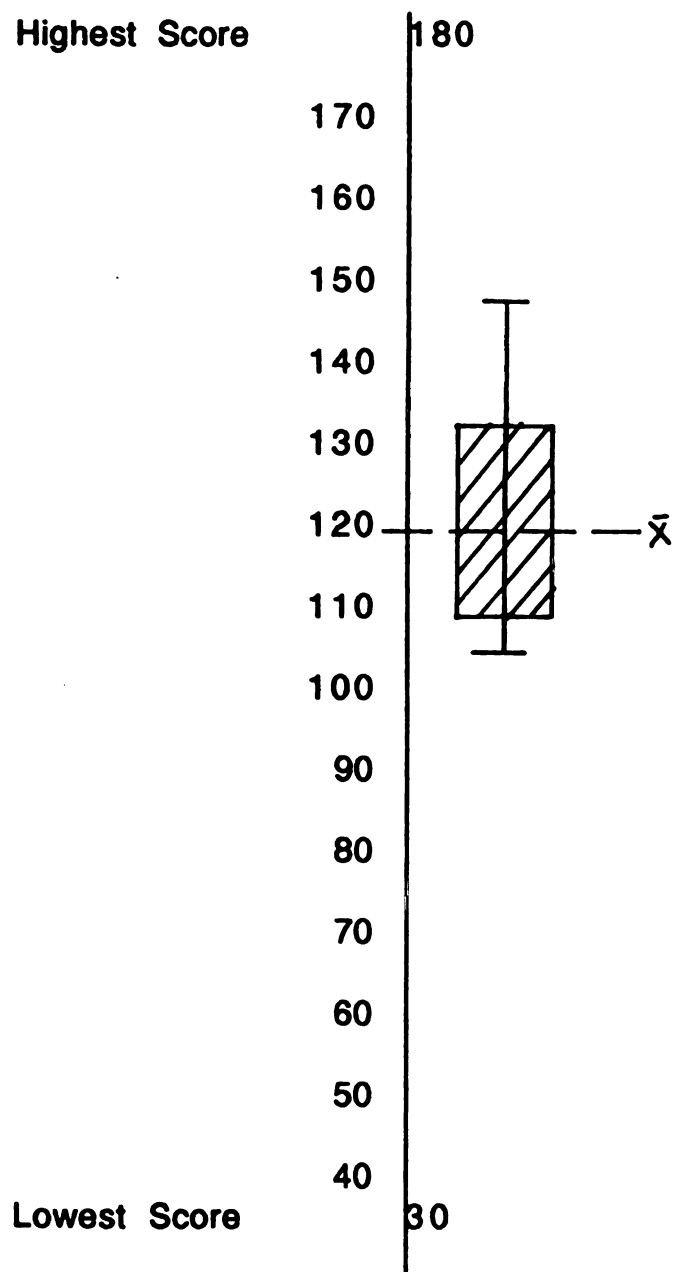
Entire population Mean 119.5 (S. D. 11.427)

Missing cases= 3, Teachers J, R, S

Table 2

Mean Teacher scores on the M-TORP:

Box and Whisker Presentation



Range: 147 to 106; Mean: 119.5; Standard Deviation: 11.427;

Box: $x \pm 11.427$ which means 131 to 108.1

Table 3

**Mean teacher responses to the Student Autonomy Scale:
Ranked by preference for increased student autonomy**

Rank	Teacher	Score
1.	H	56.
2.	B	50.
3.	C	42.
4.	F	41.
5.	M	40.
6.	P	39.
7.	G	31.
8.	R	22.
9.	A	21.
10.	K	16.
11.	E	2.
12.	L	-5.
13.	D	-13.

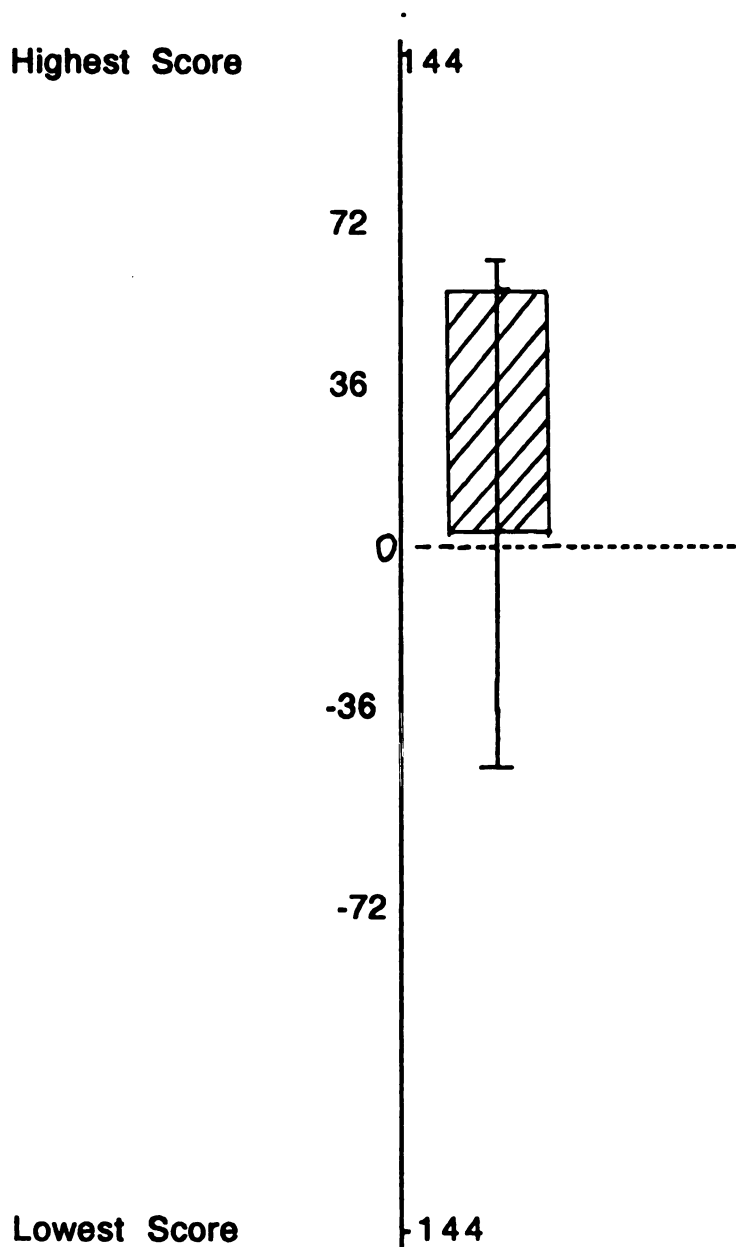
Entire population 26.31 (21.50) 13 cases

Missing cases= 4, Teachers J,N,R, Q

Table 4

Mean teacher responses to the Student Autonomy Scale:

Box and Whisker presentation



Range: 56 to -13; Standard Deviation: 21.50; Mean= 26.31

Box: Mean \pm 1 Standard Deviation = 47.81 to 4.81

The numerical values on the M-TORP can be interpreted as follows. Following the pattern of Deford in analysis of the TORP (1985), the answers to the items were scaled in relation to an orientation toward reading. In this case, if a person consistently answered the items from a phonics orientation, he or she would have received 5 points on each of 36 items (after items were recoded for analysis), totaling 180 points. If a person answered the items from a non-phonics orientation, he or she would have received 1 point on each of 36 items, totaling 36 points. A person who received 108 points more than likely would be in the middle, partly phonics oriented and partly holistically oriented because 108 points is half way between 36 and 180.

Table 1 indicates that there was variance among the teacher's responses. The range of teacher responses at Washington Elementary was from 147 points to 106 points. The mean on the M-TORP for the teachers at Washington Elementary was 119.5 and the Standard Deviation was 11.427 which means that 65% of the scores fell between 108.1 and 131.927. The mean of 119.5 is over eleven points above a mean of 108 that would have been achieved had the teachers answers had been equally divided between phonics and holistic orientation. Only three teachers at Washington Elementary scored at 108 points or less. On this measure, the M-TORP, therefore, the scores of the majority of the teachers fell toward the phonics end of the scale. Table 2 shows the data in a box and whisker presentation. On the M-TORP the teachers responses indicated that they seem to be oriented toward more phonics-based instruction than toward the non-phonics orientation. The interview

data from the study echoed the data found in the M-TORP. The interviews were consistent with the findings of the M-TORP. In the interview, the teachers as a group tended to support the more mechanistic, phonics-based methods of teaching the children to read and write. One could assume that the teachers more than likely practiced in ways that were consistent with the interviews and the M-TORP. Thus, the children at Washington Elementary were more than likely exposed to more mechanistic, phonics-based practices associated with literacy teaching and learning.

On Table 3, the Student Autonomy Scale, after the means were calculated according to the formula developed by Deci et al. (1981), the teachers' scores were ranked. The score is the result of subtracting answers that represented the more student control orientation from answers that represented the more autonomous orientation. A positive score indicates the degree of interest an adult would have in promoting more autonomous and independent decision-making for children. The Deci et al. (1981) research associates this adult orientation with the development of intrinsic motivation in children. A negative score indicates the degree of interest an adult would have in controlling and determining the decisions that a child would make. The Deci et al. (1981) research associates the controlling adult orientation with the development of extrinsic motivation in children. The highest possible score for the more autonomous orientation is 144 whereas the lowest possible score for the more controlling orientation is -144. A score that would show balanced interest in student autonomy and teacher control would have a score of 0.

On Table 3, the mean score for the thirteen Washington Elementary teachers who completed the questionnaire was 26.3077 with a Standard Deviation of 21.4957. Within ± 1.00 standard deviation 65% of the teachers fell; their scores ranged from 48 to 5. The Standard Deviation indicates that there was some variance among the teachers. The box and whisker presentation of the data on Table 4 indicates that most teachers at Washington Elementary were above a zero score. Their scores indicated a tendency toward valuing student autonomy; yet, the highest score was 88 points away from a totally autonomous position. Thus, most teachers were moderate to medium high positive in their support of student autonomy over teacher control.

It was assumed that there is a conceptual link between a theoretical orientation toward reading and teacher's views about student autonomy and independence. Thus, the two measures, the M-TORP and the Student Autonomy Scale were correlated to see if there was any statistical relationship. The analysis indicated that there was a significant negative correlation between the M-TORP and the Student Autonomy Scale, $r = -.7226^{**}$ ($p = .01$). The negative correlation means that the higher the score on the phonics orientation the less the teacher was interested in student autonomy. To say it another way, the more the teacher expressed a non-phonics, more contextualistic orientation toward reading instruction in his or her answers to the questions, the more likely the teacher supported student autonomy and independence. The score of four teachers are an example of this. Teachers B, F, H, and M had four of the five lowest scores on the M-TORP and were

among the top five scorers on the Student Autonomy Scale. These scores are an example of the negative statistical relationship between the two constructs indicated by the negative correlation. Teachers D, L and A appeared in the top five of phonics orientation and the bottom five in student autonomy, indicating again the negative relationship between the two constructs, phonics orientation and student autonomy. To say it another way, if a teacher scores high on phonics orientation toward reading, it is also likely that the teacher will be more interested in maintaining more control over student decision-making rather than those who scored low on the phonics orientation on the M-TORP. There was one clear exception. Teacher C scored high on the theoretical orientation toward reading and also scored high on student autonomy. Again, the correlational relationship between these two constructs is statistical and theoretical. Further research would have to be directed at establishing the links between teacher control and phonics orientation toward reading.

The correlation only tells us about one aspect of the relationship between student autonomy and the phonics orientation, the position the two sets of scores relative to one another. There seems to be some inconsistency between the two measures. From the phonics score, in general it would appear that the teachers' scores as a group would tend toward the teacher control orientation. Indeed, the correlation seems to indicate a negative relationship. Yet, if one examines the placement of the group of teachers, it appears that most of the teachers seem to value student autonomy not teacher control. The explanation for this seeming

anomaly may lie in the kind of questions that were asked on the Student Autonomy Scale. The question is what is the nature of the construct, student autonomy, as assessed by the Student Autonomy Scale.

According to Deci et al. (1981) the Student Autonomy scale indicates how much control an adult exerts over children in relation to how much autonomy the adult grants to the child. As a group, the teachers' scores on the scales seemed to indicate that they valued student autonomy more than the teacher control. However, the scale reached beyond the classroom in assessing teacher attitudes toward autonomy. The Deci scale measured a teachers' perception of adult attitudes toward control and autonomy in several different situations like soccer practice, doing homework and stealing in the classroom. It could be that the teachers felt that students should learn to act more autonomously in situations outside the classroom and yet students should be given them less autonomy inside the classroom. The scale seemed to support the idea of encouraging student autonomy in general beyond the classroom walls. One should therefore be careful about generalizing this data to the classroom. In the original research on the Student Autonomy Scale, it "was shown to be externally valid in that teachers from Grades 4 through 6 who were more autonomy oriented on the measure were rated as such by their students, and more importantly, the children of the autonomy oriented teachers were more intrinsically motivated and had higher self-esteem than children of the teachers who were more control oriented" (p. 642, Deci et al., 1981). The scale was linked to the promotion of intrinsic and

extrinsic motivation in the classroom. A teacher who was concerned about teacher control as measured by the scale focused more on extrinsic motivators in the classroom whereas a teacher who was concerned about student autonomy as measured by the scale focused more on intrinsic motivators. Several teachers (Teacher L, Teacher H, Teacher J) mentioned the importance of external rewards in motivating children.

The results of the Deci scale in the study, however, indicated that the teachers' scores tended to cluster slightly above the mean; that is, more of the teachers favored increased autonomy for the students. If one predicted where the teachers' scores might be based on the M-TORP and the interviews, one might expect the scores to be below the mean: that is, more of the teachers would favor greater teacher control over student behavior. However, the cluster of the teachers' scores were above the mean, not all the way to the highly autonomous score but the teachers' scores as a group would be considered to be much more representative of moderately autonomous stance toward student learning.

In addition to the teachers' scores on the Deci scale, the Student Autonomy Scale also has a strong and statistically significant negative correlation with the M-TORP which meant that the more the teacher was in favor of the phonics orientation as measured by the M-TORP, the less likely the teacher favored student autonomy as measured by the Deci scale. The M-TORP score seemed to indicate that the teachers held beliefs that were more mechanistic whereas the Deci scale score indicated that the teachers held beliefs that supported student autonomy. It was

assumed in the study that there would be a relationships between the two measures and that they would have a negative correlation. The two measures did have a negative correlation. The Deci scale score indicated moderate support for student autonomy. Correlations are not causations, however. The two measures are significantly statistically associated.

One explanation for the inconsistency between the results on the M-TORP and on the Deci scale might be that the nature of the construct, student autonomy, as described by the items in the Deci scale. The Deci scale seemed to test adult perceptions of student autonomy as a more global construct than just the way a teacher treats a student in the classroom around academic tasks. Of the eight items in the Deci scale, only three mentioned academic tasks- one item focused on ways to improve listless behavior in reading group, two were about improving performance on spelling tests. Further, it appears that three items asked the teacher to respond as if she or he were giving advice as a parent. Who knows if advice from the parent to a child would be the same advice a teacher would give him or herself? In addition, three of the items focused on the social relations among the children- a social isolate, a temper problem, a theft problem- which have to do with the social context of the classroom, not with the teaching of reading and writing. The Deci scale seems to measure whole classroom issues not just teaching reading issues. Perhaps the teachers were expressing their concern with the whole child not just the academic life of the child.

In sum, the two measures provided a quantitative description of the teachers' views about reading and the role of adults in student-decision-making. The M-TORP indicated that the majority of the teachers at the school were phonics-based in their orientation toward the teaching of reading. The Student Autonomy Scale indicated that most of the teachers leaned toward moderate support of student autonomy rather than teacher control. The correlation between the two measures indicated that there seems to be a statistically significant relationship between the two constructs, phonics-based reading orientation and student autonomy. Where we find teachers who express the more phonics-based orientation we will more than likely find the teacher to be more interested in student autonomy.

Section 2: Results from the Analysis of Teacher Interviews- Individual and School Level Summaries

Section 2 presents the results of the analysis of the teacher interviews in two ways: a.) individual summaries of each of the thirteen teachers who were interviewed; b.) summary of all the interviews to provide a school-level description of teacher beliefs and knowledge across each of the four dimensions and in relation to the two perspectives- mechanistic and contextualistic. This is a list of the teacher identification letter and the grade level taught as well as the number of years teaching with the number of years at Washington Elementary in parentheses. In the subsections following this list, there are summaries of each of the thirteen teachers that were interviewed.

Teacher	Grade level	Overall experience	
		(Washington Elementary years)	
A	6	30	(20)
B	6	6	(5)
C	4	25	(20)
D	5	23	(23)
E	4	15	(15)
F	2	24	(21)
G	2	22	(22)
H	1	30	(27)
J	1	24	(22)
K	1	11	(8)
L	Preschool	4	(4)
M	Kindergarten	10	(5)
N	Computer	12	(3)
Mean		18.29	(14.67)

Results of Individual Teacher Interviews: Individual Summaries**Teacher A.**

Teacher A is a sixth grade, Anglo-American teacher at Washington Elementary. Teaching is her career. Out of 30 years in the field, she spent her first ten years as a substitute teacher in this urban school district and has been at Washington Elementary for last 20 years. She is one of two teachers at the school who has lived within the school neighborhood all those years as well. The central theme that organizes her practice can be summed up as a classic conception of schooling. Children come to school to learn to read, write and compute and expand their horizons. She has a very strong image of what the children should learn when they are at school. Besides the basics, they need to be exposed to some of the finer, more beautiful and more worthwhile aspects of the culture and the larger society. She takes the students on field trips to art museums. She gets them to memorize beautiful poetry. She has them write poetry. They need to learn "proper English." All of these goals would be appropriate in any school.

However, when she thinks about who she is teaching and what they might bring to the teaching situation. She gets very discouraged. The students lack background knowledge. She characterizes their lives as they "live in a vacuum". Individually the children love to converse, about anything. They desperately need organization and consistency in the classroom because they lack it in their lives outside of school. What helps her survive at the school is a sense of humor and the community among the teachers. She tries every year to add some "value", some quality to

their lives. At the same time, she does not really value what they might contribute to the learning situation. The paucity of experience and lack of background knowledge continually thwarts her attempts to add some value to their existence.

Teacher B.

Teacher B is a sixth grade, African-American teacher who has been at Washington Elementary for five years. During those five years she has changed her teaching from using the district-prescribed curriculum to adapting her lessons to the needs of the children. The organizing construct in her teaching revolves around getting to know the children so that she can motivate them to learn. She recognizes that the students have "limited background knowledge" and, yet, time and again in the interview she mentioned how she tries to figure out what might motivate them to learn the "basics". She said that she hoped to create interest by relating the lesson to the students' lives, by making sure that they understand the purpose of the lesson and by engaging them in discussions during the lesson. The students need to respond to this by knowing what they need to know. "They must say to themselves, 'Do I want to read? Do I want to learn how to write?' That is their decision and, if they decide that is definitely what they want to go, I am there to try to facilitate them."

The teacher's role is to instill basic knowledge. Yet, Teacher B felt thwarted often in this goal because of what the children do and don't bring to school. She recognizes that they don't bring much background knowledge about academic subjects. Teacher B learns a lot about the students through their journals and rap sessions

several times a week. Teacher B is very sensitive to the fact that the children bring many social and personal problems to school. She sees their problems as rooted in the lack of parenting and the drugs and violence in their lives. She believes that "the children today are basically raising themselves".

Teacher C.

Teacher C, an African-American, has been a teacher at Washington Elementary for 20 of her 25 years of teaching. She sees her role as being here "to teach and to guide the students". Teacher C organizes her teaching around the district-provided materials, yet she will deviate from the standard curriculum to talk about neighborhood problems. For the teaching part, Teacher C does not seem to deviate from the district-designed curriculum which provides weekly and daily guides for all subject matter areas. She likes the basal reading series:

I like the reading program we have here. I like the book (the basal). It's a very good one. It goes along with the other language arts we have here. (For example) I taught how to back an opinion in reading yesterday. It's in the English book today, and the spelling book usually goes (along).

She understands that it is helpful when the curricular areas are integrated.

As a "guide" a teacher at Washington Elementary needs to understand the unique situation of the children and respond appropriately.

You should have an understanding of these kids. You should believe in them, and then they might need just a little more

love. You have to be mother, father, nurse, doctor. You have to be everything to these children because they might not be getting that. Some even call me 'Mommy'.

Teacher C will stop the lesson in the middle if a topic comes up that needs to be taught and will help the children outside of school.

I talk to them about drugs. I talk to them about sex because they say things in there (like) they know everything there is to be known. So I talk to them. I tell the boys, 'You know, you don't want to have babies all over town.' . and, um, 'You're gettin' a baby is not making you a man. A man can take care of a baby.' That is just as important as reading and writing. Might prove me wrong. It might change the morning (to talk about these things and not do reading and writing). But, I think it is better teaching. They need it. They need it. They are so developed and so mature. They need to know these things because many of them are not getting it at home so I do stop and talk...I hope, this is not reading and writing, but I hope this will save one person.

She assesses children's ability in relation to grade level expectations. She will use peer tutors to help the lower achieving students.

She does not think that going back to African-American culture is going to help the students get along in this society.

I say they took away the culture when we got on the boat (from Africa).....And I say rap is a poor example (of culture) because I hate it. I wouldn't say that is part of their culture. That is just something they made up....I think you should take in their

culture and linguistic background but you should also teach reading and writing that he will have to use in everyday life....Culture is okay but, um, it has been years and years and years since slavery and since your foreparents came from Africa. You have to deal in the real world. You live in the world and you better deal with it. I think if they understood that they wouldn't be so hostile.

Teacher D.

Teacher D is a fifth-grade, African-American teacher. He has been at Washington Elementary for all of his 25 years of teaching. He sees his role as a "guide" through the district-prescribed curriculum. The theme that seems to organize his work revolves around the hard work of getting the so "playful" children to go through the curriculum. The most important thing that students can learn is to "give back some feedback" to the teacher that they learned what was expected of them. His expectations are not very high however. From his own description, he does not seem to innovate or deviate from the district curriculum. In many ways he does not see the academic needs of the children in front of him. If he does deviate from district expectations, it is only to accommodate the fact that he feels the students are more comfortable and better at expressing themselves verbally rather than on a piece of paper. His stated goal is to get the children to function on grade level which they do not really do. This is an external indicator of success or failure. Grade level expectations are norm-referenced criteria and may have little to do with the students a teacher faces day by day.

Teacher D also values the other, "common sense" type of things that he teaches the students. In fact he says, "they do need a lot of it. You cannot give them as much as they need." He teaches them "etiquette". He feels you can teach them to divide but you must also teach them how to walk across the room without abusing somebody. He recognizes that the children are "socially, culturally and economically deprived". The children need to improve their language. However, he knows where they learned to talk "that way", at home, just the same place he learned to talk that way. In some ways he seems to have faith that time will help them learn to talk correctly. His job is just to get them through the textbooks.

Teacher E.

Teacher E, an African-American, has been at Washington Elementary for all of the fifteen years she has taught. She teaches fourth grade. She seems to be willing to experiment and change her practice to try out new ideas in an effort to improve her teaching. In the last two years she has gotten involved in several projects designed to impact her reading and writing instruction in the classroom. Even though there were other teachers involved in these programs at the school, Teacher E uses the concepts like "strategy instruction", "prior knowledge", "internalization", etc. in her conversation about teaching goals.

Teacher E believes that the academic and the social are both important. "That (social development) is a big part of the day and sometime that can be absolutely overwhelming." "I also think that a good teacher is one that is concerned about the social, the socialization of her students, because I think for any person the two

(academic and social goals) go hand in hand." She felt that she spent "80% of my time this year" on social goals. She wonders about the CAT test as a measure of the academic progress her students are making. She thinks there is just too much emphasis on it. Yet, she did not seem to have an alternative.

Teacher E sees a gap between her life and the lives of her students. The most striking example was what a student said to her on a field trip. She remarked how beautiful a house was and asked if he agreed. He said, "Don't look good to me." She was shocked. She said, this "let me know the condition that his mind was in. It was like, 'So what's the difference?'" She cannot understand how a student could feel this way. How could a student not value a beautiful house? She implied that his response indicated how deprived and desperate his situation was.

There is a sense that she will not be able to bridge that gap. Her classroom has eight students with "explosive, dynamite" tempers and other students who do not have the same values that she has. These are the same values which may have pushed her on to college and to get an education. If students do not share these same values that she has, how can she relate to them? What else about education could possibly be of value? Is only the reward at the end the worthwhile aspect of it?

Teacher E will also try out new activities in the classroom like strategy instruction and process writing techniques. Yet, it does not appear that these are particularly successful in her classroom. She calls "brainstorming", a "bottle of rainstorm". Did she not learn the technique well? Or was this just a slip of the

tongue? She is frustrated that they cannot learn to write with this technique and therefore, drops it. It is like there is a glossy cosmetic change in what happens in her classroom but the new techniques have not rooted or been given a change to take root. One of her most valuable techniques is modeling of appropriate behavior. Modeling may not be enough. Particularly if students do not value the model which she suspects by their response to the house. Generally, Teacher E is asking a lot of questions and making some moves to change and adjust her practice, yet she is continually frustrated and discouraged in the process because the children just have such overwhelming social needs.

Teacher F.

Teacher F is an African-American second grade teacher who has been at Washington Elementary for 21 years. There is one word that occurred throughout the whole interview with Teacher F: "care". Children need to care about reading. Teachers need to care about their children. Some parents are caring and others are not. The greatest mistake a teacher can make is "to be non-caring". How is this translated into Teacher F's curricular goals and methods of teaching African-American students to read and write? The central theme for Teacher F is that a teacher must care to be a good teacher. Nothing else is as important as caring for children. Managing a classroom is hard for Teacher F. It seems that the notion of "care" may get in the way for Teacher F. She may say to herself, "If I discipline the children too much, they may think I don't care about them." Generally, Teacher F follows the district-prescribed curriculum.

To Teacher F the social development of the children "may be the most important part" of what she does. Teacher F has a positive view of what the children know. She refers to them as "survivors" and "perceptive" about who cares and who doesn't care for them. To help them survive, she teaches them how to read and write by modeling the "better" way. She seems to value what they bring to school from home but she realistically recognizes that they will need to survive in the larger society. What they learn at school is different from what they bring from home. It is important for teachers to teach that other culture. "I think it is a real tough decision (to ignore the oral tradition) but you don't go ahead (in life), you don't go to a corporate board room saying 'yo baby' and you had better know that."

Teacher G.

Teacher G, an African-American second grade teacher, had been at Washington Elementary School for all of her 22 years of teaching. Teacher G, like Teacher F, organizes her practice around the theme of the importance of caring for the children. A good teacher at Washington Elementary cares about the children first-academically, morally and personally. Caring for the children makes you a good teacher. To make things run smoothly in her class, Teacher G would advise another teacher to "make his/her number one concern the children. Forget the rest.... You might be a doctor, a social worker, a counselor, a policeman... It means really caring for the children. You have to be there for the children." Teacher G keeps the whole child in front of her as a focus. She also sees the child as a developing child. In the fall she will teach

phonics to her second graders, by the time spring rolls around she will be teaching comprehension. She does not necessarily follow the district-prescribe curriculum.

Teacher G expressed a respect for the children in several ways. First of all, she sees teaching as an "exchange" between the teacher and the students. Her choice of the more social constructivist image of classroom dialogue confirms her interest in hearing from the children. Second, she values the language they use when they come to school and admits that there is nothing wrong with "Black dialect". However, she also knows that the children need to learn the "general American dialect" to have a job and they had better know that. Third, she thinks it is important for a teacher to understand the children's conditions to be able to teach at the school.

Teacher H.

Teacher H is a Anglo-American first grade teacher. Out of her 30 years of teaching experience, 27 of those years have been at Washington Elementary. Generally, she teaches the curriculum as scheduled by the district and she deviates little from the highly structured district guidelines. In terms of teaching the children to read and write, she believes that children must be "ready" before they tackle the difficult and demanding skills involved in reading and writing. There is no gradual transition to reading, no notion of emergent literacy. There is a need, however, to prepare them, to make them ready to learn before they actually learn to read and write. Reading and writing are seen as separate and distinct disciplines.

In several ways, Teacher H does not see the African-American child as any different than any other children. There is no need to adapt the curriculum to the children because they have special needs as a group. There are good reasons to provide consistency and management in their lives like you would do with any group of youngsters. "Scheduling, routine and management and I think especially (management). The children come where there is not much management in their life."

The lives that the children live outside of the school, however, are difficult. Sometimes those events impact the classroom.

Out of 24 students now, I only have one that pays for lunch and he is moving to the suburbs this summer. So, it gradually came (over the last ten years or so). So it gradually became... you could see it in the lunch count, you could see it in the children not having two parents and you could see it in the neighborhood immediately around here- the burned out buildings, the vacant lots and the vacant buildings and the crime here. It got more and more prevalent for the children to tell you in the morning about the crime the night before....What I am saying too is, these murders and these kids who come in and say, 'Oh my father was shot, last night.' or 'My father shot someone last night.' or something, they are the extreme few. In your classroom there will only be one in two, or two and it will be ongoing all year. Those same children. The same ones over and over and the same ones.

Teacher H listens to their stories and wonders what to do. She insisted during the interview that she was tired of the bad news

about the city and she did not want to tell all the bad news to anyone. She was trying to focus on the good things that happen. Yet, often the events in the children's lives overwhelm her teaching. "But what I am saying is, if a child comes into my room and tells me that there was a fire on their street last night, that doesn't faze me, we go on with our work. If they tell me their father was shot or someone was shooting at their house, I might ask them a little more about it...." She also knows that her children may be murdered. "...three of my previous students were murdered, three of them and that's been in the last ten years. "

Teacher J.

Teacher J, an Anglo-American, has been a teacher at Washington Elementary for 22 out of her 24 years of teaching. She is a first grade teacher. She has high expectations for the children in terms of performance as well as behavior and she says, "They get it." She does not relate to the parents. During the interview she cited several examples of how the parents had interfered with what she was trying to do in the classroom. She responds to this by "stay(ing) out of their family business. Think about school only. I zero in on school." Her advice for a new teacher would be "discipline is first. You can be strict first and let up later. If you threaten, you must carry through. As a parent or a teacher I think it is okay to set up rules, regulations, standards and goals to be followed." The tone of her response seems to indicate she runs a strict, controlled classroom.

In teaching students to read and write, the first thing a teacher should remember is that the children do not know anything.

The biggest mistake a teacher can make is "to expect too much (background knowledge). Don't expect that the children will know anything." The reading, writing and spelling program that Teacher J uses seems to be quite traditional- the basal, workbooks and skill sheets. Her teaching preference is direct instruction. Her measure of teaching success is the CAT test. "I care about the total end result in June. But I do teach toward the (CAT) test." She does not feel compelled to follow the district-prescribed curriculum, however.

Teacher J never mentioned anything about the changes in the neighborhood over the last ten years. She seemed to ignore the unique context in which she is teaching. She shut out the parents. She shut out the children's background knowledge. Although she believed that the teachers need to be "patient, devoted and dedicated", she seemed to have a curriculum that needed to be taught in spite of whatever the children themselves or their families may contribute. She followed a hard line with the children and the parents but she feels it works. Her students generally do well on the standardized tests.

Teacher K.

Teacher K, a first grade, African-American teacher, has been at Washington Elementary for 8 out of her eleven years of teaching. She knows her job at Washington is not easy, yet a good teacher is "a teacher who is motivated, who is, um, who has the children's interests at heart, who is always here, who is very seldom absent." In some ways this implies that all that is necessary if for the teacher to be present. She did not really specify exactly how the

teacher needed to be there for them. For disadvantaged children, it is important to "just be here for them..a lot of personal one-to-one relationships with the children." Yet, she still maintains a distance with the children. She claims that "I don't directly ask them what's your problem at home or anything. I don't do that.... I think that is personal. I don't know how people feel about prying into their...personal feelings and some things might be a little personal to them and they are embarrassed about it... I don't pry to see if momma is working, if you have food to eat ...If I see a problem, I say, 'Check on it' to the (truant officer)."

In teaching children to read and write, Teacher K uses drill and rote memorization. Children drill reading, drill in spelling, drill in mathematics. To learn something children must "drill, drill, drill." In fact, she praised the benefits of cooperative learning because one child can teach another a word as they drill together while sitting on the rug. Yet, she also remarked that they do not always remember what she had drilled into their minds. So, you have to drill it all again. Teacher K also emphasized the importance of readiness in learning anything. To read, you have to be ready. This means you need to know phonics and letter sounds. To write, you have to read. It seems futile to learn to write if you do not know how to read.

It is important for children to do well on the CAT test because they are tested all their lives. "It is really important for the children to learn to read because the testing that we have here. And when they are able to read, they are able to read the test booklets, they are able to read directions and follow it...." The

interviewer asked, "Why is this important?" The teacher responded, "I really don't see the significance of why it is so important but it has to be. It is a way of school systems, of evaluating. But, you have to be evaluated throughout life in order to see your accomplishing anything, if you go anywhere. For that reason it is important."

Teacher K's response to the children's needs seems somewhat inadequate. She continues to use drill when the children do not seem to respond to it. She uses DOLWE to work on the children's "slanguage". Children need to correct what they say so that they can "move up the ladder of society." She focuses on readiness in reading and writing. Even when she talks about the children's personal needs, there is a sense that she keeps her distance.

Teacher L.

Teacher L, an African-American preschool teacher, has been teaching five years. All of her teaching experience is at Washington Elementary. She focuses on teaching the children how to get along and how to behave. To do this she provides the children with structure, not a rigid structure but a set of routines they follow when they come in. It is very important for the children to learn how to operate in that structure. The children from this school in particular need to know how to work in the structure.

A teacher at Washington Elementary, according to Teacher L, needs to not put herself above the needs of the children. To this end, Teacher L has the parents come in for a meeting once a month because she needs to contact the parents about what is going on at school. She sees her role as nurturing the parents as well.

To Teacher L it is important for schools to "enforce" the learning of the basics. The African-American heritage is very important for the teachers to know to understand the children. Yet, there is no sense that the teacher needs to incorporate the heritage into the childrens' lessons.

Teacher L believed in the concept of readiness in learning to read and write. She seemed surprised to think about the fact that learning the alphabet might be reading. She thought children would be hampered in learning to write if they did not also learn how to hold the pencil properly. There seems to be a set of component skills that are necessary for the children to know, that help them to be ready to do the next step. Children cannot learn to read until they have know all of the component skills like the letter names, letter sounds and holding the pencil correctly.

Teacher M.

Teacher M, an Anglo-American is the developmental kindergarten teacher. She has been teaching at Washington Elementary for five out of the ten years she has been in this school district. She grew up in the city and has had several other jobs in the city. At one time she ran a day-care center. At Washington Elementary, she worked with the same children all day long rather than the typical half-day. Teacher M integrated reading and writing in literacy activities. She says she does not even separate the two activities in her mind. The way she talked about teaching her students to read and write seems to reflect a whole language teaching philosophy. This philosophy was also evidenced in her sending library books home once a week so that the parent and the

child could write a book report together. Teacher M values the interactions that surround literacy learning.

Not only does she link the activities of reading and writing, Teacher M also linked these activities to children's feelings and children's social development. It appears that Teacher M adjusted her instruction to meet the needs of these particular children. First of all, she recognizes that they have great needs, the "greatest needs of any children she has ever worked with". Second, she provided them with a structured learning environment in which they learn how to become more self-sufficient and self-regulating. This lead to increased independence. Third, the structured learning environment also gave the children a sense of security with adults, and allowed them to develop trust with adults which they also need. Finally, she honored their African-/American heritage but recognized that they need to be aware that there are other oral and written traditions out there that they need to know to succeed. In this situation, Teacher M does not regard what they bring to school as "slanguage" but as something they might choose to change to accomplish other goals. She honored what the children may already know and what they bring to school. However, she wanted them to choose. She knew they can choose when they are given the best information. In support of this, also, she recognized that their difficulties in school can be attributed more to economics than to other things. The economic disadvantages impacted the children's lives and learning tremendously. She was very sensitive and concerned about that.

Teacher N.

Teacher N, an African-American, is the computer lab instructor. She has been at Washington Elementary for the last three years. Prior to that, she taught middle school English classes for nine years. The theme that organizes her practice centers around her concern for the academic and social development of the whole child through posters about values in the hallway to meetings with parents after school. Last year at Washington Elementary, she was involved in an evening program for parents at which she taught them about the computer. The program was not continued this year because funds were withdrawn. Outside of her classroom on the windows in the hallway were some computer-printed banners which say, "Wise decisions." "Be responsible." "Get along with others". The words represented her philosophy of teaching. She took time out of her day to attend to the values that the children need to learn not just to survive but also the values they need to live a better life. She recognized that the children have "immense needs" which the adults should attend to. To do this, adults must develop rapport with the children.

One of her teaching goals is to "guide" children in the discovery of the correct answers. Children need to "think" which seemed to mean that the children need to spend time grappling with ideas and problems. It is not a good idea to spoon-feed them the answers. It is a better idea to let them work things out for themselves. Children's learning process is very important. However, the "answer" is a set of pre-determined ideas, a body of knowledge that is not negotiable.

She regards the language that the children speak as "slanguage" even though she did her Masters' thesis on Black English. Still, she sees the children come to school speaking the kind of English that needs to be corrected. She recognizes that great needs that the children have. It is really overwhelming what their needs are- emotional, social, economic and psychological. One of her favorite phrases during the interview was "How deep are we willing to go?" In the context of the interview, this phrase seemed to be directed at all of us- teachers, parents, administrators, university professors, the society in general. She was asking us just how much are we willing to sacrifice to make the lives of these children better. She believes we can do this but the society as a whole had better take on the project rather than leave the children isolated and without help.

CHAPTER 4: Part II

Results (continued)

Section 3: Results of Teacher Interviews: School-level Summary

One purpose of the study was to describe and explain individual teacher's views of literacy teaching and learning and write a summary of each teacher. That purpose has been accomplished in the previous section of Chapter 4. The additional purpose of the study was to describe and explain teacher beliefs and knowledge in relation to the two perspectives on teaching and learning: mechanistic and contextualistic. The two perspectives are admittedly a simplistic way to talk about classroom teaching and learning. However, the two perspectives provide us with a way to compare and contrast important dimensions of classroom teaching and learning. The contrasts between these two perspectives are placed within the four dimensions of the study: 1.) content; 2.) teacher instructional role; 3.) student learner role; and 4.) context. The overall school results are summarized in the next section by the four dimensions of the study. Following the school summary of each dimension, the results are compared with the two perspectives of teaching and learning: mechanistic and contextualistic.

Dimension 1: Content.

The content dimension included two aspects of literacy instruction: goals and methods for both reading and writing. A instructional goal was any statement that refers to that which the teacher intends the student to learn. A goal was anything that the teacher considers an intended outcome of instruction. An

instructional method is any teacher statement which referred to strategies, techniques, activities and practices used to further student literacy. Thirteen teachers were interviewed as part of the study. Some of the quotations in this section are taken directly from the interviews and may not have appeared in the summaries above but can be found in the Appendix H. The parenthesis after each quotation or summary statement identifies the teacher or teachers who contributed that idea.

Reading goals and methods. All teachers at Washington Elementary want their children to learn to read: "get them to read (A)", "let them be able to think how to find information, how to decode words more than one way.. (B)." "Basically I strive to build up comprehension, and they can have an active knowledge of what it is that they are reading and to understand all types of reading. They need to decode and basically, develop an interest.(B) "Reading is more than just calling words and pronouncing words. You have to teach them how to recognize details, main ideas, cause and effect, how to make inferences and classify.... They need to know how to decode words, they need to know the vocabulary..(C)". Several wondered "in September I teach phonics. I build the fundamentals. In spring I put the skills together and teach comprehension" but "...how can you teach them to comprehend before you have taught them to decode?" (G, H, J, K)

Only six teachers out of thirteen included the need for children to be motivated and interested in what they are reading as a goal.

You can throw away textbooks, talk with them, get them to verbalize things to get them to know what it is that they are interested in. Their dislikes and likes and try to use that again to motivate them to learn, no matter what the story is. I have found myself jumping all over the books, the core of the text, to get stories that might fit in, that I have heard on the playground or something that just kinda correlates with what is going on in their world. (B).

My goals are to help the children become good readers and to develop a love for reading. (C)

To make my readers motivated with a desire to read. (G)

To care about reading because it opens all kinds of doors for them. (F)

To develop a sense of liking to learn to read and a like to be read to.(L)

I cannot separate it (reading) from providing the motivation to see that is a valuable, pleasureable skill, that it has to be an important part of your life. I don't think it can become an important part of your life if you're only teaching the technical things about reading for two or three years and not providing them with any value, of how this is valuable to them What it will mean to them. If you can't teach them that, I don't know where you are going. I mean, 'why do I have to learn all these letters?' I am back to motivation, to wanting them to be readers." (M)

The majority of teachers at Washington Elementary mentioned that the children come to school with limited experience in the world and a lack of vocabulary knowledge. Most teachers respond to their children's limited experience with an instructional emphasis on phonics and vocabulary development. Most view learning to read as a sequential, linear process which starts at simple level, knowledge of decoding and/or knowledge of vocabulary. All teachers in the lower elementary level focus on phonics in some form (F,G,H,J,K,L,M). 'Well, you have to learn your consonant sounds and your vowel sounds. I think that the attention should be where they are able to retain information and not lose it once you look at it. Some children do that, that is why you have to keep going over and over and over. Consonant sounds and vowels, really helps. (K)" Teachers at the upper elementary level focused more on vocabulary development and less on phonics as a key to reading improvement although a number of the upper level teachers recognized the importance of phonics. "The most important thing in teaching reading is good coverage of the vocabulary. (A)" "You have to start with the basics. They lack the vocabulary development that is necessary to basically communicate.(B)"

All teachers (except the preschool teacher) use the basal in some form for reading instruction. Most seem to use the basal as prescribe by the district schedule. They have a positive response to the basal reader, worksheets and skillsheets. They generally agree that it "works fine"(J), or "engages all the skills.(A)" One teacher likes it because it integrates well with other subjects, "It goes

along with the other language arts subjects taught. (C)" Most teachers follow the district curriculum in teaching from the basal. One teacher, however, "I have found myself jumping all over the books, the core of the text to get stories that might fit in that I have overheard on the playground or something that just kinda correlates with what is going on in their world."

Writing goals and methods. In general, the writing goals for nine teachers are for children to punctuate correctly as well as capitalize the letters correctly (A, C,D,E,N,F,G,H,K). For many, learning to write begins with the "basics", "sentence writing to start with..., then, go to paragraph writing but they have to be able to write a complete sentence first." (N) Two of the first teachers said : 'Writing is separate from reading and it comes naturally. After you learn to read, writing comes naturally." (H, K)

Recently the district started a monthly writing contest with an assigned topic. The selection for merit in the contest starts with awards at the classroom level and ends up with awards at the district level. About the writing contest one teacher said, We never used to teach writing until about 4 or 5 years ago when we started to have writing contests in the area and then, they started talking more about writing. I never used to teach writing. We had handwriting every day but creative writing, we didn't start doing seriously until last year because it was mandatory. I always thought my children {primary grade level} were too young for that, but they started it and I have gotten good results....

I am not creative, I don't write a lot of stories for us to read. If I taught at a {middle class suburb} I would probably have to almost start at the natural course of things, do something else like write out story books.... but in my class ever since I have been here (27 years) I have... never had enough of the class that were way above average. I had one group that finished the {primary grade level} work on May 1st but that was in 1975....Writing is separate from reading and it comes naturally. After you learn to read, writing comes naturally. (H)

Teaching writing at Washington Elementary is not easy. Several teachers remarked on how frustrating it is:

I don't go through that extensive writing process with them because I don't want them to get discouraged" (E). "They write from their experience.... We talk about making sense and spelling, the benefits of spelling books, the difficult thing I find about teaching writing is that everyone wants you to spell everything out. I come away feeling like I am in a million pieces. (F)

I want them to be able to recognize capital letter words and be able to know if a period or a question mark is in a sentence. By the time June gets here, I drill, drill, drill on them and it doesn't register and stick with them. I have to remind them an awful lot of times that you have to start a sentence with a capital letter and let's end with a period or question mark or exclamation mark. Sometimes I have to prompt them to

remember these things. They don't remember the punctuation part. (K)

One of the kindergarten teachers presents a contrasting view of writing and reading,

I guess what they have learned is that there are symbols that represent their thoughts and they can go on paper and they can be written and we can write it for them. And if it can be written, it can be read. They know at this point (in May) that those letter symbols have meaning, that writing means something. It is not just a picture." "We learn about a period and a question mark....I don't think of them as writing, I think of them as mechanistic things, part of writing. I don't think of it as the process." (M)

Some teachers work through the frustration of students who lack background knowledge for writing in several ways. "Most children write from their experience and imagination and if you don't have the experience, you can't have the imagination. So you (the teacher) have to create the imagination and take them on trips and show them the movies or do something. (C)" Two upper elementary teachers assign longer writing projects- writing poetry, writing an autobiography, writing research reports (A, B). But, to each of them it is very difficult because of the lack of skills and background knowledge that the children bring to the task, "It is such a chore (A)."

Responses to two contrasting written classroom dialogues.

As part of the study teachers were asked to read and respond to two

written instructional dialogues- one represented what we refer to in the study as a more contextualistic approach to reading instruction- Dialogue 1 (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988), the other represented what we refer to in the study as a more direct instruction type of approach to reading instruction- Dialogue 2 (Baumann, 1986). Ten teachers preferred the direct instruction model of teaching the main idea, Dialogue 2, because it was "more effective (A)". The other dialogue, Dialogue 1 was considered to be "prying (K)", "reactive", "not a clear explanation (K)". Of those ten, three said they would also use the more social constructivist method because the difference between the two is that one is "child-centered vs. teacher-centered. (M)" On the other hand, there were three teachers who felt that the social constructivist method was preferred over the direct instruction method because it focused on the "exchange between teacher and child (G)", or it helps them "find the answers themselves (E)" or it gives the student a "chance to find out for himself what the main ideas are. In Dialogue 2 for this minority of teachers (the direct instruction dialogue) there is something "missing, that connection in the mind...(N)" In sum, for the majority of teachers at Washington Elementary, the direct instruction dialogue is more effective because it lays out what students are expected to learn. For a minority of teachers the social constructivist dialogue is more valued because it gets students to think.

In sum, Dimension 1 includes teachers' beliefs and knowledge about the content dimension of instruction- goals and methods. In

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general, the majority of the teachers at Washington Elementary teach phonics, vocabulary development, and correct form in writing. There seems to be a belief in a linear, sequential process of learning to read and write. Students need to learn one thing well before they can go on to the next. Letter sounds precede comprehension. Vocabulary knowledge precedes reading connected text in paragraphs. To proceed to the next step one must be ready. Readiness starts with letter sounds, goes to words, then, sentences, then paragraphs, then stories. That readiness entails learning the sounds of words, the meanings of words, and the proper form of writing. When the "basis" and the "foundation" is laid then, the student move onto comprehension. After all, several ask, "How can you comprehend, if you cannot decode?" and "How can you comprehend, if you don't know word meaning?"

Analysis of Dimension 1 using mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives. The content dimension includes teacher beliefs and knowledge about the goals and methods of teaching students literacy. If one views the learning of reading and writing from the more mechanistic perspective on teaching and learning, one would emphasize learning the simpler processes first and well before one goes onto more complex thinking in reading and writing . In reading and writing the simpler processes would translate to a focus on readiness, phonics, vocabulary in isolation, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. The basic idea in literacy learning and teaching from a mechanistic perspective would be that one has to decode first before one comprehends, reads literature or writes.

The learner must start simply and add larger pieces until one has competency. Start with the sound, the word, the sentence, then, move to the paragraph until you reach the chapter and the whole book.

The contextualistic perspective on teaching and learning would focus on the complex thinking that attends the comprehension of longer, more detailed texts in which the words and the grammatical rules themselves are embedded. Comprehension and communication would be the primary goal of reading and writing activities. One might need to learn initial letter sounds, for instance, but the learning would not be isolated from the larger task of reading a story or writing a letter to someone. Reading and writing are not isolated, separate activities but are intertwined. Writing activities are related to reading and reading activities serve as a source for writing. Writing becomes reading as one reads, revises, rewrites and reads again.

Most teachers at Washington Elementary focus on the word itself as "basic" or "foundational" for becoming literate. Both phonics and vocabulary development are essential components of the reading program. The teachers who mentioned phonics were generally from the lower level grades; whereas the ones who mentioned vocabulary development were from the upper level grades. Only one teacher mentioned the connection between reading and writing which proponents of a more contextualistic perspective would support. Several teachers were concerned that students understand that they write and read for a purpose. Almost half of

the teachers were concerned that students learn to like reading. What is important in the contrast between the two perspectives is how you develop the enjoyment of reading. To the teachers at Washington Elementary, learning to decode with the simpler processes provides the solid foundation that children need to be good readers and eventually writers. The major focus of the Washington Elementary teachers in terms of goals and methods of teaching students to read and write is more consonant with the mechanistic perspective. From an appreciation of the gains to be had by more mechanistic type instruction to an embrace of the basal, almost all teachers would agree that students need to start to learn to read and write at the basic level of the sound, the word or the correct form. To almost all of the teachers at Washington Elementary, the simpler learning that is fundamental and essential to reading is an understanding of phonics, an ability to decode, and the learning of vocabulary. The simpler learning that is fundamental to writing is an ability to spell, capitalize and punctuate and, to some, the ability to write a complete sentence.

The teachers have several reasons for their more mechanistic orientation toward the teaching of reading and writing. They believe that their children lack basic vocabulary, basic concepts that most people should know. Over and over again, the teachers emphasized that "you cannot presume that the students know anything." Their vocabulary is "very, very limited." The teachers are faced with not knowing what students will know or not know when they assign a reading or when they ask the students to select a

topic for writing. They watch the students struggle and in turn direct their teaching to things that the students can learn quickly and easily and the teachers can also feel some measure of success. For several reasons, they start students at the most basic and simple level- pronouncing the sound, learning the meaning of the word. After that is accomplished, then, they can turn to sentences, paragraphs and chapter books. Two teachers seemed to embrace more aspects of the contextualistic perspective but they were clearly the exceptions to the dominant form of literacy teaching at Washington Elementary.

Dimension 2. Teacher instructional role

Personal qualities. According to nine out of thirteen teachers interviewed at Washington Elementary by far the most important personal quality that a teacher needs at Washington Elementary is to "care" for the children. Seven out of the thirteen actually used the word, care, in their description of a good teacher. Two teachers mentioned the specific other roles related to caring that a teacher might have to perform while a teacher at Washington Elementary:

You should have an understanding of these kids. You should believe in them and then they might need a little more love. You have to be mother, father, nurse, doctor. You have to be everything because they might not be getting that (at home).

(C)

First of all the teacher must make his/her number one concern the children. Forget the rest....Make sure she keeps her mind on being about the business of being for the children....You might

be a doctor, a social worker, a counselor, a policeman.... It means really caring for the children. You have to be there for the children (G).

A teacher needs to develop rapport with the students and know the children's lives (B,D, N,F). Four teachers mentioned the need to be "flexible" (B,E,N,M).

Interactions. One of the important aspects of a teacher's role is what kind of interactions with the children that the teacher values. There were two key themes which appeared under the aspect of interaction: the children's need for structure in their lives (6 out of 13); and the children's need for conversation (7 out of 13). For five teachers (B,E,N,F,M) one of the ways to provide structure, and conversation is to be a model themselves. It appears that it is very important for the teacher to take an active role: structuring the classroom, providing opportunities for conversations, and modeling appropriate behavior.

What is interesting in the first two areas: structure and conversation, several teachers related the identified need as rising out of the need in the children's lives. They stated that "Children need management because there is not much in their lives.(H)" They need a structure because "(t)here is not enough in their lives. They need to see a beginning, a middle and an end. They see a process (in here)....They need to know precisely what is expected and they can't do, what they can do.....These children need, need structure. They need a basis. Without that, they are lost. There is no way I could have these children win and do self-selecting activities at the

beginning of the year. (M)" It is just that these children "demand organization from the adults because their life is so unorganized and they love the discipline of organization. You have to keep them busy and I don't mean busy work. I mean constructive busy (A)."

In the area of conversation, seven teachers (A,B,D,N,F,G,M) mentioned the need and desire that the children have for conversation because

I have been assuming again that quite often the circumstance that they go home to, that is, there is not a lot of oral discussion going on. That quite often they are told to be quiet or go stay outside or go outside... There is no one to communicate with them. (B)

I think that is one of the absences in their lives (conversations). I don't think anyone talks with them. They scream at them, maybe, and probably curse at them, whatever, give orders, to sit down, whatever. Because they love to visit. They just love it and it all comes out when they talk. You can talk about balloons and they get all wound up (A). The size of their vocabulary is very small because they have not had a lot of conversations with people. Even if they watched TV all day, they would have remarkable language facility. I am just sure they would because they would be hearing these words, their language development range is extremely low. (M)

Curricular Expectations. The district has several specifically mandated activities. One involved district-wide testing. An

important test is the California Achievement Test (CAT) in the spring every year. Five teachers mentioned the CAT test as an important measure and criteria (A,B, E,J,K). Two teachers mentioned the futility of preparing the children for the test (B, E). To two first grade teachers (J,K), the CAT test was very important in measuring their instruction. To one, testing was the reason children need to learn to read.

It is really important for the children to learn to read because of the testing we have here. And when they are able to read, they are able to read the text booklets, they are able to read directions and follow them...I really don't see the significance of why it is so important but it has to be. It is a way of school systems, of evaluating. But, you have to be evaluated throughout life in order to see you're accomplishing anything.

(K)

Another newly-mandated curricular change was in "creative" writing, as the teachers called it. There is a monthly area writing contest which requires the teachers to enter their students every month. This has spurred the assignment of writing in the classrooms.

In sum, Dimension 2 includes teachers beliefs and knowledge about teachers' instructional role over three aspects personal qualities, interactions with students and responses to curricular expectations. The majority of teachers at Washington Elementary believe that their instructional role reaches beyond the teaching of academic content and demands caring for the children. Precisely

because of the children's context, teachers provide them with structure and organization. Precisely because of the children's context, teachers know it is important to talk to the children because no one really talks to them outside of the school. Generally, it seems that those conversations are not linked to literacy activities. Several teachers mentioned their concern about state-mandated testing and curricular demands which shape their instruction.

Analysis of Dimension 2 using mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives. Dimension 2, Teacher Instructional Role, is divided into three aspects: personal qualities, interactions with students and attitude toward curricular expectations. Under the personal qualities both the mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives share similar conceptions of teacher instructional role. The teacher needs to be strong, positive and in charge. The two perspectives differ in the second and third aspects of this dimension- interactions with students and response to district curricular expectations- mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives would tend to be different.

The teachers at Washington Elementary believe in the strong personal aspects of the teacher role like being "in charge" of the classroom. Caring for the students, however, was one additional personal quality mentioned by the vast majority of teachers as an important part of their role at Washington Elementary. For nine out of thirteen teachers, one of the most important qualities that a teacher could have is "care". For Teacher F, for example, the biggest

mistake a new teacher could make at Washington Elementary is to be "non-caring". Most see their role outside of teaching academic content, as involving attention to the many other needs that the children bring with them. This attention to the more social and affective side of teaching would be consonant with both the contextualistic and mechanistic perspectives.

From a more mechanistic perspective, the prime concern during teacher and student interactions would be that the student do what the teacher expects him or her to do without the student contributing to the development of the task definition. Instruction needs to be clear, direct and unambiguous. The teacher needs to initiate, sustain and define the type, duration and scope of the interactions between the teacher and the students. Teachers need to provide many distinct opportunities for students to be successful. Progress can easily be measured by external standards like standardized tests or grade level expectations because there is a greater emphasis on discrete learning opportunities with exact answers.

From a contextualistic perspective on teaching and learning, the prime concern during teacher and student interactions would be the quality of the exchange and dialogue between students and teacher. Teachers need to pay attention to the processes of learning as well as the product. Students need to have an opportunity to create and act on some of their own learning goals which might be ambiguous and unclear at first. Initial success on knowledge-level tasks would not be as important as grappling with a cognitively

demanding and perhaps ill-defined tasks and problems. Progress in such classrooms could be a bit harder to measure because the standards could be constructed against internal (to that individual classroom) concerns and interests (Heshusius, 1991). Concern would be on student learning in relation to his/her own personal, internal goals not on goals derived from standardized tests external to the classroom. There might be portfolios of individual student work. Learning goals to be valued and problems to be solved would be selected and evaluated on the basis of classroom goals and objectives not on the basis of outside standards and expectations (Englert & Palincsar, 1991).

The Washington Elementary teachers tended to act in ways that are more consonant with a mechanistic perspective than with a contextualistic perspective in terms of student interactions. There were two ways in which the teachers' conceptions of their role seemed to reinforce a more mechanistic than contextualistic orientation toward literacy teaching and learning. First, several teachers believed that the students need organization and structure in their lives. Five teachers mentioned that it was important to provide organization and structure for the children. The teachers noted that "these children demand organization from the adults because their life is so unorganized" (A). One needs to ask organization and structure of what? In Dimension 1, the "what" for most of the teachers at Washington Elementary is the learning of the "basis" of reading and writing, the discrete foundations of reading and writing, for example, the learning of phonics,

vocabulary, capitalization and punctuation. Students could find organization and structure in both the contextualistic and mechanistic-oriented classrooms. However, the mechanistic-oriented classrooms would be organized to reinforce the learning of discrete knowledge like vocabulary and phonics rather than on the learning of problem-solving and strategies.

A majority of the teachers recognized that the children need to converse about anything. Similar to the issues around organization and structure, conversation could be found in a mechanistically-oriented or a contextualistically-oriented classroom. The difference between the classrooms would appear in conversation about what. Seven out of thirteen teachers stated that the children need to engage in conversation because "quite often they are told to be quiet or go stay outside or go outside... there is no one (at home) to communicate with them.(B)" "They love to visit. (A)" The children need to talk, need to express themselves (B). Only one teacher indicated, however, that this conversation was central to academic outcomes. Most knew conversation was important but did not link those conversations, for example, to discussions about books, to drafting and rewriting stories or to grappling with problems. The conversations the teachers did seem to have were about the children's lives, about drugs, sex and values. Conversation, dialogue and interactions are central to many contextualistic notions of teaching and learning from Reciprocal Teaching to process writing sessions. However, the conversation from a contextualistic perspective is over academic content and

geared toward academic outcomes like the comprehension of a story or publishing a book. Thus, even though the teachers stressed conversation, the valued conversation tended to be outside the realm of academics and not related to any particular academic outcomes this would seem to be more consonant with a mechanistic viewpoint rather than a contextualistic viewpoint. The belief in children's need for conversation indicate a concern about affective and social goals of classrooms. Perhaps the teachers are not able to make the connection between the social and affective concerns to students' literacy learning precisely because they view literacy learning in a more mechanistic way.

The teachers tended to be more mechanistic in regard to the third aspect of this dimension- curricular expectations. Seven teachers (A,B,C,D,E,G,J,K) mentioned their concern with either grade level expectations or the standardized test, the CAT (California Achievement Test). The concern with externally constructed and externally controlled set of standards tends to be associated with a more mechanistic perspective (Heshusius, 1991).

In sum, in this second dimension, there are some aspects of the teachers' practice which could fall under both the mechanistic and the contextualistic perspectives- personal qualities like caring for the children and being responsive to their many needs. However, it is during the interactions with the children where there seems to be some things that the teachers do which seem to indicate that their views of teacher instructional role would be more consonant with the mechanistic perspective rather than the contextualistic

perspective. Teachers stated that the children need structure and organization in their lives because they do not get that from adults. Teachers stated that they need to talk, to converse with the children because outside no one who talks to them. It is what their instruction is organized around and what they talk about that determines whether the teachers' responses tend to be representative of a more mechanistic or a contextualistic perspective. Teachers tended to structure their classes around discrete outcomes and teachers tended to converse with students but it was not over academic content. In addition, teachers tended to be more concerned with external standards than with classroom-derived expectations of success. Thus, in the second dimension, teachers at Washington Elementary seem to do things in their classrooms as a teacher that are more consonant with mechanistic perspective than with the contextualistic perspective. in their conception of teacher role than contextualistic.

Dimension 3. Student learner role.

Personal. For six out of 13 teachers the most important personal quality a child could have is a "good attitude". Under good attitude, there were some other qualities that several teachers mentioned: personal commitment to learning ((B,E,G,J); self-respect (B, M, N); be persistent (A, E); be positive (E). Four recognized that there is a great need among the children to trust some adult as well (A,B,N,M). Three teachers (A,D,G) specifically wanted students to "give back" what was taught. Four (A,D,H,J) wanted students to be good listeners. Eight teachers knew that students needed to be

motivated: five (E,G,H,L,N) used external rewards like stickers or treats to encourage performance and three (B,F, M)used interesting, engaging topics and the development of rapport with the students to create motivation.

Cognitive. The cognitive processes that children need to use to learn are to be a listener and give information back to the teacher(D, H, J); to memorize and copy (A,H, J); to drill (K); to "think" (A, C, D, N); to learn to apply information (E, N, B); and to be strategic (E). All of these activities revolve around ways to learn discrete information. There is a given body of information that students need to know. They do not need to interpret it, or question it, just learn it. The teacher's job is to facilitate that learning. The one teacher who emphasized the importance of discovery learning (E) was trying to get students to discover the correct way to punctuate a sentence through the way the sentence sounds. Background knowledge in this aspect is important as it helps one to understand given, unambiguous text. A lack of background knowledge would then affect your ability to understand what is given. To the teachers at Washington Elementary, texts are not subject to interpretation; they just need to be learned. Meaning resides in the text not in the interaction between the text and the learner.

The vast majority of the teachers (nine out of thirteen) mentioned the fact that the children come to school with limited knowledge and experience (A,B,C,E,N,F,J,L,M). Several teachers recognize that students at Washington Elementary come to school with very limited experience in the world. Six out of the 13

specifically noted that many of the children have never been out of the neighborhood (A,B,C,E,N,M)..."not even so far as the river which is six miles away." (A) Since they have had the new principal, Mr. Hamilton, the school provides field trips to take the students downtown. Before Mr. Hamilton came, several teachers mentioned that the school did not go on field trips. For many children, the teachers say, these field trips are the only opportunity the children have to get out of the neighborhood.

Several mentioned that you cannot presume that they know anything (A, J). Nine of the thirteen teachers mentioned that the children come to reading with "limited (B)" background knowledge which is demonstrated by a lack of vocabulary. The teachers realize that you cannot presume that children know anything about a topic when you start talking about it. To some, your job is "setting the foundation for them, for whatever academic area that your working in because their prior knowledge is sorely lacking. You as the professional have to make up the slack or do the best that you can."(E) "You must remember that these students live in a vacuum as far as vocabulary development or concepts of different things that we presume everyone knows." (A) There is "limited vocabulary and limited experience with the written form. A lot of these children do not associate words in a book with reading (M)."

I can't put my finger on why, most groups of five year olds have a lot to say and it might not make any sense but they have a lot to say. They usually have a pretty nice size vocabulary. They have words to describe things. They have names of things. Many of these children

come and they don't have common names. they don't know the names of animals. They don't know the names of common objects....

Communication is through gestures and pointing. I mean, I have lots of children that come in, they are nonverbal in here. I am not saying that they are nonverbal children. But it makes you wonder how much language, how much vocabulary they actually have. Identify simple objects, or follow simple directions. It is real common. (M) Most of the teachers respond to their perception of the lack of background knowledge by focusing on "safe", unambiguous cognitive activities like drill and practice, copying, memorizing, filling in worksheets, and recitation. In some ways, the teachers cannot help students improve their background knowledge beyond the textbooks on some topics because there is no library in the school anyway.

Interactive. This aspect focuses on how teachers view interactions among the students themselves. Ten out of 13 teachers believe that students can learn from each other (A,B,C,D,E,N,F,K,L,M). However, the emphasis is on social interactive gains like learning to cooperate, and be respectful to one another. The cognitive gains of cooperative learning and collaborative problem-solving do not seem to be valued very highly. Six use some form of peer tutoring in the class where a more skilled student will help a less skilled student. However, larger cooperative groups do not seem to be used very often.

In sum, Dimension 3 includes teacher beliefs and knowledge about the role that students play in their own learning. There are three aspects to this dimension: the personal qualities of a learner,

cognitive processes involved in learning and the contribution of interactive activities among children. To the teachers at Washington Elementary, a student plays a role by first of all having a good positive attitude toward learning. Most teachers focus on copying, memorizing, drill and practice, and giving back information to the teacher as it has been presented. One teacher (N) who was interested in having children use the discovery method wanted children to "discover" the correct way to write a sentence. The cognitive processes that teachers emphasize are drill, memorization and some discussion. Not one teacher mentioned problem-solving. Only two teachers (A,B) had students deal with any extended texts like an autobiography or a research project. The teachers may be overwhelmed by the limited experiences and background knowledge that children bring to school tasks. Teachers seem to believe that the children need a foundation, a "basis" or a basic vocabulary before they can explore or handle projects with divergent outcomes. Even though teachers seemed to value peers teaching peers, the outcomes of peer interactions for the majority of teachers were seen as contributing to the social development of individuals not to cognitive development.

Analysis of Dimension 3 using mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives. The student learner role dimension includes teacher views about three aspects of student learner role: personal qualities needed to be a successful learner, cognitive processes central to learning and peer interactions involved in learning. The mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives differ in all three of these aspects.

From a mechanistic perspective, the personal qualities that a learner needs are: to be a good listener, absorb information and be ready to respond to the teacher. In a classroom which seems more aligned with mechanistic-based models of student learning, it seems consistent that the learner would be motivated by success at easily defined tasks and by external rewards such as stars, prizes and treats. Whereas from the contextualistic perspective, the personal qualities that a learner needs are not only to listen, but also to integrate and reconstruct what is taught and be ready to apply it. From a contextualistic perspective, the learner needs to be motivated by challenge and an intrinsic interest in the activities. The problems to be solved may take more than one period to learn.

One of the major differences between the mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives lies in the aspect of student learner role that is called cognitive processes. These are the activities that a teacher might use to accomplish his or her goals. On the mechanistic side of the cognitive processes aspect, students engage in recitation, copying, memorizing, drill and practice of small, discrete, and often decontextualized bits of information. Learning is segmented into parts through task analysis. Meaning is in the text, not in the person-text interaction (Richardson, Anders, Tidwell & Lloyd, 1991). Textual meanings are stable and generally definitive. Background knowledge is important because it facilitates comprehension of a given text. On the contextualistic side of the cognitive processes aspect, students converse, exchange ideas, debate, discuss, create, and grapple with large, sometime

unwieldy problems. Learning is considered to be a holistic experience, difficult to segment into parts. Meaning is in the person-text interaction. Textual meanings are unstable and subject to interpretation. Background knowledge is central because it interacts with the text to construct new, individualized meanings. Background knowledge not only facilitates comprehension; it also interacts and reshapes with what is and can be learned.

Another difference between the mechanistic and the contextualistic perspectives lies in the third aspect of the student learner dimension: the interactive aspect which includes the gains possible with peer collaboration. Both perspectives tend to value peer-to-peer learning because it can help students learn to get along with one another. The two perspectives differ in the type of acceptable peer learning and the outcomes possible with peer learning. From a mechanistic perspective peer tutoring is acceptable because one, more informed student works with another, less informed student. The purpose of their interaction would be to teach the content presented by the teacher. Other interactive forms might be acceptable as long as the groups were formed to learn content presented by the teacher. From a contextualistic perspective, on the other hand, there might be a variety of interactive forms- peer tutoring, cooperative groups, writing editing groups and collaborative groups whose purposes might be to manipulate, integrate, create, or grapple with ideas and information or maybe even reshape it. They are not necessarily a more efficient way to teach an individual student what the teacher wants

students to learn. Again, the attention is not only on the product of learning but the processes involved in learning that content. From the contextualistic perspective, the process is just as important as the final product.

The most important personal quality that students could have in the classroom according to eight teachers was a "good attitude" toward learning. There was generally no consensus among the teachers in this aspect of the third dimension, student learner role which would place the teachers as a group in either the mechanistic or the contextualistic perspective. Teachers generally meant that the students needed to "put forth some effort....be positive... be persistent "(E). Of course, both proponents of the mechanistic and the contextualistic perspectives would support the importance of students having a good attitude toward learning. The difference between the two perspectives would come under just what a good attitude looks like. Teachers seemed to express viewpoints of the student learner role that could be regarded as both mechanistic and contextualistic in the personal aspect of the third dimension.

In both of the two other aspects of this dimension- cognitive and interactive- the teachers at Washington Elementary tend to come from a mechanistic perspective rather than a contextualistic perspective. In terms of the cognitive processes important in learning, one teacher gave an example of what some might call a strong mechanistic orientation: the students' role was to "get ready to please the teacher and give back what the teacher wants (D)." Another emphasized the need for students to "drill, drill, drill. We

drill reading and writing. (K)" Not all teachers were so strong in their mechanistic orientation, several focused on wanting the students to "think" (A, C, N). Of course, the question is, think about what? One focused on the development of "strategic learning (E)". However, these are strategies designed to enhance the learning of given text which is generally not subject to interpretation or discussion which tends to be a more mechanistic approach.

Another part of the second dimension emphasizes the role of background knowledge. From a mechanistic perspective background knowledge facilitates learning. Because learning is focused on such discrete bits of information, the activation of background knowledge may not be as important to a teacher from a mechanistic perspective as it is from a contextualistic perspective. From a contextualistic perspective, background knowledge not only facilitates but integrates with new learning. Because learning is focused on complex networks of meanings, the activation of background knowledge is vitally important. Many teachers from Washington Elementary highlighted the limited background knowledge and experience that the children have. Several worried about the problems associated with the lack of language development. It may be that the default position relative to background knowledge is to ignore the fact that the students do not seem to know anything, focus on discrete bits of information that they can learn and not worry about the larger, complex networks of meanings which they could not grapple with anyway because they do not have the background knowledge and experience. This stance is

quite consonant with the mechanistic perspective on teaching and learning.

Even though ten teachers emphasized that students can learn from one another, they valued peer tutoring over alternative grouping strategies. In addition, what they described as important for the groups to learn was mathematics lessons or catch-up worksheets. The peer interactions were designed to reinforce teacher-determined outcomes not problem-solving tasks with divergent outcomes. Several mentioned that these alternative grouping strategies just took too much time. In terms of the mechanistic-contextualistic perspectives, the teachers at Washington Elementary tend to value a more mechanistic perspective of peer interaction patterns than the more contextualistic perspective.

In sum, the teachers at Washington Elementary tended to see the student in his or her cognitive role or social role as a recipient of information which was to be repeated back to the teacher. Seldom did the children create their own learning problems to be solved; thus, the teachers responses in this dimension would tend to be more consistent with the skills-based, more mechanistic perspective on teaching and learning rather than the problem-solving based, more contextualistic perspective.

Dimension 4. Context

Dimension 4 includes teacher beliefs and knowledge about two aspects: the social context of classroom instruction and the perceived effects of neighborhood context on classroom instruction.

The first aspect of the classroom social context describes the extent to which the teachers include social goals in their talk about other goals. The second aspect of the neighborhood social context includes teacher beliefs and knowledge about how teachers believe that the student's background knowledge, ethnicity, and family economics impact classroom instruction.

Classroom Social Context. Almost all teachers stated that it is important for the teacher to be "in charge" of the classroom. The teacher needs to set the "ground rules" in September and follow them throughout the year. A good classroom is a well-planned classroom (A, B, H, J, L, M). For Teacher M good planning was connected to building a trust, a rapport with the students. They need to know there is a plan. Real good planning. It's a trust thing. If I say to them at the beginning of the day that we are going to do this...they look for that. They want a trusting relationship with the teacher and their peers and they want (to know) when someone says something, they mean what they say. I definitely sense that. (M)

Teacher M recognized that there could be a developmental pattern to classroom management where by the end of the year children had become "independent". "I think they are told a lot what to do and they truly do not know how to act independently"(M).

Of the thirteen teachers interviewed, eight teachers explicitly stated that they teach values and that the social development of these children is vitally important (B,C,E,F,G,H,M,N). For some they spend as much as 100% at the beginning of the year (B), 80% all year

long(E) making sure that children learn how to treat each other, get along, not steal and be polite to one another. To (A, N, C), they tell the children that the classroom is like a small family.

One of the first things I stress at the beginning of each year is that we are like a small family in the classroom and we are due to spend the coming year in the classroom together. There has to be trust.

There has to be regard for each other, just like at home--hopefully at home.(A)

The basic reason for this is, as one teacher stated

Social development may be the most important part of what I do...They could be the world's best reader and not know how to get along with someone else. The problem is that our kids are killing each other. It is extremely important, maybe the most important, that they learn how to get along without resorting to violence. (F)

The basic method that seven teachers seem to use to teach these values is to talk to the students (A,B,C,D,E,F,M).

To teach them some of those values,.... if most of the students, they understand what I am saying that, if you cannot take orders from the classroom teacher in the (our) grade, it's gonna be difficult to take orders or instructions on the outside, or socially just walking down the street and the police come on to you. (M)

Yes, I talk to them about drugs. I talk to them about sex because they say things in there (her classroom) like they know everything that there is to be known. So I talk to them. I tell the boys, "You know, you don't want to have babies all over town." and, um, "You're

getting a baby is not making you a man. A man can take care of a baby.' (C)

Several mentioned using the district-mandated Quest program to generate conversation about these issues and help the children think about their lives. One teacher has a 'success board' out in the hallway to remind children to "Make wise decisions, Be responsible, Get along with others.(N)" Another uses models of African-American athletes to inspire persistence (E). The classroom rules that are followed, however, seem to be created and maintained by the teacher. Only one teacher (M) mentioned that the students had any input on classroom governance. No one mentioned classroom jobs and there seemed to be no evidence of job boards in the classrooms. One teacher (B) occasionally allows the class to handle classroom discipline in a game they call "Court". She notes that the discipline that they give out is usually more severe than her own.

Neighborhood Social Context. Eight of the teachers in the sample have been at Washington Elementary for over twenty years (A,C,D,F,G,H,J). Six of those remarked about the deterioration of the neighborhood during that time.

We don't have working phone numbers for the children we have to call most. It is kinda' interesting 'cause the children we don't have to call are in functional families whether it is one parent or two parent. I don't call a one-parent family, a non-functional family.That is another way that we notice that we only have one child paying for lunch a week. We have I'd

say two-thirds will end up at the same phone number at the beginning of the year as at the end. (H)

We used to collect lunch money every day... and then gradually there became more and more who didn't pay for lunch because they were ADC or they qualified for various types of aid.... So gradually it went down; it wasn't fast. Then we started, I'd say about the last seven years, we started seeing more vacant house, more drugs, like the kids all know about drugs around here... more vacant lots..more fires, burned out houses. It has reached the point where the immediate neighborhood has an awful lot of burned out houses....Out of 24 students now, I only have one that pays for lunch and he is moving to the suburbs this summer. So, it gradually came. So it gradually became you could see it in the lunch count, you could see it in the children not having two parents and you could see it in the neighborhood immediately around here- the burned out buildings, the vacant lots and the vacant buildings and the crime here. It got more and more prevalent for the children to tell you in the morning about the crime the night before....these kids who come in and say, 'Oh my father was shot, last night.' or 'My father shot someone last night.' or something, they are the extreme few. In your classroom there will only be one in two, or two and it will be ongoing all year. Those same children. The same ones over and over and the same ones....But what I am saying is, if a child comes into my room and tells me that there was a fire on their street last

night, that doesn't faze me, we go on with our work. If they tell me their father was shot or someone was shooting at their house, I might ask them a little more about it... (H)

It was like another world (here) and I had no idea that this existed over here (in this part of town). I remember it from 20 years ago and so forth and (now) it looks like a war zone, burned out houses....you are competing with the streets and what the streets have to offer as opposed to what you can as a teacher in the classroom can offer. (B)

Seven teachers (A,B,E,F,G,H,M) stated that the problems that they see in this neighborhood are due to economics.

The differences I see with these children are mainly in terms of economics.... I have worked at other schools. I see the differences as working with some really poor, poor children with, um; they are at a real economic disadvantage. (M)

It all boils down to a matter of economics. I think you see people in (an affluent suburb) who have washing machines. People here do not have washing machines. Children come to school with dirty clothes. (G)

What they need is jobs. What they need is a chance for a little higher education, trades or whatever. To deny them the best possible education that you can give them or that they can get (is wrong). Teach them. I mean it is a matter of economics. We (our city) don't have businesses to speak of, we don't. We are not where the money is.... (F)

Several of the teachers mentioned the role that the parents play in the student's lives. Several teachers have found ways to involve the parents in the school. One invites them to monthly meetings where she posts the parent attendance roster for the children to see (L). When there was funding last year, another teacher got a grant to pay parents to come in at night and learn how to use the computer (N). Another sends home a book every week in a little cloth bag and the parent and child write out a book report on the book: "I am almost at the point where I force books on these parents because they are going to read to these children, if they can read.... That is step one, that they read, read, read to them all year. (M)" It should be noted here, however, that there is no library and no librarian in the school. The bookmobile comes by once a week.

For most teachers, however, most of the parents are too young and lack the parenting skills they need to raise the children. In essence, many of the children are raising themselves.

You know they just lack the necessary parenting skills. I say now I really know the difference between parenting and babysitting and it makes a big difference. Parenting is quite involved and takes a lot of work. And you find yourself as a teacher too if you want to develop more of your trust with the kids. You have to do a lot of parenting (as a teacher) the same things that, um, you know are safe. For the children who come unprepared for school, no proper procedures, no respect for authority. Many of these children lack that, you have to teach the values...

They don't have any need for education because most don't even feel that they will live to enjoy it. They see their parents dying. They are just wandering aimlessly themselves, aimlessly on the street, what is education going to do for them, what could you possibly do?What do I need the CAT test. 'Now I don't need a CAT test, my brother, Johnny he goes over on (X street) and hustles this and he makes 4 or 500 dollars a day'. Then a week comes and a long face, what is wrong with you, 'My brother Johnny is dead.' Just people are in and out of their life. So you have to try to understand all of this, but you still as a teacher have certain skills and obligations, and I find myself setting goals for myself what is that I want to accomplish with these kids and its not always these skills that the central office is telling you, it is just survival skills. (B)

The neighborhood from which the school draws its population is predominantly African-American. At one time there were a number of Chaldean families in the neighborhood; in fact, twenty years ago, there were two Chaldean-only classrooms in the school (H). However, now the neighborhood is predominantly poor African-American. Almost all students at the school receive free lunch. Ten of the thirteen teachers who volunteered to be interviewed for the study are African-American. There is only one teacher in the study who lives in the neighborhood and she is Anglo-American. The teachers were asked how they viewed certain aspects of African-American culture and language and whether these aspects of culture

and language should be taught to the children in this school. Five teachers from the whole group interviewed stated that the children know or should know two languages- a "Black dialect (D, B, M, E, F)" and "general American language". For others, the students may bring a language to school but it is really "slanguage (N, K)". For two teachers (one white and one African-American) "rap" is nothing at all, "it is something they made up." All teachers believe that the students need to "improve", "correct", not "sound ignorant" (E) and essentially change the language they bring from home. They need to learn "proper English (A,H, J)" or "general American language (G,M)", in order to get along in the "real world (C,D,E, H, L)". The conflict for those African-American teachers boils down to preparing these children to make it in the real world: "I think it is a real tough decision (to ignore the Black dialect) but you don't go ahead (in life), you don't go to a corporate board room saying 'yo baby' and you had better know that. (F)"

In sum, Dimension 4 centers on teachers' views about the context of instruction: how social goals inform classroom instruction and how the teachers think about the neighborhood in relation to classroom instruction. One of the major concerns that teachers have is for the social development of their children. Almost all teachers mentioned the broad and important role they have in contributing to the development of social values. In addition the teachers recognize how the neighborhood has changed due to the economic situation. They seem to feel that they must take up the slack where the parents have left off. They teach values, etiquette,

and teach children how to bridge the gap between their world and the "real world" where they must speak proper English in order to succeed.

Analysis of Dimension 4 using mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives. The context dimension includes two aspects of teachers' views about the context of instruction: the classroom social context and the neighborhood context. The aspect of the classroom social context refers to the extent to which the teacher includes social goals in her or his talk about other goals and if the teacher includes social goals what role do those goals play. The second aspect of context, the neighborhood context refers to the extent to which and the manner in which the teachers consider the parents, the economics of the neighborhood and student's ethnicity in her or his talk about other goals.

If a teacher tended to hold views that were more skills-based and mechanistic on the classroom social context, the teacher would be concerned with more with prediction and control of classroom events (Altman & Rogoff, 1987). Learning is most efficient under controlled social and academic conditions. Thus, the classroom social context would be organized to insure that academic tasks get done in a timely and efficient manner. Social and affective goals from the mechanistic perspective might exist for the teacher but these goals would probably be marginally important because of their influence on academic outcomes. Further, from the mechanistic perspective, teachers might or might not consider the parents, the economics and students' ethnicity. From a totally mechanistic

perspective parental involvement would be encouraged in order to further and support teacher-determined outcomes. Parents would be trained to help teachers accomplish the teachers' goals. Literacy learning is important as it prepares students to succeed in the larger society. Students would need to correct the language they bring to school in order to succeed in the larger society.

From a contextualistic perspective on the classroom social context, the teacher would be concerned with the quality of the interactions in the classroom social context. Prediction and teacher control of events and outcomes are not as important as the development of social context which supports self-regulated learners who act autonomously and independently on self-selected problems. Learning from the contextualistic perspective is the result of mutual engagement between the learner and the others in the classroom context. Social and affective goals would be integral with and related to academic outcomes. The classroom social context from the perspective on the contextualist includes more of what a teacher says and does all day long as important and potentially contributing to valued student outcomes. It includes more of the student's response to the classroom as contributing to student learning. From the contextualist perspective, the effects of the classroom social context include more of what is happening during the day and within those four walls than the Mechanistic perspective includes.

The contextualistic perspective is consonant with the viewpoint that mutual transactions exist between organism and the

classroom environment (Vygotsky, 1934/1986; Altman & Rogoff, 1987). Note, the word, "transaction" not interaction is used. This follows the Vygotskian notion of inner speech. The social context can actually affect and transform the nature of mind (Vygotsky, 1934/1986). Social goals can be integrated with, reciprocal to and intimately connected to academic goals (Poplin, 1988a, 1988b; Heshusius, 1991, 1992).

Dimension 4 covers two aspects of the context- the classroom social context and the impact that the neighborhood social context has on classroom instruction, according to the teachers' viewpoints. In both aspects of this dimension, the teachers' beliefs about what needs to transpire in the social context of the classroom is affected by the context of the school. Seven out of thirteen teachers said that social goals were as important or more important than academic goals. Having social goals alone does not necessarily align a teachers' perspective with a contextualistic perspective. However, the fact that several teachers were willing to deviate from the prescribed curriculum and pay attention to the unique needs of the children from the neighborhood indicates that they are willing to at least move away from the prediction and control of all classroom events. The willingness to see the value of social goals separate from and at least as important as cognitive goals tends to align the teachers' perspectives more with the contextualistic perspective on literacy teaching and learning.

Not only do many teachers value the social goals in the classroom and spend a good deal of time addressing those goals,

they also believe that fostering social development is one of the most important things that they do. Because of the neighborhood and the experiences that the students have outside of the classroom, as one teacher stated, "We spend a good deal of our classroom time trying to undo what has been done to these children at home. (E)"

The teachers spent classroom time "talking" about values, such as how to get along, how to treat others, how to not use drugs. Several teachers felt that at any time a lesson can be derailed by the needs that are present in the classroom. Thus, in some ways the teachers seem to break away from the more mechanistic focus of their academic endeavors to include the context of the children's lives. In this dimension the teachers would be more aligned with some of the elements of the contextualistic perspective of teaching and learning.

Section 3: Description of two focal teachers views of literacy teaching and learning

Two teachers from the thirteen volunteers were selected for Part 3 of the study based on their scores on the M-TORP. Teacher B had the lowest score on the M-TORP relative to the other teachers. This would seem to indicate that Teacher B was less phonics oriented in her teaching and more holistic and contextualistic in her orientation toward reading instruction. Teacher C, on the other hand, was one of the top five scorers on the M-TORP. The highest scorer was not selected because of poor management skills. The other two teachers' and Teacher C's score were only separated by one point. Teachers L and G were first grade and preschool teachers,

respectively, and Teacher C was an fourth grade teacher. Since Teacher B, a sixth grade teacher, was also an upper elementary teacher like Teacher C, it was decided to select Teacher C instead of Teacher L or G. The phonics orientation of Teacher C seems to be more consonant with the mechanistic perspective whereas the less phonics orientation of Teacher B seems to be more consonant with the contextualistic perspective. However, as noted earlier, no teacher's score on this measure falls clearly and unambiguously onto the contextualistic side. The range of scores for the teachers on the M-TORP seems to be from high mechanistic to slightly contextualistic.

As described in Chapter 3, the methods used to gather the data from the two selected teachers involved observations and an interview following the protocol for Part 3 (Appendix E). This section is a summary and comparison of the two teacher's beliefs and knowledge.

Recall that the two teachers were selected because their scores on the M-TORP contrasted. Teacher B's score seems to indicate that she tends more toward the contextualistic perspective whereas Teacher C's score seems to indicate that she tends more toward the mechanistic perspective. It should be noted here, however, that the overall scores for the teachers at the school ranged from moderate contextualistic to extreme mechanistic. There were really no teachers who represented extreme contextualistic perspective based on the scores.

Summary and comparison of the two focal teacher's beliefs and knowledge.

Teacher B and C were selected because it was assumed that their practices would represent and provide more information about two different models of literacy instruction at Washington Elementary- mechanistic and contextualistic. The first issue is: Were their beliefs and knowledge really that different? The second issue is: If so, how were they different ? Third, what more does this more in-depth look at two teachers tell us about literacy instruction at Washington Elementary? Appendix I presents a summary description of the focal teachers observed lessons. Appendix J presents a summary of the indepth interview with each of the focal teachers summarized by dimensions 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Teacher B and Teacher C share some similar characteristics in their teaching style and the way they operate their classrooms. As you walk in the door of each classroom, student desks are not arranged in rows but are arranged in clusters- 4 clusters in B's room, 3 clusters in C's room. Both teachers have student work on the walls of the classroom. Both teachers ran their lessons in such a way that there were no management problems during the whole time the lesson was observed. Both seemed to have a friendly and warm relationship with the students so that students came up to the desk before school with questions and would not hesitate to ask questions during and after the lesson.

The difference between the two teachers lies in the materials and methods they use and their attitude toward student background

knowledge. Teacher B does not seem to hesitate to use whatever she can think of to motivate the students and catch their interest. For example, by asking questions, by reading their journals, and by going out on the playground, she goes to great lengths to find out what interests them and, then, to figure out some way to incorporate that into her lesson. She is very concerned with helping the students see how the material they use and the skills they learn are applicable to their lives outside of the classroom. For example, she pointed out in the observed lesson (Appendix I) that the skill of summarizing is not difficult. They summarize all the time when they are telling someone about a movie or describing a basketball game. Teacher B then showed them how learning how to make a summary will make it easier to learn other things. Teacher B seems to have a keen sense of the differences among individuals in her class and spoke of several ways in which she has adapted the curriculum to meet student needs. Teacher B moved around the room as she taught. In several of these ways, Teacher B is indeed more contextualistic in her orientation to teaching. She accounts for and includes the background knowledge that children have when she approaches a lesson. She engages in dialogue with the children over the lesson content and over social developmental issues. She uses cross peer tutoring when the students are editing each others' papers.

Teacher C, on the other hand, used the materials provided by the district to teach the lesson in the reader. She taught from the basal. It was the first day on the story they were reading but

Teacher C did not ask any questions about the title or activate students' personal background knowledge in reference to the story. She had the students study key vocabulary words in sentences before they started reading the story. She modified the basal lesson and added her own questions to the story. The content of the reading lesson was to comprehend the story itself. Teacher C also asked further questions about certain parts of the story and extended the ideas to other areas of the curriculum. For instance, the students located the state of Wyoming on the map in order to identify the setting of the story. The students sat in their desks in a cluster as they read. The teacher sat in a desk with the students. Teacher C felt the lesson was important because of the standardized tests that the students have to take. Teacher C is concerned that the children will not have enough skills and information to pass the test. She believes it is very important for the children to pass the test and learn the skills.

Both teachers spend some time on the development of social skills in the classroom and survival skills in their lives outside the classroom. Teacher B said she has an open forum where any question is okay to ask of her and she can ask any question she wants of them. She said she will not hesitate to give them some "reality therapy" about the choices they are going to have to make. First, however, she really wants to know what they are experiencing and what they are worried about. Then, she will try to help them see that they need to make good choices to avoid prison and just to survive. Teacher C also spoke about talking to the children about

survival. Similar to the basal lesson, Teacher C does not seem to solicit each individual child's background knowledge about survival. However, she will stop a lesson in the middle to "talk" to them the rest of the morning, if necessary, about making better choices for themselves. There is a sense that when Teacher C talks to the children it is more like a loving parent preaching to a child. When Teacher B talks to a child, it is more like a guide suggesting that they need to think more about what they are doing. Both Teacher B and Teacher C care deeply about the children. They just have different paths to the same goal.

Since these teachers were selected on the basis of the M-TORP, it seems that the differences in their practices demonstrate the value of the M-TORP scale. Teacher B's score was more congruent with the contextualistic perspective whereas Teacher C's score was more congruent with the mechanistic perspective. Indeed in their practices, Teacher B relied heavily on the background knowledge to motivate the students to learn the material whereas Teacher C relied on the need to read the chapter and do well on the work to learn.

Section 4: Overall results

The four dimensions of literacy teaching and learning furthered the analysis of the results. To summarize those results and break away from the constraints of the four dimensions and see the whole school, the results under each dimension in Part 2 were read and reread until several patterns emerged. Three overall results emerged.

1. Teacher perception of student characteristics: According to most of the teachers, Washington Elementary School students come to the task of learning to read and write with several characteristics which influence classroom literacy instruction. The children have (a) a very limited vocabulary about and experience in the world, (b) a language that needs to be "corrected" or, at the very least, "improved", and (c) a need for organization and structure in their school lives because their lives outside of school are so disorganized and unstructured.

2. Teacher response to student characteristics: Teachers said that they responded to these perceived student characteristics by using skills-based methods to teach the children to read and write, providing a consistent classroom structure and, most important of all, by caring for the children.

3. Teacher feedback on student learning: To get feedback on the effectiveness of their endeavor, most Washington Elementary teachers seemed to echo the district concern for high scores on standardized tests, a measure that is external to the daily interactions in the classroom.

Taken together, the results indicate that the teachers responded to teaching in an urban context by focussing on caring for the children within a skills-based classroom structure.

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**URBAN TEACHER'S BELIEFS AND KNOWLEDGE
ABOUT LITERACY TEACHING AND LEARNING: AN EXAMINATION FROM
MECHANISTIC AND CONTEXTUALISTIC PERSPECTIVES**

By

Dannelle Diane Stevens

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CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

The study illuminates some of the issues involved in the literacy underachievement of many urban children. The purpose of the study was to describe and explain what urban teachers believe and know about literacy instruction. It is assumed that more knowledge of all the factors that contribute to urban literacy education might improve urban children's achievement. Teacher beliefs and knowledge have been linked to classroom practices (Peterson, , Fennema, Carpenter & Loef, 1989; Anderson, Englert, Raphael & Stevens, 1992). It is further assumed that teacher beliefs and knowledge about how to teach reading and writing tend to shape the instructional practices of teachers (Harste & Burke, 1977; Kamil & Pearson, 1979; Mangano & Allen, 1986; Wing, 1989; Johnson, 1992). The more we understand about teacher beliefs and knowledge the more likely staff developers and teacher educators will design programs and activities that meet the unique and pressing needs of the urban classroom teacher. Better communication and understanding among teachers and staff developers will impact positively urban literacy instruction.

The study's general conclusions fall under three categories:

1. Teacher perception of student characteristics: According to most of the teachers, Washington Elementary School students come to the task of learning to read and write deficient in several characteristics which influence classroom literacy instruction. The children have (a) a very limited vocabulary about the world as well as limited experience in the world, (b) a way of speaking and

communicating that needs to be "corrected" or, at the very least, "improved", and (c) a unstructured and somewhat disorganized life outside of the school.

2. Teacher response to student characteristics: Teachers said that they responded to these perceived student characteristics by using skills-based methods to teach the children to read and write, by providing a consistent and predictable classroom structure and routines for the children and, most of all, by caring for the children.

3. Teacher feedback on student learning: To receive feedback on the effectiveness of their endeavor, most Washington Elementary teachers seemed to rely on standardized measures of achievement provided by the district like the CAT test (the California Achievement test). These measures do not appear to be the kind of feedback which one could use to alter classroom instruction nor to understand the particular academic problems that the children have. Standardized tests provide more global data on the class as a whole.

Taken together these conclusions indicated that most teachers seek to create a stable and predictable classroom structure so that they can provide what urban children really need, an adult who cares for them. Because the children come to school so deficient, the teachers may see their task as filling an empty vessel, rather than using what the children know to inform instruction. Since the children know little and come to school with little, it is the job of the teacher to fill up that void. Having someone care for them above and beyond their academic needs is central to the teachers' role at Washington Elementary. Undergirding all the interactions with the children is the teacher perception that the most important

characteristic that teachers need when working with the children is to care for the children.

To teach school in an urban context means you must care about the children. To care means you take out time from academics to talk to the children. To care means you interrupt a lesson to talk about drugs or sex or shootings on the street the night before. To care means you teach the children the "correct" way to talk so that they will have a chance to succeed in the larger society. A teacher's relationship with the children is embedded with and sustained by the emotions involved in caring. It appears that, for the teachers, the events in the lives of the children outside of school seem to overshadow other more academic relations with the children inside of the school.

Implications of the urban context for urban schools

Previous research on other urban schools provided some background about urban teaching conditions and the potential effect on teacher beliefs and knowledge. From the descriptions of the teachers about the school context, Washington Elementary was not much different from other urban schools. Three types of contextual factors described in the theoretical framework of the study were important for understanding influences on urban teacher's beliefs and knowledge. (a) Urban, out-of-school contextual factors: High absenteeism, drop outs, drugs and lack of parental support seem to strain a teachers' practice in an urban school. (b) School-home contextual factors: Schools seem to have a narrow definition of literacy which does not include the background knowledge that the children, and, in this case, urban, African-American children bring to

school from home. (c) School contextual factors: Most urban teachers seem to limit their teaching to basal, skills-based instruction which some would argue further confines the urban child to a narrow definition of literacy and literate experience.

First, the urban, out-of-school context seemed to have an impact on teacher beliefs and knowledge about teaching the children to read and write. The urban school literature described a situation outside of the school fraught with disadvantage for the child. Similarly, the teachers' description of the urban context surrounding Washington Elementary was consistent with the description of other urban schools found in the literature (Kozol, 1991). The teachers described several strains put on their practice just because Washington Elementary was in an urban setting. For example, teachers remarked that things have "gone down" in the neighborhood in the last seven years. The teachers emphasized the many needs that the children have just because of the urban context. Teachers have to be everything for the children because they have so little in their lives.

There was one way that Washington Elementary was different from other urban schools, however. Urban schools are often marked by high absenteeism. The Washington Elementary principal worked very hard to change this situation at the school. Through the efforts of the school truant officer, Washington Elementary managed to get its attendance rate up to 93%. Second, previous research also indicated that schools in general, not just urban schools, have a narrow definition of literacy in contrast with the literacy experiences that children may bring to school with them. Similarly,

Washington Elementary teachers' beliefs and knowledge about literacy seemed to be very similar to other urban teachers' beliefs and knowledge about literacy. In general, the Washington Elementary teachers do not acknowledge, value or incorporate into the curriculum the natural language that the children bring to school with them. For example, several African-American teachers at Washington Elementary stated that "rap" was not a language. Teacher C, an African-American herself, said that rap was "just something they made up" and she could not stand it. Most teachers at Washington Elementary believed that the children did not have much literacy knowledge which would help them with school tasks. Yet, several researchers have suggested that the African-American English used outside the school is not deficient only different (Heath, 1986, 1989; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988).

The teachers described child-centered reasons for not including the background language of the children in the curriculum. Since part of caring for the children was giving them the tools to succeed in the society, the teachers taught the "correct" way to speak. Success depended on the children knowing and using "regular English" (Teacher G), "right way to speak English" (Teacher M), or "the language as it should be spoken" (Teacher A). Most Washington Elementary teachers viewed the language and literacy knowledge the children have when they come to school as a detriment to their success. Two teachers referred to the way that the children talk as "slanguage". At the very least, most teachers thought that the children's language needed to be "corrected", "improved upon" and "changed". As Teacher F, a second grade teacher, so clearly stated,

"You don't go to a corporate board room saying 'yo baby' and you had better know that". One kindergarten teacher (Teacher M) thought that the children should know that they have a choice about which language to use. Teacher M valued the language that the children bring to school with them.

It appeared that the only way the children's life outside of school was included in the curriculum was when the teachers "talk" with the children about the need for the children to change their behavior- stop killing each other, stop taking drugs, don't have babies, for example. Admittedly, it would be in the children's best interests to change these behaviors and it is probably quite true- the children lack background knowledge and experience with school-related topics. However, there are some questions about whether "talking at" accomplishes the purposes as well as "talking with" the children. Allowing the topics of literacy instruction to include drugs, revenge and violence, for example, might provide a bridge to school learning. Tapping the children's background knowledge would capitalize on well-developed schemas. Maybe there are aspects of the children's language and lives which would provide bridges between what the children know and what the school teaches.

Finally, the literature reveals that the within-school context for urban literacy instruction was limited to the reading lessons provided in the basal by the teacher. The use of the basal in urban settings led to an emphasis on skill-based learning. Learning to read and write in most urban schools was a matter of learning the set of component skills that are involved in reading such as how to make the sound of the letter "f" or knowing how to look up a word in the

dictionary. The Washington Elementary teachers' description of literacy instruction outlined a situation quite similar to previous research on urban literacy instruction. The Washington Elementary teachers taught students to read and write by focusing on the component skills involved in learning to read. Phonics, drill, and vocabulary knowledge were central to the task of learning to read. In the M-TORP and in the structured interview in the study, the teachers selected the more skills-based, phonics-oriented methods as the best way to teach the children to read. The teachers seemed to share the skills-based perspective of teaching children to read and write that had been found in other urban schools. In addition, in the area of writing several teachers mentioned that they did not teach "creative" writing because it was such a struggle just to get a sentence down on the page. The experience that students seem to have with literacy was limited to the activities provided by the basal.

In sum, the study contributes to the descriptions of life in urban schools, especially the life of the urban teacher. The study details the ways that the teachers talked about adjusting their instruction to the urban context. (The study further details teacher beliefs and knowledge about teaching children to read and write in urban schools.) Some of the teacher statements about teaching in an urban school signal ways that instruction might need to be reexamined to enhance childrens' learning.

(1) The teachers believed that the students had little, if any, background literacy knowledge to contribute to learning to read and write. Therefore, the teachers would not necessarily

activate the children's background knowledge when starting to read a chapter or a story. When a readers' or writers' schematic knowledge is not activated, it is harder to comprehend what he or she is reading (Pearson & Johnson, 1978). By denying the children's previous literacy experiences, the teachers may make school tasks seem less relevant to the children which can lead to a decrease in motivation and achievement (Stipek, 1988).

(2) The teachers attempted to correct or improve the natural language that the children brought to school with them. Most of the teachers felt that the children needed to speak correctly to succeed in the world. Their assessment of what children need to know to succeed in the larger society may be quite accurate. Yet, children need many and varied opportunities to change something as fundamental as the way they speak and the concomitant way that they think. Children also do not need to feel bad about the way they speak. Doing skill sheets, drill and recitation will not necessarily lead to change in language use. One can only speculate about the improvements that might be gained if teachers honored the African-American natural language the children bring to school. By letting children bring in their natural language, teachers could build a bridge to link what they know to what they are learning (Heath, 1986; Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1991; Allington, 1991).

(3) Teachers spent a lot of time, effort and energy caring for the children. For many of the teachers, this was the most

important personal quality that a successful teacher possesses at Washington Elementary. Concomitant with care was the importance of social development for the children. Maybe caring for the children and attending to their socialization took so much time and energy that the teachers did not have much time or energy left to reflect upon or change their academic instructional practices. The emotions involved in caring may have blinded the teachers to examining and improving their teaching. This conclusion of the study should inform any staff developer and teacher educator that any effort to change the urban teachers' practice must take into account how much the teachers care for the children.

Implications for classroom literacy instruction in urban schools

Two perspectives on literacy teaching and learning were used to analyze the data from the study and talk about teacher beliefs and knowledge. It is assumed that, in general, the type of classroom literacy instruction that children receive is undergirded by the teachers' different perspectives on teaching and learning (Gove, 1983; Barr & Duffy, 1978; Wing, 1989; Harste & Burke, 1977; Kamil & Pearson, 1979; Mangano & Allen, 1986).

The two perspectives on teaching and learning used in the study were labeled the mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives. The mechanistic perspective defined in the study focused on the learning of discrete skills as the path to literacy. The contextualistic perspective defined in the study focused on the social and cultural aspects of communication as the path to literacy. The mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives lie on a

continuum of perspectives of teaching literacy. Detailing the contrasts between these two theoretical perspectives provides us with a way to analyze and think about what happens in classrooms and what is presented to teachers in staff development programs. It is assumed that the mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives are convenient ways to talk about classroom instruction; yet, they are not the only ways to talk about literacy instruction. Most teachers will have a variety of instructional practices which can be described as mechanistic or contextualistic. Yet, it is also assumed that some teachers' practice is more consistent with mechanistic perspective on literacy teaching and learning while others' practice may be more consistent with the contextualistic perspective.

Some researchers find these contrasts in literacy teaching and learning to be useful ways to describe literacy instruction. Resnick (1990) described two perspectives, a skills-based perspective and a cultural-based perspective, as contrasting viewpoints about what it means to educate someone to be literate. From the skills-based, more mechanistic perspective, literacy education could be seen as a matter of organizing effective lessons. Literacy, then, becomes a "bundle of skills,....(where teachers are) diagnosing skill strengths and deficits, providing appropriate exercises, in developmentally felicitous sequences, motivating students to engage in these exercises, giving clear explanations and directions" (p. 171). If literacy is the development of discrete skills, then, our concern is the refinement of individual lessons in which reading and writing instruction is demonstrated. The skill approach has led educators away from the importance of the context in which children become

literate. Instead the skill approach centers on the refinement of individual lessons designed to teach a simple skill through direct instruction, drill and guided practice. When literacy is regarded as a bundle of skills, a number of questions arise like: What is the skill to be taught? Do the students already know this skill? How well did the students learn the skill? How much more practice will they need to gain mastery of the skill?

From the cultural-based, more contextualistic perspective, on the other hand, according to Resnick (1990), literacy education could be seen as a process of socialization into a literate community. Literacy then, becomes a "a set of cultural practices" during which teachers converse, write, read, exchange, listen and create with children in an effort to introduce the children into a community of literacy practitioners (p. 171, Resnick, 1990). Literacy from the cultural practice, contextualistic perspective is analyzed within the broader social context of the classroom. When literacy is regarded as a set of cultural practices, a number of other questions arise like: Who are the readers and writers in this situation? Why are they reading and writing? What do people read and write? What are the processes, cognitive and social, that define literate practices (Resnick, 1990)?

The teachers at Washington Elementary generally regarded the teaching of students to read and write more as a mechanistic process, the imparting of discrete skills rather than as a contextualistic process, the learning of a communities' cultural practices. A good literacy teacher at Washington Elementary should teach skills, organize effective lessons and provide practice in the

skill. For most of the teachers, writing is difficult for the students to learn and the teachers to teach because the students do not know the skill of reading first. From the more mechanistic perspective which most teachers at Washington Elementary share, learning phonics and vocabulary knowledge, and understanding the mechanics of writing are the keys to reading and writing. This is the foundation students need to ultimately become literate participants in the society.

Through several staff development programs in the two years prior to the study, the researcher introduced the teachers to alternative, more culturally-based, contextualistic conceptions of literacy instruction. Lectures and staff development activities of various instructional methods included reciprocal teaching, semantic mapping, cognitive strategy instruction and cooperative learning. Classroom demonstrations were provided by the researcher as well. Yet, it appears from the interview that almost all of the teachers chose to continue teaching using what they knew best: the more skills-based, mechanistic approach to instruction. Only one teacher (Teacher E) mentioned her struggle with trying out new ideas like cognitive strategy instruction. Another teacher (Teacher M) mentioned the alternative instructional practices like semantic mapping taught in staff development activities but did not elaborate particularly on how she used them. The eleven other teachers had not incorporated the alternative ideas from the staff development activities- at least they had not incorporated them into their vocabulary during that one interview. Additionally, in the interview, ten teachers out of thirteen selected the direct

instruction dialogue over the more interactive, contextualist, social constructivist-type dialogue as the best way to teach children how to comprehend the main idea of a paragraph. Thus, in general the teachers shared a more narrow conception of literacy as a bundle of skills rather than the broader notion of literacy as a cultural practice and did not seem to change their classroom practices to try out the alternative conception of literacy.

There could be several reasons why the teachers continued the more skills-based approaches even when presented with alternatives that were more culturally and contextually oriented. The project at the school basically involved the researcher alone as staff developer. The researcher attempted to make available the more constructivist, contextualist ideas about literacy through inservice programs, one-to-one conversations and classroom demonstrations. The project initially involved the whole school in after-school staff development efforts. Even though classroom lessons were demonstrated with the teachers' own students, the short-term exposure may not have been enough for the teachers to change and sustain change in their practice.

Another reason that the teachers may have held onto the skills-based orientation may have to do with their perceptions of and responses to the student characteristics. One of their responses to the students was first and foremost the need for the teachers to care about the students' lives. Several teachers stated how important it was to care about the students before you try to even teach them anything. Perhaps, the alternative instructional models did not include or address the teachers' concern for caring for the

whole child which is an essential part of their lives with the children at Washington Elementary. By ignoring that which was most important to the teachers, the researcher did not address the teachers' most central concern- caring for the children.

Another reason that the teachers hold onto the more skills-based orientation may be related to how they assess whether they have taught the children anything during the year. It appears that their way of getting feedback from their work was through standardized tests given once a year and daily personal interactions. The yearly, district-wide standardized test seemed to be an important part of their lives in the school. Everyone gets geared up for it. Teachers spend at least a month prior to the test preparing their students to take the test. There are posters around the school indicating the scores on the test over the last few years. The test measures vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension through a series of multiple choice questions. All children at all grade levels take the standardized test. Yet, every year the scores seemed to decline. The children fall farther behind grade level year after year. The school does not seem to get much better even with staff development efforts. The test seemed to indicate that the teachers were not succeeding very well in teaching the children to read and write. Thus, the teachers may have started to rely on the anecdotes, stories and incidents with individual children to get feedback on student learning and to give them evidence that they were accomplishing anything.

As a teacher, it is important to know that you have taught something. Yet, this profession is dominated by an "endemic

uncertainty" (Lortie, 1975). There are few ways that we know if we have ever taught anything. At urban schools where the children come to school with such disadvantage, perhaps it is important to focus on skills-based learning because then, at least, you can focus on the moment, the one letter sound, for instance, that the child should learn. Perhaps the uncertainty of teaching combined with effects of the urban context help explain why the teachers emphasize caring as an essential characteristic of a successful teacher at Washington Elementary and stay with the more conservative skills-based methods.

**Implications for staff development programs
in urban schools**

Recent research on literacy teaching and learning has indicated that learning to read and write is enhanced in classrooms when teachers seem to embrace a more contextualistic, cultural practice perspective on student learning. From the recent research on literacy teaching and learning there are several precepts which can inform staff development programs in urban schools. These precepts are:

1. Reading and writing activities need to be intertwined and interdependent all day long (Smith, 1977; Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984; Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson, 1985).
2. Teachers need to consciously make bridges between what students already know and school literacy events so that they activate the children's background knowledge (Pearson & Johnson, 1978; Dahl, 1989; Garcia & Pearson, 1991).

3. Classrooms are organized and structured so that students get involved in numerous and purposeful literacy related activities (Shuy, 1981; Moll, 1991).

4. Teachers use a variety of methods to assess student learning (Bracey, 1990; Johnston, 1990; Harp, 1991).

The study has shown that Washington Elementary teachers seem to have a set of beliefs which contrast with several aspects of the more contextualistic, cultural practice perspective on literacy teaching and learning described above. In an effort to understand the contrast between the beliefs and knowledge of the Washington Elementary teachers and some of the precepts of the more contextualistic perspective of literacy learning, the conclusions of the study are restated in the left column below. In the right column, let us pretend that an advocate of the more contextualistic, cultural practice perspective responded to these teacher beliefs.

What teachers already know about teaching the children to read and write in this urban setting.	What might be a response from a person who holds a more contextualistic, cultural practice perspective?
1. Teacher perception of student characteristics: a. The children have a very limited vocabulary and experience in the world. b. The children's language needs to be "corrected" or "improved".	1. The children have a natural language and knowledge that can be used in the classroom to bridge home literacy knowledge with school literacy experiences (Heath, 1986, 1989; Resnick, 1990).

c. Children need structure and organization in their school lives.

Because of the variety of activities that children engage in, teaching literacy from a contextualistic, cultural practice perspective requires more organization. However, children can help with by doing jobs and becoming more responsible for the classroom community in general. These activities can also contribute to increasing responsibility for their own social development (Putnam & Burke, 1992).

2. Teacher response to student characteristics: Teachers seem to respond by caring for the children, by conversing with them and by condensing the curriculum into discrete, teachable, skill-based objectives.

2. It is important to care for the children. The curriculum can reflect this care and can provide opportunities for students to practice caring for one another. Thank you notes, letters of appreciation, and jobs in the classroom can all teach children to care for one another and to take care of their environment (Comer, 1988; Haynes & Comer, 1990).

2. (continued) At the same time the children can learn that reading and writing are linked to real purposes and goals of value. Dialogue journals help teachers respond to students' messages and tell students that someone is listening to them (Reyes, 1991). The availability of books related to the children's lives might enhance interest and achievement. Classroom practices which are related to a broader, more contextualist perspective on literacy instruction would include more conversations with children about books, about their own writing, and about each others' writing (Calkins, 1986; Meier, 1987; Haynes & Comer, 1990).

3. Teacher assessment of student learning: The teachers rely on two things to assess student learning_ standardized tests and recollections of positive, daily interactions with the students.

3. Better assessment is central to improvement of literacy learning. If teachers only depend on external, standardized measures of success, they do not have a sense of what the children are learning day by day (Hansen, 1992). Ongoing dynamic measures of learning like portfolios and interviews would be more helpful and more immediate (Hansen, 1991). Teachers could get more reliable and constant feedback about what they are teaching (Clay, 1979; 1990; Harp, 1991; Paulson, Paulson & Meyer, 1991).

This all sounds well and good but the real problem is what kind of staff development efforts would take advantage of what the teachers already know and at the same time support their efforts to try out the alternative practices in the right hand column. Given that good teaching is not telling nor lecturing at the students, and, similarly, good staff development is not telling nor lecturing at the teachers. Good staff development program presenters would seek to work with teachers not against what they already know and believe.

Good staff development activities would take into account the teachers' prior knowledge. Good staff development activities would start from what the teachers already know and move to what they need to know, that is, start from the known and bridge to the new. Therefore, it is essential that any staff development efforts account for and include what the teachers already know and believe about teaching the urban child. That kind of information is provided from the results of the study described in the left hand column above.

Previous research has documented the staff development efforts designed to introduce teachers to more contextualistic and cultural practice perspective on student learning. There have been several studies which have measured teacher beliefs before and after implementation of the treatment in their classrooms (Carter, 1990; Palincsar et al., 1989; Peterson et al., 1989; Anderson et al., 1992; Richardson et al., 1991). Since the results indicate that the treatment had an effect on the students, it is often assumed that all treatment teachers acted and believed in the same way. However, these studies have documented that there is considerable variance among the teachers regarding their interpretation and even implementation of the studies' goals. One of the key factors which seemed to influence the degree to which teacher activities in the classroom were congruent with the studies' goals were the underlying teacher beliefs and knowledge about what students need to know to be successful in that particular subject. For instance, the teachers' prior knowledge of what children need to know to be good writers seemed to influence the degree to which the teachers were congruent with and implemented the process writing

strategies presented in the Cognitive Strategies in Writing project (Anderson et al. 1992).

There are several studies which indicate how important it is to know teachers' entering beliefs before attempting any change efforts. Several implementation studies in reading (Palincsar et al., 1989; Richardson et al., 1991), in writing (Anderson et al., 1992), and in mathematics (Peterson et al., 1989) sought to account for the importance of teacher construction of knowledge. These studies accounted for teacher prior knowledge by giving the teachers numerous and varied opportunities to use the new knowledge during the staff development activities. However, in all cases described above teachers differed in the way that they implemented the program. Again, it seemed that the teachers interpreted and acted upon the program based on their preexisting beliefs about students, teaching and learning.

Researchers, even those whose primary interest is student learning, must recognize that instruction is enacted by teachers in complex, demanding environments, and that in such environments, teachers' fundamental beliefs about teaching, learning, and subject matter exert great influence on instructional action. Thus, understanding teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning is a necessary element for understanding how students learn from classroom instruction and how educators can improve all students' opportunities to learn. (p. 44, Anderson et al., 1992)

Given the importance and difficulty of changing teacher beliefs while still attending to student learning, there are several things

that the above studies did not address. First, the studies did not seek out how the teachers viewed the school and neighborhood context as affecting their instructional decisions. The results of this study indicate how teacher beliefs seem to be intertwined with the urban context in which they are teaching. Since that is an important part of the teachers' reality, it seems important to use the teachers' viewpoints in designing the staff development and working in the school. Second, the researchers did not originally detail teacher beliefs and knowledge about the processes that they were teaching such as writing, and, then, use these teacher beliefs as bridges to teacher learning. In other words, the researchers did not detail the content of teacher beliefs before the staff development, use those details to shape the staff development activities, and, therefore, did not teach the teachers from the known to the new.

Third, the researchers did not ask the teachers to experience that which the students would experience in the treatment condition. After all, when researchers present teachers with new ideas, they are often preparing teachers to teach in ways that they have not been taught. Few if any teachers have learned to read using the more contextualist, constructivist perspective. Few if any teachers come to the task of teaching children to write feeling confident and buoyant about their own writing. There is nothing like first hand knowledge of the problems, successes, roadblocks and flyways when one is trying to teach something new to someone else. There is only one way to internalize these processes and problems: do it yourself and attend to your own process while doing it. It

appeared that many of the above projects designed to change teacher beliefs and knowledge and impact classroom instruction did not present teachers with opportunities to engage in meaningful learning of the processes themselves.

What would meaningful learning look like in staff development activities? Teachers need to read and enjoy literature and converse about what they are reading. Teachers may need to write, share their writing, publish their own writing. One can only wonder how engaged teachers might become if they felt the challenge, joy and motivation to read and write like they want their children to experience. What happens when teachers themselves become stronger readers and accomplished writers? What would happen when teachers share with their students their experience in "entertaining a text" (Smith, 1990)?

In general the goals of staff development activities are to help teachers construct the new beliefs about literacy teaching and learning based on what they already know about teaching in this urban school. The new beliefs that the teachers might need to embrace are: one, literacy instruction is realized through the teaching reading and writing all day long in all subject areas. Two, the curriculum used in reading and writing can provide numerous opportunities to show that you care and to teach the children to care for themselves and others while children are also learning how to read and write. Lastly, conversation, a stated value of the Washington Elementary teachers, is central to the development of language (Vygotsky, 1934/1986). In a literacy-focused environment children can be figuratively wrapped up in text and comforted

through songs, stories, letters, recipes, pictures, plays, and on and on. Whatever they can read and respond to becomes the text for the children. That text can be shared. That text can be read and reread. That text can reach out to them and embrace their many needs and concerns.

To build an effective urban staff development program, the insights derived from previous research described above can contribute to the design. In addition the descriptions of the teachers' work at Washington Elementary would contribute to the design of a staff development program. Given the past and present work, the staff development efforts in an urban school would need to have three foci:

Teachers as learners. In an effort to overcome the fact that most teachers have not been taught in ways that we expect them to teach, the goal in this part of the staff development program would be to help teachers become better readers and writers. Teachers need to experience once again the frustrations, the hopes, the challenges and the excitement of learning. Teachers need to feel what is like to be a strong reader and a strong writer. Teachers might benefit from experiencing the processes associated with learning to read and write in a community. They need to write for peer audiences, sit in author's chair, converse with each other about their own writing and reading, and feel the author's or informant's role. Eleanor Duckworth (1986) takes teachers on a learning journey using a moon log as the cornerstone. In the moon log teachers record their observations, discuss them

with each other and inevitably increase their own curiosity about the moon. The teachers begin to feel what it is like to be excited about learning and to share that excitement with others. The goal of this part of the staff development activity would be to get the teachers engaged in and excited about reading and writing in their own lives.

Teachers as observers, assessors and facilitators.

Another part of the staff development activities would support teachers in their exploration of alternative ways to assess their students' learning. One key piece in the change process is feedback that what you are doing as a teacher is working, particularly if you are trying something new. Teachers can learn different techniques for assessing children's knowledge of reading and writing processes (Clay, 1979, 1990; Harp, 1991; Bracey, 1990). Included in this section of the staff development would be how to conduct a reading interview, how to listen for changes in children's conceptions of the reading process, how to do dynamic assessment of comprehension skills (Johnston, 1990) and how to maintain a portfolio of children's work so that the children and the teacher get ongoing feedback about the children's progress (Harp, 1991; Paulson, Paulson & Meyer, 1991; Hansen, 1992).

It is assumed that, if teachers have no way to know what progress their children are making, they will not continue practices which require the teacher to risk and change their fundamental orientation toward children's learning.

Therefore, it is essential that teachers learn new ways to

assess what the children are learning. Teachers need to see how the students are making mistakes, they need to see and hear the misconceptions about the reading process that the children have and they need to see progress. Better assessment of ongoing student learning would facilitate instructional changes.

Teachers as members of school literacy learning communities. In an effort to sustain changes within a school and support further risk taking and continued change following the project, it seems important to open up the classroom doors so that teachers and students recognize the resources outside the classroom walls and within the school. Structured into the staff development activities would be videotaping, audiotaping oneself and another peer. Teachers at different age levels could meet and plan curriculum. Children could interact across age levels (Labbo & Teale, 1990). Fifth graders, for example, could read books to first graders. To sustain literacy activities across the school, the whole school needs to be involved in writing school newspapers, reading books to one another, sharing experiences in various forms and conversing about school concerns. In any urban staff development effort, in particular, the recommended literacy practices can be a way to show care and concern for the children, to teach social skills, to embrace the children's lives outside of school and to respond to the children's needs. Writing thank you notes, writing and reading stories about helping other people, reading fables with maxims at the end

can all teach reading, writing and listening skills at the same time as addressing the many pressing needs of the children. Having the whole school involved as a learning community would also give teachers a way to demonstrate their care for the children and share that caring with other teachers (Putnam & Burke, 1992). Further, it might institutionalize care across the school so that students also learn how to take care, listen and speak respectfully to one another.

The more difficult question is not how to encourage teachers to try out new ideas but to keep doing them over time, over enough time that they will see some changes in their students' learning which, in turn, would reinforce the changes in their practice. Because the staff development activities do not layer on new instructional models but seek to help teachers to internalize the broader-based conception of literacy teaching and learning, it is hoped that the changes in teacher practice would occur precisely because the staff development accounts for what the teachers already know. All of the above ideas will be mere activities if there is no opportunity for internalization. Time is important for internalization to take place. It takes time to change one's practice in the multidimensional and complex world of classrooms. Conversation and reflection can facilitate internalization of new practices. Opportunities to question, discuss, challenge, integrate and adapt new ideas into known strategies are essential if real, sustained change is to take place.

Using some of Schon's ideas about reflective practitioners might facilitate the meaningful, deep awareness and internalization

that is essential when one wants to improve one's practice. Schon's (1983) reflective practitioner stands back and considers his or her practice from a distant perspective. She or he contemplates what to do about the practice. For many staff developers and teacher educators this consists of using journals and discussion groups to promote reflection and provide opportunities for feedback from others (Zeichner & Liston, 1987 ; Bullough, 1989; Bullough & Gitlin, 1989). In addition, Schon states "practitioners do reflect on their knowing-in-practice. Sometimes in the relative tranquility of a postmortem, they think back on a project they have undertaken, a situation they have lived through, and they explore the understandings they have brought to their handling of the case" (p. 61, Schon, 1983). To create this atmosphere of reflection, one needs commitment to the process and a willingness to examine one's practice critically. It is hoped that knowing more about and incorporating more of the teachers' prior knowledge would support the teachers risk-taking and positive change through reflection and discussion.

Limitations

There are both methodological and conceptual limitations of the study. First of all, the methodological limitations include the fact that there were only thirteen teachers at one urban school who were interviewed for the study. Except for the two focal teachers, they were all interviewed only once. One data point on each of eleven teachers limits the reliability of the results. The teachers' answers may not be consistent over time. There is no reason to

believe that the teachers would change from one time to another but one should be cautious about these findings.

Another limitation was the time of the year when the study was conducted. The study was conducted at the end of the school year, in fact, during the last six weeks of the year. The school day was interrupted by assemblies, field trips and spring days. Gathering data at this time of the year may influence the results. There is some advantage to doing the study at the end of the year. The teachers have been working with one group of children all year and they know what can happen as well as what did happen.

Another limitation was that there was also only one school involved in the study. The city in which the school was located has 176 elementary schools. This is a picture of teacher beliefs and knowledge at one urban elementary school in that urban school district. The researcher gained access to the school because the principal was a proactive and energetic educator. Again, there are few reasons to believe that the teachers' answers might be any different in this school from any other school, but one needs to be cautious about the generalizability of data from only one school.

For the third part of the study, there were two focal teachers involved. More observations of the focal teachers classroom practices would have made the link between beliefs and practice more reliable. As it is, the one observation could only provide some critical incidents that were discussed in the interview. It would be more reliable information from the teachers if each teacher had been observed several times in order to establish the link between belief and practice. For the observations that were made, whatever

happened that morning could indicate that it was not a typical morning.

There are conceptual limitations of the study as well. The contrast between mechanistic and contextualistic instruction seems to be not very helpful in distinguishing between the practices of the teachers within the school. There were only two teachers at the school who embraced the more contextualistic perspective toward literacy teaching and learning. The other teachers seemed to espouse a more mechanistic perspective. Maybe the mechanistic, skills-based perspective is the best response to teaching the urban child to read and write. To ask the teachers to do otherwise would be destroying their relationships with the children and perhaps not meet the needs of the children. Also, having only two respondent who seemed to espouse a more contextualistic perspective gives us a very limited data on how people who might hold this perspective practice in urban schools.

In addition conceptually, some would argue that there are basic problems with dividing up the world of reading and writing into two simple perspectives: mechanistic and contextualistic. In so doing we lose the richness of the interactions of the teachers with the children outside of reading and writing activities. Mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives on reading and writing do not help us explain the caring that the teachers have for the children. A teacher who teaches from a more skills-based perspective and a teacher who teaches from a more contextualistic perspective both care about the children's lives. Literacy is a broader construct than is captured by the perspectives of literacy implied in the simple

contrast between mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives. Using those constructs alone to guide the development of the instruments may have shielded the researcher from other more relevant or more interesting variables present in the teachers' beliefs and knowledge about literacy teaching and learning in an urban school.

Future research

Future research needs to investigate and detail the contrast between the teachers' cultural expectations and the students' even when the two seem to share the same ethnic background. This research would provide us with a richer description of the experiences of African-Americans in the United States. Don't assume just because teachers and students share the same ethnic background that they will also share the same culture and world experience. In many ways the lives of the teachers at Washington Elementary were very distant from the lives of the children. Only one teacher in the study lived in the school neighborhood. Even though 73% of the teachers interviewed were African-American, the contrast between the teacher's background and that of the students' was significant. This contrast might have caused numerous communication problems. Even among the teachers themselves there was variance in their experience as African-Americans in the United States. Five of the teachers had been educated in segregated schools in the South and came North to this "big country town" (Teacher C) in the 1960's. Teacher C stated how much they liked the small houses and yards in this big city. Whereas, the remainder of the teachers grew up in the North either in cities or in the suburbs.

It might be interesting to see how much the Southern teachers' conception of schooling was shaped by all those years in an apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) in the segregated South.

Another future project would entail the implementation of the staff development program describe above. This project would be an implementation study where the staff developer focuses on helping teachers use conversations and care for the children as a path to literacy. Maybe the teachers need to read the books that the children read. Maybe the teachers need to write their own books for their peers. If one acts on the broader, more cultural-practice definition of literacy, the whole world opens up. This research project would have the potential of supporting change in the teachers' practices in the urban school because of its three-pronged approach: teachers as learners, teachers as assessors-observers, and teachers as members of a learning community.

Conclusions

In sum, the study is important for several reasons. First, it shows the influence of contextual factors on teacher beliefs. The way the teachers spend their teaching day with the children seems to be influenced by the needs of the children and the context of the neighborhood. Many studies of teacher beliefs and knowledge in the past have sought to understand some of the general concerns and interests of teachers. Earlier studies did not place the teacher beliefs in the context in which the beliefs were derived. Neither the neighborhood context nor the specific children were described in previous work on teacher beliefs and knowledge. In the previous work, the focus was on what teachers believed about what happened

within the classroom walls. In this study, the inclusion of teacher perceptions of the neighborhood context and the children's background enriches the description of the teachers' beliefs and knowledge. The teachers seem to base some of their instructional decisions on the fact that the children come to school with such an overwhelming set of needs. They will deviate from the curriculum to attend to the children's needs.

In addition, as the classrooms of the future become more diverse, it is important for us to not assume that teachers and students share the same values and culture. Just how teachers cope with the differences between themselves and their students and account for the differences between the home and the school learning is important for us to understand. Building successful multicultural classroom communities depends on our understanding of the cultural dynamics between the teachers, the school, the students and the community.

Finally, the study is important because it elucidates how teachers respond to the deep needs of their students in an urban context. Critical reflection may be overshadowed by the emotions involved in caring. Scholes (1989) in Protocols of Reading addresses the interconnections of reason (the texts in our mind) and emotion thus:

...reason always comes to us textualized with emotion. What a text is, can be described as a texture, a textile, woven of threads of reason and threads of emotion. (p. 108)

Embedded in the reasons for the work of the urban teacher is the text of caring for the children. Perhaps, clear analysis and critical

thinking is less possible because the work of being a teacher at Washington Elementary means being engaged so totally, so completely that changing ones' practice is risky at best, and devastating at the worst. There may be not much room for change in the academic endeavor of teaching the children to read and write because reason is interwoven with the emotions involved in caring. Yet, the gulf between the teachers' life and the students' life experience continues to grow every year so that several teachers remark on how different the children's values are from their own. To become more academic and self-critical may mean being less emotional, less caring. And these children have desperate needs. The academic endeavor may be frustrating and continually unsatisfactory. Yet, the teachers resolve that frustration by focusing on that which they can do consistently, that which they can see has an effect through their daily interactions, that which seems to make a difference in the lives of the children-- their concern and caring. One would not want them to care any less and continue teaching. Yet, perhaps the methods by which they deliver the caring can be reframed to build a classroom learning community where caring and literacy activities are mutually supportive and both teachers and students are nourished in the process.

Appendices

Appendix A:
Mechanistic and contextualistic perspectives:
Contrasts across four dimensions.

Appendix A:

Mechanistic and Contextualistic Perspectives:
Contrasts across four dimensions

DIMENSION #1 CONTENT

MECHANISTIC PERSPECTIVE	CONTEXTUALISTIC PERSPECTIVE
Goals: -The learning of simpler processes in reading and writing as building blocks for more complex reading and writing later. -Units of language: Letters, letter/sound relationships, words separate from stories& text -Tests on discrete subskills and strategies like finding the topic sentence -Emphasis on phonics and vocabulary development isolated from application to stories, books -Important to recognize words accurately, read fluently -Reading processes are separate from and prior to writing processes -Important to spell, punctuate, capitalize words, and know topic sentences in order to write -To comprehend students must know all words in a selection	Goals: -The learning of complex thinking processes in the context of authentic, whole tasks as essential for complex problem-solving activities -Units of language: sentences, paragraphs, whole stories, books, chapters, songs -Tests on amount and kind of information gained from comprehending texts -Emphasis on understanding what you are reading -Important to have a purpose while reading and writing, to define words in context -Reading and writing processes are intertwined -Important to recognize audience and purpose in writing -To comprehend, background knowledge activated, use of context clues, focus on purpose and making meaning.
Methods: -Basal reader- based and limited instruction. -Drill and practice on discrete isolated skills related to reading comprehension -Direct Instruction used: academic focus, precise sequencing of content, high pupil engagement, careful teacher monitoring, specific corrective feedback -Background knowledge facilitates comprehension but is not essential -Writing sentences from spelling words. -Oral reading to check fluency	Methods: -Basal reader- used but enriched with trade books -Numerous opportunities to connect reading and writing all day long. -Discussion, reciprocal teaching, problem-solving, process writing activities (author's chair, peer tutoring, publishing) used -Activation of background knowledge essential for comprehension -Creating sentences, stories from spelling words -Oral reading, silent reading, too.

DIMENSION 2: TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE

MECHANISTIC PERSPECTIVE	CONTEXTUALISTIC PERSPECTIVE
Personal:	Personal:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strong, positive, in charge -High expectations, based on teacher goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strong, positive, in charge -High expectations, derived with student goals in mind
Interactions:	Interactions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Student understands teacher expectations -Teacher concerned with student misconceptions, guesses or mistakes in relation to the teacher's goals -Teacher initiates, sustains and defines type, duration and scope of classroom interactions -Classroom routines are controlled in order to assure student success. -Teacher needs to provide clear, direct, unambiguous instruction -Many distinct opportunities for success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Student create own expectations -Teacher concerned with the quality of the exchange between teacher and student -Teacher initiates some not all learning activities -Teacher pays attention to the processes of literacy as well as the final product -Classroom routines engender shared understandings about meaning, forms and uses of literacy. -Teacher fosters opportunities for students to participate in classroom conversations over texts -Initial success not as important as grappling with ill-defined problems
Curricular Expectations:	Curricular Expectations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Progress is measured against externally (outside the classroom) constructed and externally controlled set of standards -Criteria for problem selection and evaluation is derived form an external set of standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Progress is measured against internal (teacher and student) constructed and controlled set of standards -Problems are selected and evaluated on the basis of classroom goals and objectives

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DIMENSION 3: STUDENT LEARNER ROLE

MECHANISTIC PERSPECTIVE	CONTEXTUALISTIC PERSPECTIVE
Personal:	Personal:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Listen, absorb information, give back -Motivated by rewards- extrinsic factors -Dependent, students need careful guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Listen, reconstruct meanings and apply -Motivated by a challenging environment -Independent, autonomous, self-reliant
Cognitive:	Cognitive:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Recite, reinforce, copy, memorize, drill and practice essential -Segment learning into parts through task analysis -Meaning is in the text -Texts have stable meanings -Background knowledge important because facilitates learning <p>-Focus on distant future benefits of learning</p> <p>-Errors only important in relation to external standards students need to know</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Converse, reply, exchange, discuss, grapple with ideas essential -Learning, a holistic experience; difficult to segment -Meaning created from person-text interaction -Texts are unstable, subject to interpretation -Background knowledge central, essential because interacts with text, can reshape learning (meaning is created through the interaction of text and audience) -Focus on present engagement and involvement -Errors critical in the path to individual learning
Interactive:	Interactive:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Peer tutoring acceptable because one student informs another of the information <p>-Highlights discrete, individual academic gains that students can learn from one another.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Peer tutoring, cooperative groups, collaborative problem-solving: variety of interactive formats with peers are worthwhile <p>-Highlights the broader individual and group gains achieved with interactive learning among peers.</p>

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DIMENSION 4: CONTEXT

MECHANISTIC PERSPECTIVE	CONTEXTUALISTIC PERSPECTIVE
Social Context of Instruction: -Learning is most efficient under tightly controlled conditions -Emphasis on prediction and control in classroom environment-Trusting your teacher not as important as having a controlled and predictable context -Social goals, not considered part of a teacher's job	Social Context of Instruction: -Learning proceeds through mutual engagement between learner and classroom context -Emphasis on development of self-regulation and independence among learners -Learners learn best from people they trust -Social goals important in classrooms -Social goals may be integral, reciprocal, connected and related to academic goals
Neighborhood Social Context: -Important to involve parents so that they can reinforce school learning expectations -Parents need to be informed about school expectations -Literacy learning needs to prepare students to succeed in the regular society. -Students need to correct their language and learn standard English.	Neighborhood Social Context: -Important to involve parents because we are concerned about the whole child -Parents can inform school about the child and their expectations -Literacy learning needs to be personally and culturally relevant to a student -Students need to know how to bridge from the language they know to standard English.

Appendix B1:
Part 1- Demographic Survey

Appendix B1:
Part 1-Demographic Survey

To provide some background on your professional experience, I would appreciate your answering the following questions. Thank you.

1. Professional Experience

Professional Education: I hold a (check one or both) B.A./B.S. _____ and or M.A./M.S. _____. I also hold additional certificates in _____

Teaching Experience:

How many years have you taught in the this city's public schools? _____
At what grade levels? _____

Of the above years that you have taught in the this city's public schools, how many years have you been at Washington? _____ years at Washington.

What grade levels have you taught at Washington?

Grades K-1____; Grades 2-3____; Grades 4-5____; Grades 6-7____.
Other specialty areas (Please list these and indicate length of service.)

II. Curriculum

For part of this study I am interested in the curricula that you have available and are able to use in the classroom. In addition, I am interested in how much opportunity you have during the busy school day to teach reading and writing. I am also interested in the kind of support you get from home for homework and school activities. The following questions address these topics.

A. Curriculum

What is the approximate amount of time every day that you devote to reading instruction with the basal (to teach all reading groups)? _____ minutes

How many reading groups do you have in your room? _____ number of reading groups.

Are there story books in the room? yes____; no____

Do you ever have enough time to organize a lesson around a story book? yes____; no____.

If yes, what do you do for this lesson?

If yes, how often would this lesson happen? _____

What are some of the other regular language arts activities that you do?
(Please describe).

How much time do you spend on these additional language arts activities each day? _____ minutes week? _____ hours & minutes

How many times during the week do students learn about writing? _____ times.
Please describe some of the things that students do when they are learning about writing.

What are some other writing activities that your students engage in? How often?

Please write out your typical daily schedule for all subjects (the kind of schedule you might write on the board for the students.)

II. Parental support.

How many home contacts (by phone or in person) do you make a semester? _____ times
In general, how much and what kind of parental support do you get?

Appendix B2:
Part 2- Modified Theoretical Orientation toward reading

Appendix B2:
Part 2- Modified-Theoretical Orientation toward Reading

The Modified-Deford Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP, Deford, 1985)

Name _____

Directions: read the following statements, and circle one of the responses that will indicate the relationship of the statement to your feelings about reading and reading instruction.

Select ONE best answer that reflects the strength of agreement (SA) or disagreement (SD).

1. A child need to be able to verbalize the rules of phonics in order to assure proficiency in processing new words.
2. An increase in reading errors is usually related to a decrease in comprehension.
3. When students work together, their writing is often not their own work. It is the result of other students and conversation in the classroom.
4. Fluency and experection are necessary components of reading that indicate good comprehension.
5. Materials for early reading should be written in natural language without concern for short, simple words and sentences.
6. When children do not know a word, they should be instructed to sound out its parts.
7. Teaching children about the reading process is as important as teaching children how to read.
8. Knowing about a student's family and community is necessary in order to help the student learn to read and write better.
9. Reversals (e.g., saying "saw" for "was") are significant problems in the teaching of reading
10. An fundamental task for teachers in introducing material is to find out student ideas and knowledge about the topic. Therefore, it is important to spend a great deal of time relating story and writing topics to students' background knowledge.
11. It is important for a word to be repeated a number of times after it has been introduced to insure that it will become a part of sight vocabulary.
12. Paying close attention to punctuation marks is necessary to understanding story content.
13. It is a sign of an ineffective reader when words and phrases are repeated.

14. Being able to label words according to grammatical function (nouns, etc.) is useful in proficient reading.
15. When coming to a word that's unknown, the reader should be encouraged to guess upon meaning and go on.
16. Young readers need to be introduced to the root form of words (run, long) before they are asked to read inflected forms (running, longest).
17. It is not necessary for a child to know the letters of the alphabet in order to learn to read.
18. Flashcard drills with sightwords is an unnecessary form of practice in reading instruction.
19. It is important for all children to write stories even if they cannot spell. It is also important for children to read stories even if they are non-readers.
20. Scribbling and reading picture books are as valuable as phonics in helping children learn to read and write
21. When students don't know an answer, it is more important for the teacher to provide an answer quickly rather than let the group spend time trying to work together to figure it out.
22. Phonic analysis is the most important form of analysis used when meeting new words.
23. Children's initial encounters with print should focus on meaning, not on exact graphic representation.
24. Word shapes (word configuration) should be taught in reading to aid in word recognition.
25. We first learn how to think from interacting with others not by figuring it out in our own mind.
26. If a child says "house" for the written word "home," the teacher should not correct the response.
27. It is not necessary to introduce new words before they appear in the reading text.
28. Some problems in reading are caused by readers dropping the inflectional endings from words (e.g., jumps, jumped)
29. Dividing words into syllables according to rules is a helpful instructional practice for reading new words.
30. It is a good practice to correct a child as soon as an oral reading mistake is made.
31. It is a good practice to allow children to edit what is written into their own dialect when learning to read.
32. The use of a glossary or dictionary is necessary in determining the meaning and pronunciation of new word.

33. Ability to use accent patterns in multisyllable words (pho' to graph, pho to' gra phy, and pho to gra' phic) should be developed as part of reading instruction.
34. Controlling text through consistent spelling patterns (The fat cat ran back. The fat cat sat on a hat.) is a means by which children can best learn to read
35. It is important to teach skills in relation to other skills.
36. Formal instruction in reading is necessary to insure the adequate development of all the skills used in reading.
37. When I teach reading, I make sure my students have mastered decoding skills and sound-symbol relationships before emphasizing and spending instructional time on reading comprehension.
38. Generally, it is best if students learn the basic mechanical skills (decoding) before they are taught higher-order thinking skills.

Appendix C:
Student Autonomy Scale

Appendix C: Student Autonomy Scale

The "Problems in Schools" Questionnaire

On the following pages you will find a series of vignettes. Each one describes an incident and then lists four ways of responding to the situation. Please read each vignette and then consider each response in turn. Think about each response option in terms of how appropriate you consider it to be as a means of dealing with the problem described in the vignette. You may find the option to be "perfect", in other words extremely appropriate in which case you would circle the number 7. You may consider the response highly inappropriate in which case you might circle the 1. If you find the option reasonable you would circle some number between 1 and 7. So think about each option and rate it on the accompanying scale. Please rate each of the four options for each vignette. There are eight vignettes with four options for each.

There are no right or wrong ratings on these items. People's styles differ, and we are simply interested in what you consider appropriate given your own style.

Some of the stories ask what you would do as a teacher. Others ask you to respond as if you were giving advice to another teacher or to a parent. Some ask you to respond as if you were the parent. If you are not a parent, simply imagine what it would be like for you in that situation.

Please respond to each response option by circling one number on its rating scale.

1. Jim is an average student who has been working at grade level. During the past two weeks he has appeared listless and has not been participating during reading group. The work he does is accurate but he has not been completing assignments. A phone conversation with his mother revealed no useful information. The most appropriate thing for Jim's teacher to do is:

- a. She should impress upon him the importance of finishing his assignments since he needs to learn the material for his own good.

1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	5.....	6.....	7
very			moderately			very
inappropriate			appropriate			appropriate

- b. Let him know that he doesn't have to finish all of his work now and see if she can help him work out the cause of the listlessness.

1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	5.....	6.....	7
very			moderately			very
inappropriate			appropriate			appropriate

- c. Make him stay after school until that day's assignments are done.

1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	5.....	6.....	7
very			moderately			very
inappropriate			appropriate			appropriate

- d. Let him see how he compares with the other children in terms of this assignments and encourage him to catch up with the others.

1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	5.....	6.....	7
very			moderately			very
inappropriate			appropriate			appropriate

2. At a parent conference last night, Mr. and Mrs. Greene were told that their daughter, Sarah, has made more progress than expected since the time of the last conference. All agree that they hope she continues to improve so that she does not have to repeat the grade (which the Green's have been kind of expected since the last report card). As a result of the conference, the Greene's decide to:

- a. Increase her allowance and promise her a ten-speed if she continues to improve.**

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7

very moderately very
inappropriate appropriate appropriate

- b. Tell her that she's now doing as well as many of the other children in her class.**

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7

very moderately very

inappropriate appropriate appropriate

- c. Tell her about the report, letting her know that they're aware of her increased independence in school and at home.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7

very moderately very
inappropriate appropriate appropriate

- d. Continue to emphasize that she has to work hard to get better grades.**

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7

very moderately very
inappropriate appropriate appropriate

3. Donny loses his temper a lot and has a way of agitating other children. He doesn't respond well to what you tell him to do and you're concerned that he won't learn the social skills he needs. The best thing for you to do with him is:

- a. **Emphasize how important it is for him to "control himself" in order to succeed in school and in other situations.**

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7

very moderately very
inappropriate appropriate appropriate

- b. Put him in a special class which has the structure and rewards contingencies which he needs. 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7

very inappropriate moderately appropriate very appropriate

- c. Help him see how other children behave in these various situations and praise him for doing the same. 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7

very inappropriate	moderately appropriate	very appropriate
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- d. Realize that Donny is probably not getting the attention he needs and start being more responsive to him.**

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7

very moderately very

inappropriate appropriate appropriate

4. Your son is one of the better players on his junior soccer team which has been winning most of its games. However, you are concerned because he just told you he failed his unit spelling test and will have to retake it the day after tomorrow. You decide that the best thing to do is:

a. Ask him to talk about how he plans to handle the situation.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7

very moderately very

inappropriate appropriate appropriate

b. Tell him he probably ought to decide to forego tomorrow's game so he can catch up in spelling.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7

very moderately very

inappropriate appropriate appropriate

c. See if others are in the same predicament and suggest he do as much preparation as the others.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7

very moderately very

inappropriate appropriate appropriate

d. **Make him miss tomorrow's game to study; soccer has been interfering too much with his schoolwork.**

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7

very moderately very

inappropriate appropriate appropriate

5. The Rangers spelling group has been having trouble all year. How could Miss Wilson best help the rangers?

a. Have regular spelling bees so that the Rangers will be motivated to do as well as the other groups.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7

very moderately very

inappropriate appropriate appropriate

b. Make them drill more and give them special privileges for improvements.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7

very moderately very

inappropriate appropriate appropriate

c. Have each child keep a spelling chart and emphasize how important it is to have a good

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7

very moderately very

inappropriate appropriate appropriate

d. Help the group devise ways of learning the words together (skits, games and so on).

1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	5.....	6.....	7
very			moderately			very
inappropriate			appropriate			appropriate

6. In your class is a girl named Margy who has been the butt of jokes for years. She is quiet and usually alone. In spite of the efforts of previous teachers, Margy has not been accepted by the other children. Your wisdom would guide you to:

a. Prod her into interactions and provide her with much praise for any social initiative.

1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	5.....	6.....	7
very			moderately			very
inappropriate			appropriate			appropriate

b. Talk to her and emphasize that she should make friends so she'll be happier.

1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	5.....	6.....	7
very			moderately			very
inappropriate			appropriate			appropriate

c. Invite her to talk about her relations with the other kids, and encourage her to take small steps when she's ready.

1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	5.....	6.....	7
very			moderately			very
inappropriate			appropriate			appropriate

d. Encourage her to observe how other children relate and to join in with them

1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	5.....	6.....	7
very			moderately			very
inappropriate			appropriate			appropriate

7. For the past few weeks things have been disappearing from the teacher's desk and lunch money has been taken from some of the children's desks. Today, Marvin was seen by the teacher taking a silver dollar paperweight from her desk. The teacher phoned Marvin's mother and spoke to her about this incident. Although the teacher suspects that Marvin has been responsible for the other thefts, she mentioned only the one and assured the mother that she'll keep a close eye on Marvin. The best thing for the mother to do is:

a. Talk to Marvin about the consequences of stealing and what it would mean in relation to the other kids.

1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	5.....	6.....	7
very			moderately			very
inappropriate			appropriate			appropriate

b. Talk to him about it, expressing her confidence in him and attempting to understand why he did it.

1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	5.....	6.....	7
very			moderately			very
inappropriate			appropriate			appropriate

- c. Give him a good scolding; stealing is something which cannot be tolerated and he has to learn that.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7		
very inappropriate	moderately appropriate	very appropriate

- d. Emphasize that it was wrong and have him apologize to the teacher and promise not to do it again.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7		
very inappropriate	moderately appropriate	very appropriate

8. Your child has been getting average grades, and you'd like to see her improve. A useful approach might be to:

- a. Encourage her to talk about her report card and what it means for her.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7		
very inappropriate	moderately appropriate	very appropriate

- b. Go over the report card with her; point out where she stands in the class.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7		
very inappropriate	moderately appropriate	very appropriate

- c. Stress that she should do better, she'll never get into college with grades like these.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7		
very inappropriate	moderately appropriate	very appropriate

- d. Offer her a dollar for every A and 50 cents for every B on future report cards.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7		
very inappropriate	moderately appropriate	very appropriate

Appendix D:
Part 2- Structured individual interview protocol

Appendix D:
Part 2- Structured Individual Interview Protocol

Interviewer opening remarks:

" I would like to spend some time asking you some questions about teaching at Washington Elementary . First I will ask you some general questions; then I will get more specific. All of the questions I ask are seeking your professional ideas and opinions about the item. There is no right or wrong answer. There is no better answer than any other answer. The questions are just to provide a stimulus for thought about the teaching of reading and writing. If you think of some other information that might be relevant to the topic of teaching reading and writing please include it in your answer. I would like to tape record the interview. I will also be taking some notes of what you say in order to supplement the tape. Do you have any questions?"

1.1. I recognize that this is a big question. But, I am interested in what you think about being a teacher at this school. Please tell me about what it is like to teach school at Washington Elementary .

1.2. Assume that there is a new teacher at Washington Elementary . She is certainly not new to teaching; she has been working in Maple Ridge for several years. However, she is new to Washington Elementary . She approaches you to get some information about working at this school. What would you tell this teacher tell about what is important to know about teaching at Washington Elementary ?

Probes:

1.2.a. What is most important for this new teacher to think about when teaching these children reading and writing?

1.2.b. What would be a great mistake to do in your first year here?
What about in reading and writing instruction?

1.2.c. What advice would you give this teacher in making sure that things run smoothly?

1.2.d.. What would you say about the children?

Probe: Anything else you would say to a new teacher about the children at Washington Elementary ?

1.2.e. How would teaching at Washington Elementary be different from teaching say at Maple Ridge?

Probe: Are the children the same or different from the children in Maple Ridge?

1.2.f. What about teaching reading and writing at Maple Ridge? Do you speculate that there are some differences?

1.3. How would you describe a good teacher at Washington Elementary ?

1.3.a What if I phrased the question in more general terms-- what are the characteristics of a good teacher of urban economically disadvantaged African-American students, not just students at Washington Elementary ?

2. Please tell me about teaching reading at Washington Elementary .

2.1.What is important to do as a reading teacher?

- 2.2. When you think about teaching students how to read, what do these children need to know to be successful?
- 2.3. When do your students read in your class?
- 2.4 . How would you describe your reading program?
 - Activities?
 - Areas covered?
 - Frequency of instruction?
 - Grouping practices?
- 2.5. What are your goals for reading instruction?
2. 6. What specific skills do you want your children to have before they leave your room for the year? Is phonics and vocabulary development important to your teaching of reading?
3. Please tell me about teaching writing at Washington Elementary .
 - 3.1. What is important to do as a reading teacher?
 - 3.2. When you think about teaching students how to read, what do these children need to know to be successful?
 - 3.3 When do your students write in your class?
 - 3.3.a. What type of writing do they do?
 - 3.3..b. How frequently?
 - 3.3.c. What kinds of things do you teach the children?
 - 3.4 What are your goals for writing instruction?
 - 3.5. What specific skills in writing do you think your students should learn before they leave your room for the year?
4. What role do you feel you play in student learning to read? How about learning to write?
 - 4.1. What do you do that most helps students learn to read? to write?
 - 4.2. Is it similar to what you might do in another school, say like in Maple Ridge?
5. What role do students play in their own learning to read? to write?
 - 5.1. What do students themselves do that most helps them learn to read? to write?
 - 5.2. Do your students ever work in collaborative groups in reading? in writing? Do they ever collaborate in other subjects?
 - 5.1.a. What are the benefits of collaborative grouping?
 - 5.2. What do children need to know to be successful in reading in collaborative groups?
 - 5.3. What do children need to know to be successful in writing in collaborative groups?
 - 5.4. Do you have problems with collorative groups? How do you overcome the problems?
6. What kinds of things do you intentionally do to make sure the classroom lessons run smoothly?
 - 6.1. What kind of management ideas are important to remember when teaching reading here at Washington Elementary ?
 - 6.1.1. How is this different from Maple Ridge?
 - 6.2. What kind of management ideas are important to remember when teaching writing here at Washington Elementary ?
 - 6.2.1. How is this different from Maple Ridge?
 - 6.3. How much attention do you give to teaching students how to get along? Why?

8. Now, I am going to read to you some statements that people have said about teaching economically disadvantaged African-American children in urban settings.

From working here you know a lot about teaching the children, I would like to know if you agree or disagree with these statements and why you feel that way.

8.1. "Some people have suggested that the economically disadvantaged African-American children in urban settings need direct, explicit instruction in reading and writing that focuses on phonics and vocabulary development. Only after teachers have provided this fundamental direct instruction, then, should the teacher consider other things like having students read literature or participate in cooperative groups."

a. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why? Why not?

8.2. "Some people have suggested that economically disadvantaged African-American children in urban settings come to school with a strong oral tradition. These children know a lot about language through speaking. Yet, schools evaluate the students' performance on their ability to respond in writing not their oral language. Some people criticize these schools for trying to make the African-American student white."

a. Do you agree with this or not? Why? Why not?

8.3. "Some people say that teachers need to take into account a child's cultural and linguistic background when teaching reading and writing."

a. Do you agree with this or not? Why? Why not?

b. Would this be appropriate with your students? Do you agree or disagree?

Part 1: Interview.....

Section 9.-Dialogue Analysis...

I would now like you to read two different classroom dialogues. The dialogues occur in different classrooms after the third graders have read a short paragraph. Each teacher handles the interaction with the students after the reading differently. The passage that the students read is as follows:

My father can cook bacon and eggs real well. He can also bake cakes that taste wonderful. He cooks excellent popcorn and pizza. The thing he cooks best of all, however, is hamburgers barbecued on the grill.

DIALOGUE 1:

Teacher: Who can tell me about the main idea of this paragraph?

Elise: It's about bacon and eggs.

Tom: It's about pizza.

Marilee: It's about dad's food.

Greg: Those aren't main ideas, Ms. Jackson.

Teacher: How do you know?

Greg: Those ideas don't tell what is mostly about-- they give details.

Teacher: Good thinking, can anyone help the group? What are you all thinking about the main idea?

Greg: This paragraph tells what dad cooks.

Teacher: You know when I want to remember something. I try to get the main idea. I might look at all the details like pizza, bacon and eggs, cakes and think to myself, "What are all of these about?" I would come up with "dad's cooking" as a main idea.

DIALOGUE 2:

Teacher: Remember last time when we learned how to find main idea sentences in paragraphs? Today you will learn how to find main ideas in paragraphs that do not have topic sentences. This is an important reading skill because, if you can figure out what these main ideas are, you will understand and remember the most important information in the material that you read.

Look at the example I have on this transparency.

My father can cook bacon and eggs real well. He can also bake cakes that taste wonderful. He cooks excellent popcorn and pizza. The thing he cooks best of all, however, is hamburgers barbecued on the grill. (*Teacher reads paragraph.*)

Notice that there is no single sentence that states the main idea. Rather, the entire paragraph consists of a series of details. This does not mean that there is not a main idea in this paragraph, however, for there is a main idea.

Teacher: What would be the topic of this paragraph?

Frank: Bacon and eggs.

Teacher: No, Frank, because only the second sentence talks about bacon and eggs. The topic has to cover all the details in the paragraphs. What is the topic?

Desmond: Father cooking

Teacher: All right, the topic of the paragraph is "father cooking".

Now let's list on the board all the ideas that talk about father cooking.

Who can help us begin?

Tamara: Father can cook bacon and eggs. (adapted from Baumann, J., 1984, pp. 108-109)

Interview Questions:

9.1. What is the difference between these dialogues?

9.2. Which one of these dialogues is more likely to occur in your classroom?

9.3. Which one is more likely to teach the student what he or she needs to know about main ideas?

Appendix E:
Part 3- Structured individual interview protocol
with two focal teachers

Appendix E:

Part 3- Structured individual interview protocol with two focal teachers

Questions for Teacher B based on lesson observation.

I am interested in focusing in on parts of the lesson I observed. Sometimes I find that it is easier for teachers to talk about what they do when we focus on a particular lesson. I observed you teaching a lesson to build summarization skills. There were some very interesting parts to that lesson that I think we have talked about before in a more abstract way.

L1. Started the lesson with "If you do not want to participate and can't handle this, you can leave now." What is important about saying this to the children?

L2. You used Bill Cosby show for an example in the first part of the lesson. Why?

L3. Let me recall, what reasons should students learn to summarize?

L4. Mapped summarizing characteristics.... How did they learn to map?

What if a student came up with a different summary?

L5. I noticed the following statements. I am curious about what your goal was in saying these things.

L5.1. You made several reference to the children's families. How does that work in supporting your goals?

L5.2. Everyone here is going onto high school and finish and even onto college.

L5.3. Every day you have been summarizing. Story of brother and sister playing quietly in the next room. "Don't judge a book by its cover. That is like your mom or grandma would say."

L5.3. What does Eric's success tell you about schooling for the urban child?

(Continue with Phase 3, Part II & III, interview questions on other sheet.)

Questions for Teacher C based on lesson observation.

First of all I would like to comment on your class. I appreciated observing your children. There are many capable youngsters in that room. I am interested in focusing in on parts of the lesson I observed. Sometimes we find that it is easier for teachers to talk about what they do when they focus on a particular lesson. I observed your teaching a reading lesson. There were some very interesting parts to that lesson that I think we have talked about before in a more abstract way.

L6. You have one reading group this year. Do you think you will do that again next year?

L6.2. Would you make any changes? So few teachers feel comfortable having one group.

L6.3. How did you manage it?

L7. There were some noteworthy things that happened. Could you tell me about:

Some of your students went out for Accelerated reading.

Did that help them become better readers? In what way?

L7. In the reading lesson

L7.1. What is the opposite of amateur-- professional, AM-PM,-- You extended the learning beyond what was given in the lesson itself. Can you tell me more about that?

L7.2. Why did you have students look up Wyoming on the map?

L7.3. Give purpose to students for what they are reading. You ask guiding questions before they start to read. Why?

L7.4. You sit with students at student desks during reading. Students gather around the board. In both math and reading students had an opportunity to write on the board.

L7.5. During the reading lesson there was a long discussion on having a "face as hard as stone"..... Student answers-- " all face different directions", "never moved his face around"-- Students gave a number of different responses until after 5 or 6 students one answered correctly. You did not really tell them the answer.

L7.6. During the Quest lesson, you had students work with partners to read and then present the material on alcoholism. Also, you assigned students to draw a group picture to show what alcoholism does to a person. Tell me about the goals and methods you used here, please.

(Continue with questions from Part 3, Sections II & III below)

II. This section focuses on the broader questions related to the lessons themselves.

1.1. Was this lesson typical today?

1.2. Although I observed the lesson and have a general idea of what it was about, I would like to hear in your own words how you would describe this lesson to someone. What was it about? What methods did you use? How do you account for children's different responses to the lesson? What did you want the children to learn?

1.2.1. Does the district have curricular guidelines?

1.2.2. Was this lesson directly related to district curriculum? Do you feel you can deviate from curricular guidelines very often? Do you deviate from these guidelines? In what areas?

1.2.3. I am interested in your observations of the lesson. As you think back, what kinds of things do you think worked especially well? Which ones? Why? Why not?

2.1. What did you do that helped students to learn? What kind of planning did you do? How important was your role in facilitating student learning?

3.1. What would tell you that the students had learned what you taught them in this lesson?

3.2. What do students have to do to succeed in this lesson? Did all of the students do this?

Why? Why not?

3.2.1. Are there any special considerations you make for students in this lesson?

4.1. What do you think you did before and during the lesson to make sure that the lesson ran smoothly? How did you manage the lesson?

4.2. Imagine that you would be teaching this lesson at another school with a higher SES. How might you change the lesson? What kinds of changes would be necessary? What kind of things do you think you did here rather than in another school? How does the neighborhood context affect your teaching?

III. Questions related to teaching in this context.

5.1. When you decide that a lesson was successful, what criteria do you use for success?

5.2. How do you decide what students need to know to be better readers and writers/

5.3. What methods seem to work best with these students? Why?

6. 1. What do students need beyond what the district provides. How do you provide that?

6. 2. Do you have an opportunity to consider what students want to learn very often? If you do, what changes do you make in the curriculum?

6. 3. How much control do you think teachers really have over student learning? what other factors contribute to student learning?
7. 1. Please tell me about your students.
7. 2. In general, are there some activities that are more effective in teaching students than others? Which ones? Why? Why not?
7. 3. Should students have more opportunities to learn from one another? What kind? How would structure those opportunities? How would you make sure students had learned something from one another?
7. 4. What have you found that children can gain academically and/or socially from working in groups or with one another? Can you describe any specific instances?
7. 5. Is there anything in particular that children can gain from working with one another in a group that they cannot gain any other way?
7. 6. Imagine that you are collaborating with some other teachers to develop a presentation for new teachers regarding alternative learning activities to be used in the classrooms. One teacher comments, "I never let my children work in pairs or groups. They just don't get through the material fast enough and there are too many discipline problems." How might you respond?
8. 1. What do you think are the reading and writing needs of the particular students at Greenfield Park?
8. 2. How do you account for the differences among these students in learning and behavior?
8. 3. How do you explain your successes or failures in helping these students learn to read?
8. 4. Would you work differently in a different context?

THANK YOU....

Appendix F:
Permission slip

Appendix F: Permission Slip

Two Types of Research Projects

I. The researcher brings in a new project or idea.

The research question for this first type of project is:

What is the effect of this project on the people's behavior, knowledge and/or attitudes?

This is an experimental design.

II. The researcher visits a school and observes or talks to the people in the school.

The research question for this type of project is:

How does the world make sense to the people in it?

This type of research is a descriptive study. The researcher creates a description of the situation from the viewpoint of the participants in the situation. The researcher just wants to know "what is" and what the people in the situation are concerned about.

My project is a descriptive study, the second type of research.

I want to know what kinds of things you think about when teaching he children at Washington Elementary to read and write. The project will involve:

Today: Completion of three surveys on reading, student motivation and your professional experience.

Sometime between now and the end of school: An interview about teaching reading and writing at Washington Elementary. The interview should take about one hour. You will receive a copy of the interview questions ahead of time. I would like to tape record the interview. Your identity will be protected. All tapes will be coded for analysis and subsequent reporting. We may be able to get a floating sub to take your classroom during seatwork so that I may interview you. I do not expect the interview to take place after school or before school. I would like to make it convenient for you.

Your participation in the project is voluntary. Should you decide to participate, you should know that you can withdraw from the study at any time. Also, if there is any question in the interview or survey that you do not want to answer, you have the right to refuse to answer it.

I am looking forward to learning about all the things that are important to consider when teaching reading and writing at Washington Elementary. I think this will help people address your needs better in staff development programs.

Signed, _____.

Home phone; _____

Thanks.

Dannelle D. Stevens
(517) 351-1952

Appendix G:
M-TORP Sorted by subsections

Appendix G:
M-TORP Sorted by subsections

The Deford Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP, Deford, 1985)

Name _____

Directions: read the following statements, and circle one of the responses that will indicate the relationship of the statement to your feelings about reading and reading instruction.

Select ONE best answer that reflects strength of agreement (SA) or disagreement (SD).

PHONICS SUBSECTION

1. A child need to be able to verbalize the rules of phonics in order to assure proficiency in processing new words.
2. An increase in reading errors is usually related to a decrease in comprehension.
4. Fluency and experssion are necessary components of reading that indicate good comprehension.
6. When children do not know a word, they should be instruction to sound out its parts.
9. Reversals (e.g., saying "saw" for "was") are significant problems in the teaching of reading
11. It is important for a word to be repeated a number of times after it has been introduced to insure that it will become a part of sight vocabulary.
12. Paying close attention to punctuation marks is necessary to understanding story content.
13. It is a sign of an ineffective reader when words and phrases are repeated.
14. Being able to label words according to grammatical function (nouns, etc.) is useful in proficient reading.
16. Young readers need to be introduced to the root form of words (run, long) before they are asked to read inflected forms (running, longest).
22. Phonic analysis is the most important form of analysis used when meeting new words.
24. Word shapes (word configuration) should be taught in reading to aid in word recognition.
28. Some problems in reading are caused by readers dropping the inflectional endings from words (e.g., jumps, jumped).
29. Dividing words into syllables according to rules is a helpful instructional practice for reading new words.
30. It is a good practice to correct a child as soon as an oral reading mistake is made.
32. The use of a glossary or dictionary is necessary in determining the meaning and pronunciation of new words.
33. Ability to use accent patterns in multisyllable words (pho' to graph, pho to' gra phy, and pho to gra' phic) should be developed as part of reading instruction.
34. Controlling text through consistent spelling patterns (The fat cat ran back. The fat cat sat on a hat.) is a means by which children can best learn to read.
35. It is important to teach skills in relation to other skills
36. Formal instruction in reading is necessary to insure the adequate development of all the skills used in reading.

HOLISTIC SUBSECTION

3. When students work together, their writing is often not their own work. It is the result of other students and conversation in the classroom.
5. Materials for early reading should be written in natural language without concern for short, simple words and sentences.
7. Teaching children about the reading process is as important as teaching children how to read.
8. Knowing about a student's family and community is necessary in order to help the student learn to read and write better.
10. An fundamental task for teachers in introducing material is to find out student ideas and knowledge about the topic. Therefore, it is important to spend a great deal of time relating story and writing topics to students' background knowledge.
15. When coming to a word that's unknown, the reader should be encouraged to guess upon meaning and go on.
17. It is not necessary for a child to know the letters of the alphabet in order to learn to read.
18. Flashcard drills with sightwords is an unnecessary form of practice in reading instruction.
19. It is important for all children to write stories even if they cannot spell. It is also important for children to read stories even if they are non-readers.
20. Scribbling and reading picture books are as valuable as phonics in helping children learn to read and write.
21. When students don't know an answer, it is more important for the teacher to provide an answer quickly rather than let the group spend time trying to work together to figure it out.
23. Children's initial encounters with print should focus on meaning, not on exact graphic representation.
25. We first learn how to think from interacting with others not by figuring it out in our own mind.
26. If a child says "house" for the written word "home," the teacher should not correct the response.
27. It is not necessary to introduce new words before they appear in the reading text.
31. It is a good practice to allow children to edit what is written into their own dialect when learning to read.

Appendix H:
Summary of teacher interviews by dimension

Appendix H:
Summary of teacher interviews by dimension

Teacher A: Summary of interview by dimension

DIMENSION 1: CONTENT

Teacher A, a sixth grade teacher, wants her students to develop a "real need for reading" and to use writing for personal expression. She wants them to be able to "share the most important part of their life in writing." The classroom activities indicate that she has lofty goals for the children. She wants the students to integrate what they learn into their lives. It is important to introduce them to the arts and to beautiful things like poetry and paintings. Several of her activities are designed to show children the cultural heritage of the larger society "because they don't have anything, you know, as far as just the nice things, I'm not talking about materialist things. Just to know there are lovely and beautiful things in the world, that people have written beautiful books, poetry, chiseled wonderful statutes and things." When she takes her students to the various museums in the city, she points out "They are not in a movie theater, this is not video-land. There is something of value here."

One of the biggest teaching challenges for Teacher A is adjusting her instruction to the children's lack of background knowledge, "a word that you presume is common language, they don't know. They haven't been exposed to it." "They 'live in a vacuum'. You know, as far as vocabulary development or concepts of different things that we presume that everyone knows." When children read in her class, she stresses that each word is important. "I tell them you can't just skip over. That could be the most important word in the sentence. Then, we go phonetically and try to sound it out and then look it up, and, by that time you've lost the whole story." Children are not curious about the meanings of words either. "I wish I could get them to be more curious for the meanings of words....When they don't know a word, they just make a noise, using the initial sound, so that they don't get the whole meaning and they just go on." Thus, she sees the important part of teaching reading as "good coverage of the vocabulary." However, it is not the whole text that seems to be stressed. Teacher A seems to have a subskill approach to teaching reading. She did not mention using context clues to determine word meaning. At one end of her practice there are lofty ideals about beautiful things and ideas and at the other end is memorizing poems, copying spelling sentences, doing worksheets and memorizing the language and expressions as given by someone else- the larger society. The skills she teaches are designed to help students bridge that gap, to help them reach into the larger society.

Teacher A uses the basal because it gives her confidence that she has covered all the subskills necessary to be a proficient reader. The basal "covers everything from comprehension to vocabulary reinforcement, reference study, reading maps. You know it just engages all the skills." In writing she assigns projects like an autobiography this year or poetry writing for Mother's Day last year. When she does give these assignments, she is faced with the lack of experience and background knowledge that the children bring to these tasks. Assigning poetry is easier than having students write an extended essay which may have to be revised and revised. That revision and rewriting process is very difficult for these students. "But, again, writing a paragraph for a story... the language, I mean you have to rewrite it so much to get the final copy. It is just a terrible chore."

Teacher A feels that the direct instruction dialogue from Question 9 is better because it "gives the students their thinking." Although she admits that discussion and direct instruction both occur in her classroom. The direct instruction dialogue is better because it helps the children "along with their thinking".

DIMENSION 2: TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE**PERSONAL QUALITIES:**

Teacher A recognizes the importance of a commitment to teaching. She has been at Washington Elementary for 20 years and an elementary teacher for a total of 30 years. She is one of two teachers at the school who has lived in the school's neighborhood all those years. Teacher A also sees her role "obviously to instruct them as to give them techniques how to do this (read). And hopefully to inspire them." "You must be in (teaching) wholeheartedly or you fall by the wayside and I think that through the years you need a sense of humor." The lesson plan is "your main tool" and "preparation is vitally important".

INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS:

Teacher A wants them to learn what is presented. Teacher A wants to see students respond to her instruction by giving back what she has taught. "It's a good day when you get some feedback from the students that something went through and stuck, and your efforts are appreciated and they are producing something." There is a sense that the students' job is to respond- not to interact with the teacher over academic content. An interaction would imply that they have a voice in the type of projects they do, the readings they encounter and the outcomes of instruction. For Teacher A the best way to learn is for the teacher to provide a structure for the children. She has a very good reason for providing a clear structure for the children. The biggest mistake a teacher could make is to "not immediately get organized because these children demand organization from the adults, because their life is so unorganized and they love the discipline of organization. You have to keep them busy and I don't mean busy work. I mean constructive busy."

Teacher A recognizes the value of having conversations with the children. A good teacher is "someone who can talk with the children and is sympathetic to them and lets them know that they can come to them if they have to for whatever reason." Yet, she does not connect conversation with academic work. "In (affluent suburb) you would tend to have more children whose life is more sensible and (who) would have more conversations. I think that is one of the absences in these children lives. I don't think anyone talks with them. They scream at them, maybe and probably curse at them, whatever, give orders, to sit down, whatever. Because they love to visit. They just love it and it all just comes out when they talk. You can talk about balloons and they get all wound up."

CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS:

Teacher A realizes the importance of succeeding on the CAT test for the children but the children's refusal to read and follow directions gets in their way of being successful. It seems like one explanation of their low scores for Teacher A is that they just do not read directions. "They refuse to read directions. If there is a set of directions, (I say) 'Don't do a thing on that paper until you read the directions.' It is just like a phobia to them. On the CAT test, I cannot read the directions for them in (my grade). 'You are on your own.' ...I think so often they avoid reading. It is almost like a chore."

DIMENSION 3: STUDENT LEARNER ROLE**PERSONAL:**

To Teacher A the children need to put out some effort in order to learn. "They would do the work and if their minds are open and receptive to learning, they have to do the learning. That is all there is to it. There are achievers and non-achievers."

COGNITIVE:

Teacher A uses knowledge-level activities and discussion to engage students in school tasks. On a typical morning students will copy a poem from the board and copy the spelling sentences. They "know the first thing they do is to get loose leaf paper and get their poetry notebook out. They have their poems out for the week that have to be

memorized. And they copy their poem into the notebook, then they have the spelling lesson to copy the word list and spelling sentences are on the board to be copied, and then to complete the first part of the spelling lesson. We'll see that's all in the first half hour or 40 minutes."

She follows the activities in the basal closely and supplements the basal with enrichment activities. Yet, the topics are teacher-selected. There is a body of knowledge, cultural knowledge that the children need to know and learn. There is little sense that the children construct or reconstruct what is taught. They just need to adjust and learn what is presented and what is important in the culture because they bring so little to school tasks. The lack of background knowledge and experience with the culture shows up all the time. For example, she recalled a time when she was giving them a "picture of characters and plot" and was using nursery rhymes "because they are so simple and cleancut and the story of the three pigs came up. Someone said '(Teacher A) would you tell us this story?' These are (upper elementary) students. I told them the story of the three pigs, and it was as silent as this room. It was absolutely quiet. And when I finished, they clapped. It's pitiful."

INTERACTIVE:

Teacher A is not hesitant to let students work with one another because sometimes they can learn from a peer "sometimes better than they do from the adult." To be successful in groups they need to learn things like cooperation, self-control and "to respect whoever is the reader of the group even if they don't like her...You must be quiet, you must listen, and you must take directions and then you make your suggestions."

DIMENSION 4: CONTEXT

CLASSROOM:

Teacher A includes social goals in her overall goals and she uses the metaphor of a family to explain to the students how to behave. She stresses that "we are like a small family in the classroom and we are due to spend the coming year in the classroom together. There has to be trust. There has to be regard for each other, just like at home- hopefully at home, and all of those things and I stress how proud I am of them and, 'my gosh, how beautiful you look today.' They appreciate being appreciated."

NEIGHBORHOOD:

Teacher A recognizes that the children "live in a vacuum" outside of school even in terms of knowledge of their own lives. Things have gotten worse over the last ten years. Teacher A attributes it to the "drug infestation thing. It is irresponsibility on the part of the adults. These children are what- ten, eleven- years old. We figure since 1980 it has gone downhill all the way. It is just like a ball, that keeps wrapping, and it all comes together, and the children are the ones who suffer."

Clear evidence of the deterioration of the neighborhood came this year when she asked her students to write an autobiography. "I have run into this and it has never happened before. Because we had it on the board and when we started breaking (the autobiography) into chapters, Chapter One would be from my birth to three years old and (the students said) '(Teacher A), I don't know what to write'. I said, 'You know you'll have to ask your mom. She's the one that knows.' Well after about a week of this, 'My mother says she can't remember anything.' So literally, see some of them, not all, have written some darling things so far, but there are some children, you know, their life, like I said, is a vacuum....I would like them to have a picture page, ya know, labeled, this is so and so at two years old, (I hear), 'nobody keeps picture of me.' There are probably 14 or 15 (of my 30 students) that just have written just one loose leaf page so far." "Well, because I haven't even started telling them how their life is so different from anyone else's especially with them as the main character. And, um, on their birthday, was there a blizzard? Was grandma with you?and, you know, that type of thing, and what did you do what was your favorite toy? (They say) 'I didn't have any

toys.'....So, it's kind of between a rock and a hard place to deal with that kind of thing." Some of the parents are very appreciative of what Teacher A does for the children. "Three or 4 parents came to me in tears to thank me (for the Mother's day poetry book)."

To Teacher A the children bring little from home to help them solve school problems or succeed at school tasks. Her response to "rap", popular music from the neighborhood culture: "I prevent it (in my classroom). I can't stand it, it isn't music, it isn't anything as far as I am concerned, but that is my opinion." Teacher A believes that her students need to learn proper English because it is necessary for economic success. "It isn't a question of whiteness. It's English. Really, that is how I feel. English is a language and you must learn to speak it properly. Speak it any way you wish when you are on your own at home, colloquial language or whatever you want to call it, but there is proper English." Interviewer asked: what would it give them? Teacher A responded: "Well, I think in a sense, maybe immediately they wouldn't realize it but they, ... self-confidence to approach a possible employer or whoever. And know you are speaking the language as it should be spoken."

Teacher B: Summary of interview by dimension**DIMENSION 1: CONTENT**

Teacher B, a sixth grade teacher, wanted her students to know that "Reading does not mean just decoding words. It means understanding what you are doing....and then be(ing) able to apply it to something else, another context, or something that is happening in your life....The next thing is word attack skills. Phonics- some way of learning how to just attack the words".... "and basically ... develop an interest." "This year I have the majority of them performing two or three grades below. We had to start going back, learning how to decode words and to build words". As a teacher you have to "go find their background knowledge which was very, very limited."

Her writing goals were focused on teaching her students to be aware of audience and to have a purpose in their writing. "What is your purpose and who...your audience would be, affects your writing." In writing, Teacher B took into account the kind of student she had and adjusted her goals to engage him or her in the task: "I felt good inside to be able to sit down and let the child write and express himself because if you did not do that someday the torment that some of these kids have would still be living inside, it would never be exposed. "

Teacher B used the basal reading series and supplemented it with popular books, trading cards and magazines. She discovered this method when she tried using a lower level reading book, "If I just went to a lower book and ... then when we stopped and check for understanding, I find that they have no idea what is going on and 'Oh, I don't know. and I don't really care, (Teacher B). Who wants to read about this?' That is how I started letting them bring in, it's called 'Black Beat', different trade magazines from the music world and we just look at the pictures and determine what the context of the picture is... what is going on.... what makes sense, what pictures you use and you know it makes a big difference when it is something they know.... I just cannot use a standard text book, just cannot." In addition, ".... If you read it to them, their comprehension seems to increase. If they read it, it goes down." So, they read aloud a lot, even in sixth grade.

Teacher B changed part of her curriculum to meet the needs of the low achieving students in her class. This year she gave a special reading session for 45 minutes every day to a group of male students who were 2 to 3 grade levels below the others. "... (I said) 'Now if you want to be one of these kids that end up down at (XYZ) Funeral Home or out at (Jefferson) Prison, fine, take yourself somewhere else'. And it was just like I think at one point they thought, 'I think this lady is crazy.' I really thought I was gonna' get a lot of flak from parents, but Mr. Hamilton (the principal) said not one word. It got to the point where the kids did not even want to leave this room, We would take blends and put a blend on the board and then end of the day you would turn up with ten or twelve words. They knew the words.... We had all kinds of street words on the board and whatever...."

In writing Teacher B assigned the monthly writing topics that the district suggested but she also encouraged her students to write on other topics of their own interest. She changed her grading policy on writing so that students would not get so discouraged by the marks on the page. This seemed to produce more writing. "I also stopped writing only about things that we were told we had to write about, 'let's just write about things that are on your mind and things you want to talk about.'" In her methods she focused on process-writing strategies. "We go over the pre-writing steps over and over again- how to brainstorm an idea. We do a lot of story mapping.... We get the grammar for a few moments in the morning with DOLWE."

Teacher B had her students write in a journal. It became a way for the students to vent some of their feelings and she recognized its value. "I encourage them to write in it daily towards the end of the day, whatever they want to write about. I find sometimes they make some notes for me to read their journals and sometimes to read them is hard because it is not what you would expect to be. You know, some personal

problems what is going on at home.....It gives them an outlet to address problems or concerns that they might have."

The dialogue analysis in Question 9 reflected her concern that the students understand the purpose of the lesson. This response is consistent with her focus on making sure the students have a purpose in reading and a purpose in writing. In the dialogue analysis she prefers the more direct instruction dialogue (D2) because the teacher "had adequate preparation and the lesson was kind of set up. She really tried to find out what the objectives were for the day....It gave meaning to the lesson." The main difference between D1 (social constructivist model) and D2 was that D1 is "reactive" whereas D2 is "proactive". The teacher in D1 is "basing everything on the assumption that maybe she had taught this lesson previously and the students caught on. There is really no introduction or useful background information... it did not adequately prepare the child for the lesson....I just prefer the second method (D2). Yes, I feel that I would use this type of interaction and probing dialogue." In her response to Question 8.1, Teacher B indicated that she believed that the students need the direct, explicit instruction before literature and cooperative grouping because you have "to get their attention, to motivate, and, yes, you have to start from the basics. They lack the vocabulary development that is necessary to basically communicate."

DIMENSION 2: TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE

PERSONAL QUALITIES:

Teacher B, an African-American, has been a teacher for 6 years. Five of those years have been at Washington Elementary. Teacher B believed that teachers need to be aware of the children's lives and the importance of building rapport with the children. "I don't see how you could teach without taking into account their background- (they are) Black Americans from inner cities. I have lived in inner cities all my life, but this (school) was a culture shock to me. I have to learn, pull from my background knowledge and learn from the children and you have to do it to survive. You have to do it yourself. If you don't - you become a total liability to the profession..., and totally a handicap to the children."

For Teacher B, other personal qualities a teacher needs are "a little creativity, flexibility, patience and prayers. All things are possible with them (the children). The most important thing I have learned is to be able to accept the children as they are, their background, not be so judgmental and critical and take the things that they know and try to work from there." She believes that teachers play a "major role." "They are really a great bunch of kids that have a lot to offer if we as adults just take time out to listen to them. I feel that you must be on guard always to look for signs because unfortunately there is a lot abuse or negligence that is happening to some of them. They put that wall or barrier up, but if you were able over a period of time to establish that rapport with the students they usually find ways of letting you know." A good teacher in this setting will open herself up to the children. "You have to be the type that can stand the children all over you, wanting to touch you and tell you things and you know you have to be that type of person." "I get letters all the time from them and I try to let them know that there is a solution, whatever the problem will be and let's sit down and try to figure it out, you can't do this and you can't do at home, you can't do it here or whatever, but there is a way."

INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS:

Teacher B saw herself as a facilitator once the child decided s/he wanted to learn. "I feel that with Washington Elementary students or any students that I see myself basically as a facilitator for trying to be the individual that makes it possible to want to learn and then to give them some rules or avenues in which to explore. My role basically is to see ...or help a child be, to become I guess 'self-actualized', discover their worth, that is, what is it that they want to do, and how to set goals for themselves.. 'Do I

want to read, do I want to learn how to write, that is their decision and if they decide that is definitely what they want to do. I am there to try to facilitate them."

Teacher B modeled for students how to learn, think and converse. "The modeling, probably the instruction that I am going to have to model. (Try) not assume so much,...to model. Just do not assume that, because you set up before class and disseminated information that they learned something." Teacher B worked very hard to find ways to relate the curriculum to the student's lives. "I have found..., you really had to go on my own personal experiences and that's quite often you can throw away text books, talk with them, get them to verbalize things to get them to know what it is that they are interested in. Their dislikes and likes and try to use that again to motivate them to learn, no matter what the story is. I have found myself jumping all over the books, the core of the text to get stories that might fit in that I have overheard on the playground or something that just kinda correlates with what is going on in their world."

She believed you have to talk to the students. You have to listen to the students in order to know what they are thinking and what they care about. "I have been assuming again that quite often the circumstances that they go home to, that is, there is not a lot of oral discussion on. That quite often they are told to be quiet or go stay outside or go outside.... There is no one to communicate with them.... When you ask them what do they think, they are just deprived to speak out orally because they have been laughed at and told to shut up or (have been) put down. Until you work with that as a group as a whole that everyone learns different and has a lot to offer, and we can see that and no matter what the child says, you can take it and try to make it positive and get the rest of the students to see that, they might start to open up."

CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS:

In her first year at Washington Elementary five years ago, Teacher B followed the district curriculum closely but she found that her students were not learning at the pace set by the district. After that year she adapted the curriculum to meet her students' needs. "I realized I had the students becoming jack of all trades and master of none. We knew nothing, but we were on time, okay. I just took my second year, just took a chance, and I am going to try to teach what is necessary and what needs to be taught, (it is) okay when you lag behind. But again, with the administration, Mr. Hamilton has always been very supportive of what you try to do. I really found that. That was the second year when even CAT test started to improve. When I just set down, assessed my students and I finally found myself in many cases not making a class, a whole class assessment, where they are, where they need to be, with particular students....I had to do it individually. I had to find ways of reaching each one of them individually. It was quite a challenge and I think that was the year they wanted me to have three reading groups but they finally narrowed it to two. Quite a challenge, but with the CAT test scores I think it really improved. " "I find myself setting goals for myself, 'What is that I want to accomplish with these kids?' And it's not always these skills that the central office is telling you. It is just survival skills."

DIMENSION 3: STUDENT LEARNER ROLE

PERSONAL:

Teacher B felt that students needed to make a personal commitment to learn. "To me they have to really do some soul searching themselves,His role is basically to search himself and find out what his weakness is and find out, 'Do I want to?' And then for me, personally, then to verbalize, 'Yes I need help. No I can't read. What can I do about it?' and then sit down and try to work something out. One on one, not in a group.... They must say to themselves, 'Do I want to read? Do I want to learn how to write?' That is their decision and, if they decide that is definitely what they want to go, I am there to try to facilitate them."

Teacher B recognized individual differences in learning. Sometimes the reasons that students responded in certain ways may not always be obvious. Sometimes a teacher has to dig deeper to find out why they respond the way they do. For example, she had a student who stuttered in the classroom but spoke fluently outside on the playground. "When I hear them with their peers they are calling them everything but the name, just as fluent as can be. But, when you get them in class, when you try to get them to talk, 'come on, tell me'. I find myself saying, 'take your time, take your time, just take your time.' After awhile when they feel comfortable enough with you, you will find it is not speech impediment. It's just nervous, afraid to break that ice, break out of what's known to them and their vocabulary is just so unique. I feel that some of them have a way of covering up that you would never know and it was just a quiet channel, not just yet ready to bloom or blossom, that may not really be the case. It may just be that they are being brainwashed, abused, and they want to talk, but they don't know how."

COGNITIVE:

Teacher B believed that students need to get involved in discussions to learn. "I like to have discussions... I like oral reading. It's more time-consuming but I get a better opportunity to really check for understanding.... to draw inferences, just to get a chance to talk. Period...These children here at (Washington Elementary) they need to be able to express themselves." To Teacher B it is not just reading the words aloud that is important, it is the understanding that must accompany that. "Many of them feel that decoding words (means that we) just start reading louder, and the faster they read means they are good readers. But when you give them questions on story comprehension or whatever, they don't pass. The majority of students who feel they are good readers, their comprehension fails." She believed that "Yes you have start from the basics. They lack the vocabulary development that is necessary to basically communicate or their level is communicating so deviant- if I can use that word- is so unacceptable that you and I know that everybody in there, sitting in class (knows)... and you can't call the teacher the B word so (the students) don't say anything at all."

To Teacher B, the teacher has to realize what these sixth grade children bring to the classroom "because a lot of times when you become frustrated when you are trying to pull something from them that (the basal) says you must, then they don't give it to you. They finally say, 'Shoot, Ms. (Teacher B) I be rollin'. You know... what they are going home to and what they are up against, and you are giving this assignment out everyday and homework assignment and it's not coming back. And you keep giving these discipline assignments, and they stop coming to school and I don't think that you're really communicating. It's our duty to just educate and instill basic knowledge, but before you can do that you really have to understand where the child is. You are expecting a child to go home to an environment that's conducive to studying and it's not there....we have children sleeping in closets because they try to get away from some of deviance that they see."

INTERACTIVE:

Teacher B believed that students can learn a lot from working with one another. "You try to instill that we all learn from each other and we all make mistakes and no one is perfect." "I have certain projects that they work on for two weeks during the semester-- research projects-- social studies and literature... because it is learning social skills, how to get along with others, how that when working with others you can see things from a different perspective. There there may not always be a right or wrong answer but trial and error and another person working with you may have something to add to the group, just to sit down and to just brainstorm together and to be able to accept what others have to say."

DIMENSION 4: CONTEXT

CLASSROOM:

Teacher B incorporated social developmental goals into her academic curriculum. How much attention does she pay to helping them learn to get along? "100%. You can't teach them unless you have control. Control means many things to me. I don't necessarily expect a child to come in and be quiet. All various types of noises should be going on which is normal. But the social skills where the students are not so malicious or physically abusive- that I don't tolerate and try to get them out of that habit. I have gotten to the point sometimes that it is mandatory that they are able to say something kind to each other at the end of the day. Even if they don't verbalize it, write it in your journal- a thought, a kind thought. It's just difficult. I can understand why, what they see and hear. Right here in this environment, to get them to sit down and be the portrait of the ideal student that will never happen." She said she told the children that the social goals extend beyond the classroom. "Teach them what is to be expected and, if they are not performing the way I feel they should do, what is socially acceptable to a child their age. And then, in this particular environment because of that fact I like to remind them of the saying that Jesse Jackson says. 'Just because you live in the ghetto, the ghetto doesn't have to dwell in you.' To teach them some of those values, and if they don't want to deal with it, I just direct the confrontation between you and that child."

To teach them social skills, Teacher B spent a lot of time at the beginning of the year going through some routines. Throughout the year, she focused on helping them be more autonomous and self-regulating in their behavior. "With the principal's permission, I was able to model all day long for a couple of days how we line up, how we go to the lavatory, how we do this and you know I'd say that is so incidental before, but these student really didn't know now and really after a couple of days of just modeling, I was just overwhelmed at the turn around in behavior." She elicited student response to . "Communicating what's expected of them in terms of letting them communicate with me what they expect from me. And quite often let them establish the rules and we play, they taught me a game sometime ago, I think it is called 'court'. And if someone violates a rule, and they don't want my discipline assignment, first of all, then we go to court, and they are judged by their peers and I have found myself that the discipline that they receive from their peers is much much more stringent than what mine would be."

"Most of the students, they understand what I am saying, 'That, if you cannot take orders from the classroom teacher in the sixth grade, it's gonna be difficult to take orders or instructions on the outside, or socially just walking down the street and the police come on to you.' If they say, get bent out of shape with them (the police) and (they will) find themselves downtown. 'And you don't understand why. It's just attitude.' And they feel that attitude is something that has to be verbalized. They don't understand body language. 'Oh, my body is saying this. I don't want to do it,' and they can really use that body to get across. But they aren't aware of it, I need to try to help them there. That is one thing that's, a daily thing I give a lot of time and attention to."

NEIGHBORHOOD:

When Teacher B took the job five years ago here, she was surprised at the condition of the neighborhood. "It was like another world (here) and I had no idea that this existed over here. I remember it from 20 years ago and so forth and (now) it looks like a war zone, burned out houses." As a teacher, "you are competing with the streets and what the streets have to offer as opposed to what you can as a teacher in the classroom can offer." The parents are not skilled at parenting and it affects what you need to do as a teacher. "You know they just lack the necessary parenting skills. I say now I really know the difference between parenting and babysitting and it makes a big difference. Parenting is quite involved and takes a lot of work. And you find yourself as a teacher too if you want to develop more of your trust with the kids. You have to do a lot of parenting (as a teacher) the same things that um, you know are safe for the children who come unprepared for school, no proper procedures, no respect for authority. Many of these children lack that. You have to teach the values....for the most part of the year and definitely within that first month or so and um you just have to have rules. You

really have to be persistent with them, and just nail them. If they don't follow, you just have to send them home." Some of the children's parents neglect the children. "There is no one there (at home to talk to). I'm literally saying that there are children I would imagine born in some of these crack houses and the mother gave birth stepped over them and kept on going. They have to go for themselves. The only language they hear, is that which is going in and out of the door. So, when they come to school they are unprepared. Especially in the lower grades...it's like they are left out in the wilderness and have to go for themselves. (Things like) paper-- they have never seen it before."

Since Teacher B has opened up the conversation in her classroom through writing and the open forum she has heard how living in the neighborhood seems to impact the students' lives. "Their attitude sort of, 'I want it today, I want the flashy lifestyle and I am not afraid to go, go for it and I am willing to pay the consequences.' I find that very sad for young children, what they are telling you quite often is they are really ready to lay down and die for it, if it has to be. When you try to show the negative parts that, 'Well if you want to roll and be out here rolling as they say, there are only two alternatives as I can see it and that is either the cemetery or penitentiary. And their response is 'I'll take that. Okay, at least I can live in style.' Now this is not all of them, but the great majority." "They don't have any need for education because most don't even feel that they will live to enjoy it. They see their parents dying; they are just wandering aimlessly themselves, aimlessly on the street, what is education going to do for them, what could you possibly do?"

Teacher B presented a bleak picture of the lives of some of the children in the neighborhood. She described an incident where a child's life was impacted by the condition of the neighborhood. One evening after school, the truant officer and Teacher B found a third grader wandering around the gymnasium. He told them what had happened. "Me and my mom was walking down the street, and the car and the guys just start shooting at us. And my Mom told me to run, 'Run as fast as you can', and I didn't know where to run because, if I would've went home, I was afraid they gonna' come there 'cause they come there all the time and shoot at the house. And they shot my Mom and my Mom fell and I don't know where my Mom is.' You know, what do you expect to do for this kid the next day, or whenever he comes back to school?....These types of situations are becoming the norm within the schools and within that economically disadvantaged Afro-American community but that's becoming the majority to me now. The minorities are the few in-between students that you have that can pass the CAT test that you know how to help. I think, you are dealing with this group and trying to help motivate and keep them highly motivated while you are dealing with these social problems and sometimes you have these things that I shared with you and it takes off and drains you for the day and you just can't keep up that momentum."

Teacher B recognized that the context impacts what she wants to teach. "What do I need the CAT test for? Now I don't need a CAT test, my brother, Johnny he goes over on (X street) and hustles this and he makes 4 or 500 dollars a day. Then a week comes and a long face, what is wrong with you? 'My brother Johnny is dead.' Just people are in and out of their life. So you have to try to understand all of this."

Teacher B believed that the Black heritage has gotten lost with this generation. This group of students represents a sub-culture of the African-American culture. "...(!)t seems that education has zeroed and targeted just the one aspect, that all Black Afro-Americans who are economically disadvantaged have the same values, okay, have the same means or lack of means. I find this to be extremely false. Twenty-three years ago I might have bought it, but right here is to me proof of my belief ... what I mean by that is usually even 23 years ago there was a black female head of the household, but she was a strong dominant female who set values, and made sure that children were taken care of and took pride in working or even if she wasn't even able to work, to receive public assistance.... She was the center of the family. I can't say it no longer exists but it is so small, that it is becoming the minority. There is a sub-culture within this

economically disadvantaged culture that just ...is derived from what I see as basically drug related, or just extreme dependency on social services department. And the female head of that household is much younger than the female was 24 years ago, um. It's just the breakdown of the family structure. And where children today are basically raising themselves. Even years ago, with the economically disadvantaged black families, parents had to work, do something, but the child saw the parent going off to do something, if no more than domestic work.... Today they don't see it. The majority of the students who come to this school don't have that family structure. They belong to that sub-class of economically disadvantaged. The first class has these values- the children who come highly motivated to learn.... whereas the children in the second class, or the sub-culture don't have it because they are taught keep your mouth closed. 'You don't know who you are talking to, you might be talking to the mayor, my worker, or whatever, you don't know who they are.'

"And I've learned that no matter how devastating it might be to the child, how alone or neglected they are really, they are dedicated (to their parents) and you find yourself sitting in a classroom with kids that almost like patients in a state hospital, they won't budge. They won't bond with you any form or fashion. You know when you pry, then you usually find out, well- this is typical of a child who lives in a crack house. Or a child who has been physically or sexually abused, and you think, 'Oh no, it is only one or two in the classroom', and you turn around you got 75% of the class. That is no longer the minority; that is the majority. The majority are falling into this that I perceive as a sub-culture that the family is so dysfunctional that you can't even call it the family, that the child has more parental expertise than the parent ever would have, and a lot of the children's parents are 20, 19, 18 and you know they dropped out of school in 6th, 7th, 8th grade. No parenting skills whatsoever.... and, it's just sad that these children are not allowed to be children.""We have children hanging around the school all day long, they would rather do that than go home. There are definitely problems and then when you go to their home, you find out why. Now there is nothing you can do. It's nothing you can do until you can change that overall complete environment."

Teacher C: Summary of interview by dimension**DIMENSION 1: CONTENT**

Teacher C, a fourth grade teacher, included comprehension and vocabulary development in her reading goals. Decoding is necessary but is something that should be taught in the primary grades, not at fourth grade level. "I try to develop the vocabulary first because...if they don't know the words, they cannot read." Teacher C's goals were to "help the children become good readers and to develop a love for reading." In writing, Teacher C would like her students to write longer text like paragraphs and reports. She assigned "persuasive paragraphs, book reports, (and) summarizing". Teacher C wanted her children to "to be able to develop and write a paragraph." She recognized the role of experience in contributing to writing as well as reading. "Most children write from their experience and imagination and if you don't have the experience, you can't have the imagination. So you have to create the imagination and take them on trips and show them the movies or do something" because many just don't have the experience. When working with these children "don't assume that they know certain things." So, Teacher C took them on field trips because "it broadens their cultural experiences and they see things that they might write about, it helps them in their writing and reading. Then, they write a story they have that experienced.... It's hard for them to write about something they have not seen."

Teacher C wanted her students to know that a single word will have several meanings depending on the context. "After they need to know how to decode words, they need to know the vocabulary. Then, you go into recognizing details, finding the main idea, locating information. But, you know (they need to know) synonyms and antonyms and the shift in meaning. The word might mean one thing in one sentence and something else from another, the word may have different meanings."

Teacher C used the basal reading series. She found it helpful because the topics in the basal were related to other curricular areas taught at that time in the district-designed curriculum. "I like the reading program we have here. I like the book, (the basal). It's a very good one. It goes along with the other language arts we have here. (For example) I taught how to back an opinion in reading yesterday. It's in the English book today, and the spelling book usually goes (along)." When students read from the basal, she worked on vocabulary first. "If I am gonna have oral reading, there are times when I have my best reader read it and then I will ask questions from my slower ones." "Phonics is very important but they (the students) should have it before they get to my fourth grade. Phonics is very important. I have taught first grade, second grade, third grade. When I taught first grade, it was very important, but kids learn in other ways too, you know. But I found the phonetic way was best for me." Teacher C recognizes that it is helpful to integrate across the curriculum. This year she has one reading group because of the similar skill level of the children. About one-third of her students also are involved in reading trade books. They get the books from the reading specialist who gives them an individual comprehension test on the books after they are done. The students receive points and prizes for doing well on the comprehension tests.

Teacher C's writing methods include a school writing contest once a month in which her students participate. "All of us (the teachers) have to do it because each month we have a theme from (the reading specialist), for the creative writing (contest). We have a theme. You have to write and have the children write on this theme and they you follow the writing process.... and you pick the best three and you give your best three to the (reading specialist) and she will pick the best three for the school and then it goes to the area office." There are some opportunities in her classroom for students to create their own text on a topic which might interest them. "They write at other times, too. A few weeks ago they wrote a character sketch and really they will surprise you. You might underestimate them. They did a very good job and they did the interviewing (for the sketch) also....And they also do Quest (a self-esteem program)

and I had them, two people, working together and I had them gather the information. They talk about drug abuse and I had them write why you should not use drugs. I suggested that they write down- maybe following the writing process a little bit- write down maybe ten or fifteen things why they should not use drugs and then, form it in a paragraph."

Teacher C selected the direct instruction dialogue (D2) because the teacher is "developing thinking skills." It is interesting to note that Teacher C is concerned about the thinking skills but these are teacher modeled and directed thinking skills in the direct instruction dialogue. There is little sense that the students may have their own way of constructing the thinking processes. She echoed this preference in her response to the other dialogue, the more contextualist dialogue, the teacher "is not giving the children their thinking." Teacher C disagrees that direct instruction is all that the children need, however (Question 8.1); she thinks that "along with phonics and other instruction, literature and cooperative grouping should also be taught."

DIMENSION 2: TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE

PERSONAL QUALITIES:

Teacher C, an African-American teacher at Washington Elementary for 20 of her 25 years of teaching believed that a teacher at Washington Elementary needs to be more than just a teacher. A good teacher "knows the subject matter, loves and understands children." To Teacher C, understanding these children, believing in them, and responding to their needs was essential to success at this school. "You should have an understanding of these kids. You should believe in them, and then they might need just a little more love. You have to be mother, father, nurse, doctor. You have to be everything to these children because they might not be getting that. Some even call me 'Mommy'. And I tell them that they are my children because they are definitely more with me than they are with their parents. Most of the time they are not with their parent.... So they are with me six hours a day, and they are playing in the afternoon and at night they are asleep."

INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS:

To accomplish this understanding and responsiveness to children's needs, Teacher C saw her role as a guide. "I feel I am a guide. I am here to teach and guide the students." Her interactions with students start with the expectation that "these children can learn. They are the same as other children. There is no difference in teaching them. They (teachers) should teach them the same (as students in an affluent suburb) but they might have to approach it in a different way. Well, I would start out probably on a lower level (here) than I would with children from a different background. A little lower level with these kids and if they can go faster, go faster." The biggest mistake a teacher can make at Washington Elementary is to "come up with the attitude, after learning about their background, that these children can't learn." In addition, the poverty and deprivation of experience that the children bring to the classroom seems to influence her interactions with students more than their ethnic heritage. "I don't guess it would be any difference between a poor African-American student than it would be a poor white American student."

CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS:

Teacher C did not mechanically follow grade level expectations. She assessed her students and then decided on grade level. "You shouldn't teach according to the grade level. 'I have fourth grade and I am gonna' teach fourth grade.' You shouldn't come up with that attitude. You have to get the children where they are. If they are below grade level, then you start with that. And if some are above, you have to group them." She did not mention the CAT test and preparing children for the CAT.

DIMENSION 3: STUDENT LEARNER ROLE

PERSONAL:

Teacher C recognized the importance of a positive attitude among her students. Teacher C believed that students need to "understand that they are to work to the best of their ability." There is a sense from what she says that ability is a stable trait. "The children here have a wide span of abilities. You might have children who are very smart, children that are not so smart and children that are very slow."

COGNITIVE:

Students' ability to process information and to learn was also based on how they are taught, what experiences they bring to learning. Teacher C starts lessons with purpose-setting activities by telling the students the objectives of the lesson. "First I tell them the objectives that you want to do today. Objectives of the lesson are very important."

Teacher C did what she could to broaden the experiential base that children bring to school tasks. She knows the importance of background knowledge in schooling. Teacher C noted that the children "are culturally deprived. The children in (affluent suburb) will have a normal cultural experience. I am sure they will have been on more trips and more vacations than the children here at Washington Elementary. Most of them have not been out of the area or have not been out of (our city). Some of them have not been downtown unless with a trip with the school." "When they go on field trips it broadens their cultural experiences and they see things that they might write about... to help them in their writing and reading."

INTERACTIVE:

Teacher C believed that children can learn from one another. "(Working together) helps all children. Children learn from their peers many times quicker than they would learn from me. Because I might say one thing one way and they might not understand that. I heard from a teacher that she was trying to teach this child to carry in math, and the child just didn't understand the carry and another child said, 'Well, just tote it over here' and the (second) child understood. I feel the children learn from one another." She did peer teaching in both mathematics and social studies.

To have cooperative groups, a teacher cannot automatically assume that children know how to take turns and listen to one another. "They must know that they must work quietly, they must know that they should take turns in speaking, and they must know what each one should do this year... First you set the ground rules, and then you have to monitor each group. You just can't let them sit alone."

DIMENSION 4: CONTEXT

CLASSROOM:

Teacher C established early in the year that she makes the rules. The children did not seem to have a voice in the operation of the classroom. "...In the first of the year when I come in, I set down the ground rules and you can (do that). You almost have to be cruel, to get them to understand that you are in charge. If you have to call the parents every day, then,... if you have to send them to the office. Establish the ground rules and then they know you are not going to take it and most of the time you (the teacher) come out on top."

Social development was an important goal in her classroom "that is just as important as reading and writing." Teacher C will discuss and lecture to children about how important it is to think through their choices in how they treat others as well as how they treat themselves. She talked to her class about many things- treatment of other children, sex, and drugs. It appeared that she lectured to them more than have a problem-solving session where the children come up with answers through discussion. "It (social development) plays a big role in that you must have the other children understand well .. the children understand each other. You might have children who might have their basic needs and then have kids who do not have basic needs. I had an example of that happen to me. I had a little girl who's very unkept and somehow this was used against her (by the other children). The kids would say things to her and she felt

very depressed and she would be hostile to them. So, I had her go out of the classroom; then, I would talk to the class. I told them that, 'She cannot help it that she is unkept. She cannot help it that her hair is very difficult (to deal with). She is not big enough to do it yet. It is her mother's responsibility. She cannot help that. We should not look at her and do things to her.' And it really worked. They didn't tell her what I said,. They didn't pick on her anymore and she has changed some..."

Teacher C was not only concerned about relations within the class but also outside the class. "I talk to them about drugs. I talk to them about sex because they say things in there (like) they know everything there is to be known. So I talk to them. I tell the boys, 'You know, you don't want to have babies all over town.' . and, um, 'You're gettin' a baby is not making you a man. A man can take care of a baby.' That is just as important as reading and writing. Might prove me wrong. It might change the morning (to talk about these things and not do reading and writing). But, I think it is better teaching. They need it. They need it. They are so developed and so mature. They need to know these things because many of them are not getting it at home so I do stop and talk...I hope, this is not reading and writing, but I hope this will save one person."

NEIGHBORHOOD:

Teacher C has taught in this neighborhood a long time. Teacher C says "I know the children. I even know the parents because I might have taught some of the parents." Teacher C realizes that the parental situation affects children's ability to perform in school. "Most of the children here are from one parent families and the children cannot get help from home because most of the parents can't help them. She (a new teacher) should understand that she will have to provide most of the work at school. And the homework should be something that she has taught in school that the children understand, to reinforce it." "Most of the time you see one parent or you will see the child's name and the mother's name are the same last name. You might see a father, you might not. If you see a father, it's a different name.... With the kids it's not a problem, because they don't really spend time outside the area, they don't know. They don't know, they think it is right (to only have a mom). Some of them have grandmothers, but lots of times the grandmother is not with them."

Teacher C believed that the children need to learn to "deal in the real world," "in everyday life." Learning the "skills of the world" will allow the children to "do things." That real world does not necessarily include African-American culture. "I wouldn't say they (the schools) are trying to make them (the children) white. I think they are trying to make them realize that they are going to have to deal in a white world. And I think they should realize that they gotta learn the skills of the world to do things." "I say they took away the culture when we got on the boat (from Africa)." She echoes this sentiment when she talks about rap, "And I say rap is a poor example (of culture) because I hate it. I wouldn't say that is part of their culture. That is just something they made up." "Yes, I think you should take in their culture and linguistic background but you should also teach reading and writing that he will have to use in everyday life....Culture is okay but, um, its been years and years and years since slavery and since your foreparents came from Africa. You have to deal in the real world. You live in the world and you better deal with it. I think if they understood that they wouldn't be so hostile."

Teacher D: Summary of interview by dimension

DIMENSION 1: CONTENT

Teacher D, a fifth grade teacher, accepted the reading and writing curricular goals and methods as given by the texts, and the district guidelines. What is important for the "teacher to prepare the child to give back what the teacher wants". What the teacher wants is for children to understand the correct meaning of the readings and to use the vocabulary correctly. Teacher D mentions here and in other dimensions about how important it is to assess students on their oral participation, sometimes in preference to their written. His writing activities seem to be limited to writing sentences for spelling words and occasional seasonal writings.

To Teacher D, one of things teachers need to is: "You have to make the youngsters in your room read, comprehend what they read, interpret what they read and are really able to give it back to you. We give a synopsis of what we read." When they are reading, they are not just "calling words that they are reading for a purpose. They are to learn something when they read. They should be able to give some information about what they read. They got to know that they have to be able to give some feedback."

According to his description, Teacher D's classroom activities in reading and writing closely followed the district's prescribed curriculum. He used the basal to teach many of the reading skills. The students worked on vocabulary words before they start "our oral reading." They needed to "understand a lot of things before they can go into a story and finish it correctly." "I don't dwell on phonics too much. I never taught too much of it. I didn't learn how to teach much of it but we work on vocabulary. That is the first thing Monday morning. That is vocabulary." Consistent with teaching children to match correct forms in reading, Teacher D's writing goals focused on children being able to put in writing "correct sentences relating to a particular topic. And someone can pick it up and read it and comprehend exactly what they are saying. Something that is going to make sense- Good punctuation, spelling and other things that go along with writing." Teacher D stated the specific skills needed to know before the end of the year: One is "correct punctuation. They learn how to stay to the main idea and give details to go along with the main idea. Topic sentences." Students were encouraged to write correctly and to communicate clearly. "Every Wednesday we write- this to me is writing- when they write sentences from their spelling words. We do creative writing on different things, seasonal things like if it is Christmas, 'What I plan to do for Christmas.'"

Teacher D's responded to the dialogues echo his interest in helping children give back what the teacher wants. Teacher D said he prefers the direct instruction dialogue, (D2), because "it gets the child ready to give you a reasonable decent answer. It helps the child to understand what you want, what you want him to do." In response to the question about direct instruction over literature and cooperative groups (Question 8.1), he felt that a teacher should "take the child from where he is and you try to find out who already knows this and be able to go on and read to them...You just can't assume that (they don't need literature and cooperative groups)."

DIMENSION 2: TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE

PERSONAL QUALITIES:

Teacher D, an African-American, had taught at Washington Elementary for all of the 23 years he has been in the profession. Again, one of the personal qualities that a teacher should have was to guide the students to the correct, the proper way things should be done. On the academic side he believed that teachers play "a major role, hopefully. I try to guide them into a necessary skill that are necessary for them to do a good job. To show them the way it should be done, to make corrections." On the social side, teachers needed to be patient and to give of themselves. "You have to be patient with the children. You can't expect wonders overnight. You have got to show that you care. You have got to show that you are interested in them and you can't be a snobbish

type person either... I mean look down your noses at them as though they are so inferior to you. You've got to relate to them on their level."

A good teacher builds rapport with the students through sharing his/her problems. "You've got to let them know that you have had problems. You got to let them know that you understand their feelings and understand they have problems, understand that they have wants, wishes and desires that don't always get met.... You've got to let them know that you have feelings for them." There was a sense of commitment to the children beyond being an instructor of academic content. "You have to give of yourself to make sure things run smoothly. As Loretta Young once said 'A good teacher is like a candle, consuming itself to give light to others.'"

INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS:

Teacher D recalled his own comfort with the verbal versus written activities. Teacher D valued the verbal interactions in his evaluation of students. "Yes, you move from the known to the unknown. You give them the benefit of the doubt if they can verbalize, but if they cannot write it up. Give 'em the credit for it. I find they can do it, too, sometimes. I think I can talk, speak better than I can write. I have some people really put it out. I can lay it out. But, when I put it on paper, it doesn't come out that way."

CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS:

Teacher D was aware of curricular expectations for his students. These are not his own assessments. What he described were the importance of the expectations of the school and district. Again, we hear the word "properly". Teacher D was acutely aware of expectations that his students are on grade level when they leave his room. One of his major goals is getting these "children at grade level, helping them to function well in the next grade like I do every year. That is one of my major goals, help them to function properly and stand on their own two feet for next year."

DIMENSION 3: STUDENT LEARNER ROLE

PERSONAL:

To be a successful learner in Teacher D's classroom, children needed to learn how to "really be able to give it back to you." Children need to learn how to be listeners. Students needed to "play the role of a learner, a listener, somebody that should listen to the teacher, should try to please the teacher in order to get a good grade. They (need to) put themselves into it. They become involved in their own work."

COGNITIVE:

Teacher D emphasized the receptive skills that children need to have to be successful learners in his classroom. Teacher D saw a problem with retention of information. "They have to be listeners in order to be learners and this isn't always easy for some of the people."

He assumed that the children know a lot when they come to school about some topics but a teacher should be wary of assumptions about academic knowledge the children may have. On one hand he says, "It doesn't pay to assume anyway that this child because he is an African-American or disadvantaged or economically disadvantaged child, he is not going to know this because some of these children will surprise you, they know a lot." Teacher D may find individual children who know a lot. Whereas as a group and particularly with academic content, he stated that a teacher should not assume that they know or remember too much. "We assume that the children come to us from primary and know a whole lot of things that they really do not know... you have got to take the children from where they are and move on. As we learn back in school in methods courses, you start from the known and move to the unknown. That is what you have to do with these children if you want to be successful. You cannot assume too much. You cannot assume that a fifth grader knows how to write his name with a capital letter, start his name with a capital letter. You can't assume that he knows his name is a

proper noun and girl is a common noun.... Don't assume they know that 'cause they probably don't."

INTERACTIVE:

Teacher D recognized that children can learn from one another and can learn in groups. However, he was not very specific in the interview about what kind of activities he would use. "We have group activities quite often where we work in as a group and learn from each other." Group activities provided a place where "the children get to exchange ideas and they get to learn from each other. It is the way of respecting their peers and trying to enhance their social skills."

DIMENSION 4: CONTEXT

CLASSROOM:

Teacher D believed that children need to follow the rules. To have an orderly classroom, he said : "one thing I teach my youngsters is that they should take their seats. That they listen. And, that we sing together, therefore, we don't talk together. They have to be listeners in order to be learners and this isn't always easy for some of the people.... I get control without even opening my mouth. I have a way to stare at them to get them to calm down. I fold my arms and just stand and stare and they know it means to shut up and let's listen. It is a way of management and it's what I call my September teaching strategy and it works... I put the rules on the board and I let them know what I expect of them and I tell them quite frankly that they are there to learn." These were the classroom rules as given by the teacher. Children were expected to follow the rules.

Teacher D was concerned about the social development of his children. Teacher D believed that his students can learn. However, there were some social problems that they bring to school which interfere with learning. In order to teach them about the social expectations, he lectured them on how they should behave. "They do need a lot of it (social development). You cannot give them as much as they need. They do well as individuals. They have some other needs that I might get in trouble if I said. Things they should learn at home: how to treat others, how to get along with others, how to keep your hands to yourself, how not to take things that don't belong to you and what not. You can go in the classroom and ask them to divide a long problem and they will do it. You can ask them to read an article and say what is in an article and they can do it. But, when you ask them to walk across the room to bring you something they might get in trouble before they get to your desk by kicking another child or taking somebody's paper or toy off his or her desk. There is a lot of things that we need to give them." "I try to tell them how wrong it is to abuse other kids, other people, other children. (How wrong it is) to take things from other children. How unacceptable it is. It does not work in our society. You might get by with it now but later on in life you will not get by with it. It is going to close in on you...If you are an adult, you know, if you take something from somebody, they gonna haul you downtown.... I let them know it is very unacceptable."

Teacher D included many social goals in his classroom instruction. The social goals related to the expectations of the larger society as well as specific behavior which helps this classroom run more smoothly. "I teach the boys you don't wear hats in the building unless you are doing construction work or unless you are wearing a graduation cap .. Never wear hats inside the building.. Certain little things like that I like to teach them. Maybe if they don't get it at home they can get it from me." Teacher D taught "etiquette. I teach social graces and all these things. I got a letter once from a parent saying, 'You think this letter is coming to thank you for the three R's you taught my child- reading, riting and rithmetic. It is not. It is coming to you to thank you for teaching my child plain, old common sense. Just things about life. If you are hungry get some food. If you are sick, go to the doctor.' She (the parent) said , 'You were just so good at teaching common sense types of things.' That is something I love to teach youngsters."

NEIGHBORHOOD:

To Teacher D it was important to expose the children to new ideas because they were so "culturally, socially and economically deprived". "The children here come from one parent families.... They only have one person they can talk to. Some of the children despise a man because they don't have to listen to a man at home. This is something new to them. " He also recognized that they have "less exposure to cultural experiences" than children from affluent neighborhoods so "you have to cover things here that you would not have there. They have already been covered at home, the corner library or on some excursion or tour that they have taken with their parents."

As indicated earlier, one effect of the neighborhood and the African-American culture on Teacher D's teaching was that he is accepted verbal answers as well as written. His reasons for accepting these responses went back to the treatment of African-Americans in the United States. "I think in all seriousness that children should be evaluated on both their writing communication and their oral communication. Sometimes people do better telling me orally the quick answer than they could if they were reading it or seeing it in writing. So it needs to be balanced. 'You just don't sit and if you cannot write, you cannot answer the question.' That might not be true. They can tell you orally. " He relates this to the history of the African-American. "There was one time when Blacks only kind of communication they had was oral communication. Did you know that they didn't read and write. There were no whiteboards, no books for them. They only learned from White man's lips. Not from his writing or his books. If they were caught reading and writing, they were punished. Remember when the girl, you know what I am talking about, Sandie Duncan, was teaching Lester Earle how to read something like that. Anyway, yes, children know how to verbalize sometimes much better than they know how to write it."

Teacher D took into account a child's cultural and linguistic background when teaching reading and writing. When youngsters used a sentence like, "I brung my book to school," Teacher D said, "They are using what they heard. And, they need to be improved upon and like 'shet the door', they are using Black dialect. I don't criticize that I just have to improve it. The white teachers probably say what in the world is he talking about. Me, I know, I remember my parents using it. I know a lot about it. I know how to correct it too. I know how to help them.... I heard a guy on the radio yesterday [correct it].. this girl said, "My boyfriend don't always take me to the right places." He (the announcer) says, "Oh, your boyfriend doesn't take you to the right places."

Teacher E: Summary of interview by dimension**DIMENSION 1: CONTENT**

Under the content dimension, Teacher E, a fourth grade teacher, valued the development of strategies, internalization of strategies, activation of prior knowledge, and attention to context to facilitate comprehension. Teacher E stated several times that students needed to see how to apply what they know to other subjects, other settings, even to the larger world.

In reading, Teacher E had learned some new ways to think about teaching reading and was grappling with a way to talk about teaching reading. She was interested in "some improvement in their, I don't want to say, reading skills, I want to phrase it another way, I am trying to think of a new phraseology for reading skills... strategies and all that kind of stuff. I want them to be able to internalize things." One of the skills she emphasized is the importance of "setting the foundation for them, for whatever academic area that you're working in because their prior knowledge is sorely lacking. You as the professional have to make up the slack or do the best that you can." One strategy she taught was the use of context clues : "I used to teach vocabulary in isolation.... I love sentence context." She was also concerned with teaching children how to apply what they knew. "I think it is important for the teacher to teach vocabulary and skills but try to show the RELATIONSHIP between vocabulary words and how these vocabulary words and the skills that they might be learning, how all of these elements are related to some other subject, or to events that are happening in the city or around the world." She taught the "youngsters" that "there is a relationship between what they are doing now and what might be in store for them in the future."

In writing Teacher E would like her students to "develop their writing skills and be able to write in a clear, concise way" and "master the vocabulary or spelling and grammar and such. I would like to say something about originality but I would like all my students to really write in an original manner... I need them to know spelling and/or vocabulary and penmanship."

The activities Teacher E used in both reading and writing sometimes extend beyond the basal and writing sentences for spelling words. She read aloud to her students, "nothing like setting examples." Her reading methods included using the basal and reading aloud to her fourth grade classroom because there is "nothing like setting examples." "Reading aloud motivates that desire for your students to become good readers, good outloud readers."

Her students participated in a "Friday Soundoff": a writing exercise where she selects the topic but they write what they want. She talked about the frustration of using "creative writing" process writing methods with these students. She found teaching children to write very frustrating, however. "We touch upon writing, you mean, creative writing. Creative writing is so frustrating." There are just so many skills to teach that creative writing is often considered "a luxury". Teacher E also used process writing in her classroom for "creative writing". She stated: "I am trying hard at reading and writing because I work with my students and go through the whole writing process. You know you make the bottle of rainstorm or whatever it is, you jot that down. You convert your ideas into sentences and we'd go through the process and that would take a long time in my class because they are not used to writing that way. None of our boys and girls are. We are too busy trying to give them reading and math and spelling and English for 'quote' creative writing. That's one of those luxuries.... I am always drained on the afternoon we do it. It was exhausting." She says, "I don't go through that extensive writing process (too often) with them because I don't want them to get discouraged."

Teacher E liked to hear her students response to what she teaches. This was evidenced in her choice of the contextualist dialogue (D1) because "it gets the most out of the youngsters... And in Dialogue 2 the teacher is spoon feeding and picking out the

answers for them. Or something along that line which is not really helping them to be the best they can be." She also believed that students really need exposure to literature and cooperative grouping. In Question 8.1 she disagreed with the idea that these students need only direct, explicit instruction. "I disagree with that. That is what is wrong with it now. That is why we have the problems that we have today. I think these things- direct, explicit instruction in reading and writing- should not be done at the expense of those same students not being exposed to literature or participating in cooperative, collaborative groups... all these things help us develop the total child."

DIMENSION 2: TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE

PERSONAL QUALITIES:

Teacher E, an African-American, has been at Washington Elementary all of her 15 years of teaching. To Teacher E to be a good teacher at Washington Elementary you have to be "very adaptable, very flexible, and you have to be willing to try many different approaches as a solution to a potential problem, ... not meaning that that might give you success. You just have to have the willing spirit to try all these different things." She demonstrated her adaptability and flexibility by being willing to participate in new programs. Recently she became involved in a district staff development program where she teaches summer school teachers how to teach children to use reading strategies with a problem-solving curriculum. A good teacher also knows that she "really has to motivate a lot." A good teacher also is "one that does her best, that also goes out of her way to cover the academic material that is supposed to be covered throughout the school year. I also think that a good teacher is one that is concerned about the social, the socialization, of her students because I think for any person the two go hand in hand."

The biggest mistake a teacher can make at Washington Elementary is to "assume that the children have the same background as you." "Don't assume that the youngsters background and experiences are similar to what you have. That would be a gross error to make. It really would." Teacher E saw a great difference between her experience in the world and the experiences of her students.

INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS:

Teacher E interacted with her students. One of her most important methods was to model and demonstrate the beliefs and attitudes she wants them to possess. To Teacher E, when a teacher models the appropriate behavior and response, the children will benefit. "I try to express to my students, I guess, express and model to them, a love for reading, not only reading for information but reading for enjoyment purposes." In addition her actions included attention to motivation. As a teacher you "really have to motivate a lot and stay after (them) and just lean on them in order for them to do what they are supposed to do."

CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS:

Teacher E talked about how the teachers responded to the results of the CAT test this spring. The results were very discouraging to the staff. She stated once again her interest in making sure the children understand the importance of these things for their future. "We want good scores. Why do we want them? 'Because it is gonna' help us (the children) in the future', blah, blah, blah, whatever. I would say (that) to the students. And, you know, it was CAT, CAT, CAT all over the building- Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. So, I really don't know what happened (why the school did so poorly). But, it is obvious, all across the board, by that I mean, through all the grades except two cases that something, something is not clicking and I don't know what it is... The problem is that one year the scores were so great. Mr. Hamilton (the principal) hugged me... and he was just beaming and we got roses and champagne."

DIMENSION 3: STUDENT LEARNER ROLE

PERSONAL:

To be a good learner in her classroom, it was important to be persistent and have the right attitude. The qualities that will lead to success for students in her class were:

"Be positive, be respectful and be willing to try, you know, the second, third or fourth time. Be persistent." and have a "respectable positive attitude. And not to be afraid to make mistakes and to be willing to try again. Because many of them will go their first mile but then if there is a hurricane or a roadblock that gets in their way, do you think they will remove that? uh huh. It will stay right there."

Teacher E noted that there is academic diversity among her students. "(This school) is like any other school, there are some superstars. We have some average kids and some way low, just like any other school. Varied abilities." There were also attitudinal differences among students. "Because I know some really smart kids that have lousy attitudes, and I wouldn't want to spend any more time with them than I have to, and by the same token I know some people that aren't A students but if you could grade their personalities they would get A +++." Washington Elementary students, however, are "(j)ust like any other kids there are some that are very enthusiastic and they want to get what you want to present, and you also have those on the other side of the coin that you're going to really have to motivate a lot and stay after and just lean on them in order for them to do what they are supposed to do." One of the key differences between Washington Elementary and an affluent suburb would be "behavior. I think... there would be a little, a little more respect for authority, rules and obeying those rules. All those things would be a little more evident at (affluent suburb)."

COGNITIVE:

Teacher E taught students to be strategic learners. She recognized the value of cognitive strategies in facilitating learning. To be successful, they "have in their repertoire several strategies or word and/or sentence comprehension... new thing now is not to teach words in isolation but to teach them in context." One of the major problems with teaching at Washington Elementary, however was that "many of our youngsters do not leave the neighborhood" and they lack the "prior knowledge" to succeed on academic tasks. She would like them to be able to "internalize things."

INTERACTIVE:

Teacher E's students worked in collaborative groups sometimes. Collaborative groups, however, did not seem to help the student accomplish cognitive goals. To Teacher E, the groups seemed to help their "socialization skills."

DIMENSION 4: CONTEXT

CLASSROOM:

Teacher E placed the socialization of her students at the top of her list along with the academics. "There are so many components in the day that we have to deal with in terms of social behaviors and trying to transform negative social behaviors in to positive social behaviors so that our youngsters are receptive and can see whatever it is that we are trying to teach them. That is a big part of the day and sometime that can be absolutely overwhelming." "I also think that a good teacher is one that is concerned about the social, the socialization of her students, because I think for any person the two go hand in hand." This year, in particular, was a hard year for her. She felt that she spent "80% of my time this year. I would say.... A lot." She spent a lot of time teaching the importance of respect. "You must still give that person respect. You must give people respect. That is where everything else comes from.... whether they internalize it or not remains to be seen....(this year) they all had such explosive tempers and it was like having eight sticks of dynamite in one room. That was how I interpreted it all year. None of them was willing to back off. "

Things sometimes get so bad in her room that she felt she needs special training to deal with the children's problems. "I have these, I have a couple of really bright little boys, but they have explosive and I do mean explosive in the sense of dangerous like dynamite explosive tempers, and these little boys are only nine and ten years old. And I graduated from college in 70. 1970. I have not been given any special workshops or trained to deal with young people this early or that young that have these extremely

explosive tempers. This is one of the main things that is needed. Prevention programs, process progress. I do the best that I can but I am not a counselor. I'm not a psychologist and I just do the best that I can. You can't teach anything if a child is constantly doing this (slapping at something) for ten minutes."

One of her most important methods was to help children think about African-American role models that are out there. She wanted to build a "respectable positive attitude. And not to be afraid to make mistakes and to be willing to try again....Michael Jordon, I just used to just talk about him all the time to my students because I remember a couple of years ago we had a Sports Illustrated magazine for kids and we were reading an article about him and it was so fascinating because his skills were so poor. They were so low that he could make the 10th grade basketball team. So here is this billion dollar man now who had trouble in high school... and the beauty of it was that he did not give up, he tried that much harder to work every day. I tell that story ..."

NEIGHBORHOOD:

Teacher E believed that the home influence is pervasive. "We spend most of our day trying to undo what has been done to the youngsters at home. So it is an ongoing process. I started to say daily battle, but I don't want to get the connotation, warrior." The children do not come from traditional families where their parents come to conferences. "Many times we have our parent/teacher conferences you see one parent, sometimes don't see one parent, you see an aunt or uncle or big sister or big brother as representing the one parent that the children lives with."

The children come to school with values that Teacher E did not understand and she feels she wishes she knew some way to help them. She recalled a conversation with a child on a field trip. "Did I tell you about the time when we were on the fieldtrip somewhere, we were riding on the bus somewhere and we passed some really beautiful homes and I say 'So and so, don't you like those pretty homes?' and he said to me, 'No, they don't look good to me.' And I was approaching it from the point 'Where you live is ugly, isn't it nice just for a few minutes to see something beautiful?' and he was approaching it from the point, 'No, it doesn't appeal to me and I don't want to even see it now.' It really shocked me (that) those houses didn't interest him. And it just jarred me. It let me know the condition that his mind was in. It was like, 'So what's the difference?' Those homes didn't mean anything to his way of thinking. I was coming from the point of, 'Oh, just something to look at, the momentary thing of beauty, enjoy the beauty of just seeing it'... I felt really stupid for saying that in the first place. That was one of those times when I wish I had had some other kind of training to deal with these kids and all of these emotional problems.... I grew up in Dayton, Ohio, and in a nice, suburban neighborhood."

In reference to the role of African-American culture in her teaching, Teacher E believed that the children have to live in the "real world. They have to be exposed to that" because if they talk the other way, they are going to "sound ignorant". As a teacher you can account for their background and not show disrespect but they had better be taught. "I don't think it is making the youngsters White. It's just like, I was telling the boys and girls about the way they talk to me and I don't allow 'ya' and 'nah' and 'uh, huh'. It is 'yes' and 'no'. I always use McDonalds as an example. If a person at McDonald's, if you are there and say 'uh'and 'uh, huh.' I am saying, 'You are going to sound totally ignorant versus another young person that says yes and no' ... So I told my youngsters about form." She agreed that teachers need to take into account the student's cultural background but not at the exclusion of teaching them other things. "I agree. I think that it should be taken into account. It is something that is adaptive. My thinking is finding a happy medium, all right, and there is a time and place for everything."

Teacher F: Summary of interview by dimension**DIMENSION 1: CONTENT**

Teacher F was a second teacher. There was one word that occurred throughout the whole interview with Teacher F: CARE. Children need to care about reading. Teachers need to care about their children. Some parents are caring and others are not. The greatest mistake a teacher can make is "to be non-caring". How is this translated into curricular goals and methods of teaching African-American students to read and write?

Teacher F wanted her students to "care about reading because it opens all kinds of doors for them." She wanted "them to know that they can read. Find out the world is available to them if they read....know that the answer to anything is written down somewhere and you can find it." A good reading teacher will "be aware of the definition of reading and access their background knowledge. Remember that the children have a vocabulary and that they can understand the words they are reading. I think it is important that they have word attack skills and become independent readers." She recognized that the children do all kinds of reading all day. Any writing lesson is "reading their experiences, (there are) notes to them, messages. It is all around them." "I think you need to know how to tackle a word, how to use the rules and to guide you, you know, in spelling and in writing." In writing, she wants them to "write fairly enough to be understood. Not to be fearful of writing." Again, she stressed the importance of feelings in relation to school work.

Teacher F used the basal and read aloud to her students every day. Phonics was part of her repertoire of teaching methods. She seemed to know that students should write but she found it frustrating because students do not remember the writing rules and do not spell independently from her. Her methods included DOLWE and the basal. "Phonics, structural analysis (are important). (And it is) important that the children are exposed to rituals or to someone reading." She also "thinks it's important that children are exposed to rituals or to someone reading. Reading to them, but they can be exposed to children's literature and can be exposed to what they'd like to read, what they would grow to like literature. We read every day, whatever we pick out. There is a series of books I read every year. A lot of times it is what they want to read, or they bring their books in, their favorite stories."

Teacher F taught writing rules but she got frustrated because students did not include capitalization or good spelling in their writing. She tried "to teach them that it (their writing) should make sense. In a story, 'What do they like in their story?' and in the beginning (have) an introduction, be sure to add something that happened... to resolve it in some way." We "know our Daily Oral Language. (We know how) to put a capital letter that should be incorporated into the writing and I shouldn't have to say, 'go back' and say, 'Put it back into a capital letter.' This is part of the language and this is why we do it." "They are really very good at telling me it should have a comma and turning around and not putting it in their writing." "We talk about making sense and spelling, the benefits of spelling books. The difficult thing I find about teaching writing is that everyone wants you to spell everything out. I come away feeling like I am in a million pieces. "

Teacher F valued both the direct instruction and the contextualist dialogues. She saw a place for both of them in her teaching. The contextualist dialogue (D1) was valued for building motivation, not contributing to academic knowledge, however. Teacher F noted that there is a place in the curriculum for both instructional methods as illustrated in D1 and D2. The contextualist dialogue (D1) is more "determined or stubborn. The other one was more focused on what they are going to learn." She is not sure which one she prefers. In addition, in response to the question about direct instruction versus literature and cooperative grouping, she saw a place for literature in the curriculum. "I think it is important to teach the mechanics but I disagree that

literature should not be used and many times it is a great way to get there...When there is a good book, they almost knock you over, 'May I read it? May I read it?' It is an excellent motivating tool. That is, if you can find things they are interested in."

Motivation was important to Teacher F.

DIMENSION 2: TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE

PERSONAL QUALITIES:

Teacher F, an African-American, had been at Washington Elementary for 21 of her 24 years in the elementary school classroom. To her, the greatest mistake a teacher could make would be "to be noncaring." Along with caring, it was important that a teacher feel that the students can learn: "...to say they can't learn, or they don't care (is wrong). You have to care and you have to instill the care in them." A good teacher has to be "prepared, you have to know what you want the children to learn. You have to be persistent in accomplishing it."

INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS:

Teacher F's interactions with students included "a lot of encouraging." Teacher F also mentioned that she interacted with her students in two other ways- modeling and conversation. One of her teaching methods is to model good learning for the students all day long. "In my mind, I probably model (writing) because they see me write. They know that what I write on the board in the morning is not something that is copied from somewhere. It is something that I write as I write." Teachers need to talk to the children as well because no one talks to them in their lives. "It is very important what we do because we, in many times, are the only people who talk to the children. And, if they (teachers) don't, then, instead of helping them out, (we would) continue to trap them at the same time that their parents have trapped them."

CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS:

I did not find any mention of curricular expectations like references to the CAT test or the daily oral language activities or the monthly writing contest.

DIMENSION 3: STUDENT LEARNER ROLE

PERSONAL:

Teacher F had a lot to say about the special characteristics of these children. To Teacher F the children are capable. However, they need to have a good attitude. There is a sense from her that the children come to school knowing a lot. What the children bring to school is not negative; it is just different. She seemed to see it more as a difference in language. There are two different languages that the children have to learn- one they bring from home and the other is presented at school. They need to learn the one at school because it is the way out. Teacher F noted above that the children are survivors. In addition, they are quite perceptive about adults. "They are funny. They are resourceful. Extremely clever, they can figure you out in a very short time. They are very perceptive. They know whether you care for them or not." She also noted that "our children are easily excited. They get very loud. You have to know... when they are excited that is the way they express themselves.... It is just a certain amount that has to be tolerated." She knows that it is important for them to have the right attitude in order to learn. "Their attitude is all important. And they have to be an active participant. (I say) 'If you don't try, you probably won't be successful. If you have a negative feeling, that you can't do (it), then you can't or you don't want to...'. Teachers of Africa-American students "have to be aware that they (the students) are bright and they can learn. They are survivors, and not slow. They are very quick to size up a situation because they have to be. And you must be aware that learning the language, learning to read, write are extremely important to them, to anyone who is disadvantaged, but moreso to anyone disadvantaged. Because that is what society expects. This is their way out." Children also have a responsibility to be good learners. She said, "You have a responsibility to be cooperative so you can learn."

COGNITIVE:

Children learn through listening and through responding orally to questions. Teacher F used a lot of oral responses to gauge children's misconceptions, "... it gives us a chance to clear up (misconceptions), you know, and the more you hear the more certain (you can be) that they are on track."

INTERACTIVE:

Teacher F believes that students need to learn how to work together because they really do not know how to get along. She states it very clearly: "our young people are killing each other." In order to be successful they need to learn to "respect each other's ideas. They learn from each other and sometimes they just understand better from each other."

DIMENSION 4: CONTEXT

CLASSROOM:

Teacher F made sure her lessons run smoothly by getting "everyone's attention, having them write things, taking the distractors and things that distract them away. Try to engage them and responsively in something so that they have to listen for something and then they will have to answer something."

Teacher F recognized that academic accomplishment does not mean the child can get along with other children. She also knew that social development "may be the most important part" of what she does. To attend to social development, she talks with the children and uses the Quest program. "They could be the world's best reader and not know how to get along with someone else. The problem is that our kids are killing each other. It is extremely important, maybe the most important that they learn how to get along with each other. How to handle conflicts without resorting to violence.... We talk about how to resolve it. As a class. I say 'Was it necessary to say that?' (We use) the Quest program... (It involves) decision making and deciding and respect to making decisions and thinking through the consequences before you do something. The kids can tell you (the answers), but I don't know if the kids that can be the most explosive could still tell you the answer, that they know what to do. You hope at some time it will really lock in, and (they will say) 'that is really something I can try.'"

NEIGHBORHOOD:

Teacher F believed she can work with the parents. However, "at Washington Elementary you have all kinds of conditions. You have children that are totally uncared for and you have children that have parents that are very caring. Sometimes there is little concern that is shown until something happens and that, yes, can be tough. If the parents know you are on the kid's side, it is easier to work." Teacher F recognized that the children bring some experiences from home. However, they do not necessarily bring reading and writing skills. "You have to realize that it is extremely important for these children (to learn to read and write) because often there is no reading in home."

Because of the differences in language between the home and the school, teachers have to work very hard to help the children understand the importance of reading. "You have to realize that it is extremely important for these children because often there is no reading in the home. Because of the differences in language, you have to make certain that the children will understand." At one time Teacher F had a student from a local university helping her. The student "each week brought in a flower. They were delighted with that. They looked forward to seeing it. Those are the things that the home doesn't really provide, opportunities to just stop and see a flower. Still, that there are things that you may not live in the best of surroundings but there are beautiful things that are available to you. That you care."

In reference to respecting the African-American oral tradition, Teacher F brought it all down to economics. "What they need is jobs. What they need is a chance for a little higher education, trades or whatever. To deny them the best possible education that you can give them or that they can get (is wrong). Teach them. I mean it

is a matter of economics. We (our city) don't have businesses to speak of, we don't. We are not where the money is.... "

Teacher F thought that teachers do not necessarily need to account for the children's cultural and linguistic heritage. There is a correct way to speak the language. You shortchange the child by not teaching them the correct way to speak. Teachers need to watch out for the children. "I think you have to teach the child the correct way to say something....It's a very subtle form of racism that watches to see that they speak correctly or not. I mean that it's a judge of intelligence, no matter what race you are. I mean when, if someone speaks poorly, White or whatever, people make a memory of them and (it teachers are not) able to break the trend, and do not tell them what is correct, (it) shortchanges them. They have to know the word that comes to mind... And it's part of the problem with the phonics. It's part of the problem with spelling and all these things....They have to remember the right way.... so, it is the teacher's place to watch out for them. We have a language. We have two languages....You are entitled to the best education the teacher can give you and along with that you (children) have a responsibility to be cooperative so you can learn. But I don't think we have an excuse for not teaching them. I think it is a tragedy when we ourselves allow (them not to learn). I think it is probably part of the result of the Daily Oral Language (lessons) or working with it, that the children recognize that 'he be doing' that it's not correct English. I mean if you write it, they say, 'it's not right'. They may turn around and repeat it, 'He be bitten' that they still recognize when they see it in writing and that it is part of the language, but a step in the right direction." "I think it is a real tough decision (to ignore the oral tradition) but you don't go ahead (in life), you don't go to a corporate board room saying 'yo baby' and you had better know that."

Teacher G: Summary of interview by dimension

DIMENSION 1: CONTENT

Teacher G, a second grade teacher, viewed the teaching of reading and writing as an "exchange" between teacher and student. What they exchange varied over the year from a focus on phonics in the fall to a focus on comprehension in the spring. For Teacher G, mostly, she would like to "make her children become readers with a motivation, a desire to read." She wants to "help the children understand phonics and comprehend... comprehend at grade level." Students have a role in learning how to read. In writing, she expected her children to use the proper form for writing at their grade level. Her writing goals were for students "to be able to write a paragraph with a topic sentence and details."

The reading skills that were important to her were "main idea, inferences, details, and character traits." She was eclectic because "I have been told that there is no one best reading teaching style." She recognized that children read all day long in her class. The skills the students need in writing were "capitalization, punctuation and paragraph with details."

Teacher G seemed to use the basal all year long. "I break my teaching up into pieces. In (primary grade), in September, I teach phonics. I build on the fundamentals. In spring, I put the skills together and teach comprehension." Teacher G used the basal but makes some adaptations for her students. "I always steal from spelling to improve my reading program. One hour doesn't give me enough time to work on the problems I encounter in reading.... I do phonics so the children can hear the sounds. It made spelling easier." In writing she used the DOLWE method that the district provides. "We have no material to teach writing. We don't have a book of objectives. I like to see that the children have learned something."

Teacher G's interest in listening to children and having them participate in an instructional exchange was demonstrated by her response to the questions about the dialogues. She felt that the contextualist dialogue (D1) was more effective because "it is an exchange between teacher and students. The students were more involved in teaching and learning in the dialogue.... Dialogue 1 does it better." In response to the question about the need for direct instruction (Question 8.1) Teacher G agreed that direct, explicit instruction "makes sense because how can you expect children to comprehend before they are taught to decode?" Teacher G had a developmental focus to teaching reading, starting with phonics and ending up with comprehension at the end of year. Direct instruction in decoding can precede instructional conversations designed to help children understand broader concepts like finding the main idea of a reading. Because Teacher G had a developmental focus she could support both direct instruction and a more social constructivist orientation depending on the time of the year. This may be a sign of her flexibility and responsiveness to student needs rather than a set teaching practice to which all students must conform.

DIMENSION 2: TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE

PERSONAL QUALITIES:

Teacher G, an African-American teacher, had been at Washington Elementary School for all of her 22 years of teaching. A good teacher at Washington Elementary cares about the children first- academically, morally and personally- caring for the children makes you a good teacher. To make things run smoothly in her class, Teacher G would advise another teacher to "make his/her number one concern the children. Forget the rest." "First of all the teacher must make sure that she keeps her mind on being about the business of being for the children. Forget the rest of it.... You might be a doctor, a social worker, a counselor, a policeman... It means really caring for the children. You have to be there for the children." A good teacher at this school was "able to get her point across. Teach the academics first. A good teacher can correct the behavior of the children. I am not talking about just behavior, though. Values are

neglected today. We need to build a conscience." A good teacher of African-American students was "one who has experienced the same thing. One who has experienced big city life. If the teacher understands the children's conditions, it helps."

INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS:

Teacher G believed it is important for the teacher to get students involved in the learning. Teacher G felt that the students have something to give in the exchange between teacher and students. She saw an important part of her role is "to introduce, to motivate, to try to get them to participate in the learning. You have to make it a two-way exchange." She listened to the children and gave them feedback. "Students must definitely have a role. In the exchange, you have to do so much for the child. Turn them on. Help them feel good about themselves.... They have to know where you are coming from. They need to know they are on track."

CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS:

One of Teacher G's goals was to have her students, "comprehend at grade level" when they leave her room.

DIMENSION 3: STUDENT LEARNER ROLE

PERSONAL:

Teacher G felt that students need to participate in their own learning. In order for students to learn they have to listen and to participate in the discussions, in the "exchange". She believed that all children can contribute, participate and share what they know.

COGNITIVE:

When Teacher G taught reading, she "make(s) sure the children participate. They all have something to offer during reading. They can answer questions."

INTERACTIVE:

Teacher G valued her classroom time. Since she has not seen much benefit from collaborative learning, she did not use it. Teacher G did not use whole class cooperative grouping simply because "I don't get as much done." However, she saw the benefit of using peer tutoring in the classroom. "I do pair up the smarter kids with others. Sometimes children come to you (enroll) after Easter. It is impossible to teach them all they need to know. So, I pair them up with smarter kids. That can make them feel good." She knew there was some value to cooperative groups. "The groups are based on respect for one another. They learn to wait turns and to listen. "

DIMENSION 4: CONTEXT

CLASSROOM:

Teacher G recognized her role begins with caring for the children- making their needs your number one concern. Social development "plays a big role. Children need to learn manners. I correct them and I teach them. I use Quest, too." Quest is a district-wide self-esteem and conflict resolution program. It was introduced in the school in the year prior to the study.

NEIGHBORHOOD:

Teacher G did not say much about the parents. Except that she has been at the school so long, that she is now teaching the children of some of her former students. Teacher G saw the difference between this area and an affluent suburb is all a matter of economics. "It all boils down to a matter of economics. I think you see people in (affluent suburb) who have washing machines. People here do not have washing machines. Children come to school in dirty clothes."

Teacher G believed that we need to teach the children the "general language" so that they will succeed in the society. In reference to respecting the African-American oral tradition and not making children White (Question 8.2), Teacher G believed that our insistence on written performance is not an effort to make the children White. "I do not see this as trying to make them white... I see it as making them learn a general

language. They should have a general type of communication. They need to know the language."

In reference to the question regarding the need for teachers to account for a student's cultural and linguistic heritage, Teacher G believed that teachers still need to teach their children the general American dialect. "They are ways to make corrections (in language) without offending them. You don't say it in front of everyone else. Don't tell them in a negative way. Some say we should not speak like Whites. I don't mind being able to speak a Black dialect. But, children need to learn the general American dialect."

Teacher H: Summary of interview by dimension**DIMENSION 1: CONTENT**

Teacher H was a first grade teacher. Generally, Teacher H follows the curriculum laid out by the school district. She was willing to change when a new dictum comes down, but, otherwise, everything goes pretty much as prescribed by the district. Teacher H wanted her children to read well. She seemed to have a phonics-vocabulary approach to accomplishing this goal. The key to accomplished reading was understanding the words. Teacher H wanted her students to "read fluently." "A good reader is anybody who can read fluently without missing one or two words a page, and then they should be able to answer questions orally or written about what they read. Or be able to tell you the whole story, to recall the whole story which you (the teacher) usually don't have time for." It was also important "that they can comprehend what they read, so that they have some word attack skills so that if they look at a word they can ... look at the beginning, look at the end. I don't make phonics my first attack like some people do; some very good teachers do. I make more the whole word, the whole sight thing.."

Writing was separate from reading and will come after children learn to read. "Writing is separate from reading and it comes naturally. After you learn to read, writing comes naturally." Her goals for writing were that they "just be able to express themselves verbally and some of them write all the time anyway... Some were writing little notes the other day, I like school and I like spring...Before we had creative writing...they used to ask me and how do you use this and I would spell it and put it on the board."

The basic method Teacher H used to teach reading is determined by the basal since she follows it very closely. To Teacher H all teachers need some consistent system. "Teaching reading and writing at this school is no different than any other school. I follow the teachers' manuals more, we have to follow the basal. I sorta' follow them, not 100% but I do what they say to do and it seems to me that (the basal) is pretty good. It seems to me that they have it all set up and organized, you don't have to do anything but teach it." "We have workbooks that are excellent; the stories are excellent; they are interesting- the pictures (even). There is everything there. There is phonics. It is comprehensive. It is not just seatwork." "I feel there has to be some system. (The basal) is used throughout the school. It gives them the phonics they need all year. ...(Phonics and vocabulary development) are very, very important. We have it in the work book. We have it in the drill, in the seat work and the vocabulary test and that is very good for them and for me."

For writing she followed the plan laid out by the school last year to turn in monthly "creative" writing pieces on topics determined by the district. "We never used to teach writing until about four or five years ago when we started to have writing contests in the area and then they started talking more about writing. I never used to teach writing. We had handwriting every day but creative writing, we didn't start doing seriously until last year because it was mandatory... I always thought {primary students} were too young for that, but they started it and I have gotten good results." She noted that "I'm not creative. I don't write a lot of stories for us to read." "If I taught at (affluent suburb) I would probably have to almost start at the natural course of things, do something else like write out story books or something else... But, right in my {primary grade}, ever since I have been here I haven't had that type of- I have had a lot of above average (kids)- but I have never had enough of the class or enough of the group where half of the kids were way above average. I had one group that finished the first grade work on May 1st but that was in 1975." The implication here seemed to be that she would teach differently with a group of more skilled students. "Oh, it is always in the afternoon, we write Tuesday afternoon sometimes, sometimes Friday afternoon.... We have topics like one I like about (our city) and the whole time of year we write about."

We discuss it first and then they write... I don't really teach them that much, that (writing) is mostly a non-teaching thing."

To Teacher H, the direct instruction dialogue (D2) "is better because the teacher brings their attention to the last time (they learned the material). She starts telling them what they are supposed to be looking for." She recalled, "Dialogue 2 is much better. She builds a foundation... then, she tells them why its important to find the right idea. That's much better." Her instructional methods center on direct instruction. "I agree with that (direct explicit instruction in phonics) but I agree with that for all children whether they are in a very affluent area or not. All children need direct instruction and good direct instruction and then it should be reading literature and participating (in groups after that). The African-American child is no different from any other child. I wish we could get that through our heads."

DIMENSION 2: TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE

PERSONAL QUALITIES:

Teacher H, an Anglo-American teacher, had been at Highland Grove for 27 of her 30 years of teaching. She said you can always tell if a teacher is a good teacher by the response of the teachers the next year when they get her kids and the response of the parents. "A good teacher from a bad teacher? For one thing, the next teacher doesn't dread getting the kids." "A good teacher is one when everyone wanted to get her kids because you don't have to reteach the last grade. You don't have to work so hard. That is how you know a good teacher at any school is one where parents don't mind putting their kids in her class." A good teacher should take limited responsibility but should really be persistent and not give up on the children. To Teacher H, if she moved to another school, that would be "running away".

A good teacher also takes "responsibility. There's been a little bit too much away from that. There was a stage when teachers didn't take enough responsibility, they start blaming the crime rate or the burned out houses or whatever and they, we have to take some responsibility." "The only way I don't take responsibility for the kids that have such serious problems, emotional problems that our attendance (officer) said that I can see that the home is having such a serious influence..... We get kids here that are really sick...If I can teach them fine, if I can't, then, I have always said, that is not my responsibility." In addition a good teacher doesn't give up. "....both my parents came from Europe, they arranged it, and my dad had a trade and my mother was a cook. ... One of the things that your European homes teach, I think this is another reason (I continue teaching here), um, in the European homes, you don't like just give up."

To Teacher H, teachers here are locked in at the same school anyway. To change schools teachers have to have permission of the current principal and permission of the receiving principal. No principal wants to get rid of his or her strong teachers, so we are locked in to this school, anyway. "The teachers couldn't leave anyway because of the high number of applications out there in the suburbs, I had to stay. The assistant principal used to say he was locked into the situation... If I wanted to, I couldn't anyway, because I have too much seniority in (this city), but I never really seriously ever thought about running away."

"The really good teacher gets the child interested, so that, ideally, this is all ideally, this doesn't happen every day. Some days none of this good stuff happens, sometimes it all falls apart. My mornings don't fall apart. But my afternoons once in a while do. It is usually at the end of the school year."

INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS:

It is important to provide her first graders with love. "Our children (at the school) are, at least, loved. And I think the only disadvantaged child is one that is not loved." She recognizes that the children come to school with many disadvantages.

Teacher H believes that management is of the "utmost importance. Scheduling, routine and management, and I think especially if the children come (from homes)

where there is not much management in their life." Teacher H recognizes that the children lack structure in their lives and it is important for the school to provide that for them.

CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS:

Teacher H feels the pressure to help the children learn to read. "I think we are really uptight, I think the teacher in big cities and all over are uptight about reading because we are under pressure...."

DIMENSION 3: STUDENT LEARNER ROLE

PERSONAL:

Teacher H viewed the children as expressive and responsive. "Did you read about the cool inner-city kid that hugged the Queen of England the other day in the inner-city? She didn't know that that was against protocol. Our children are more responsive. They are not as conditioned as some of these suburban children... They are not as programmed... suburban children are very programmed."

COGNITIVE:

To Teacher H, cognitively the children do not have much responsibility for their own learning. The teacher has a lot of responsibility, though. "Children don't play hardly any {role in their own learning} because they are the result of the home and the teacher. See the home and the school, and there are hereditary (factors). They have a serious problem learning if they are retarded or something."

INTERACTIVE:

To Teacher H collaborative grouping was not easy. It was just not developmentally appropriate for children at this age. "They have to know a little bit about what their purpose is in that group, what their job description is so you can speak it. You have to also know how to work in groups. That is something that is not easy unless you are a natural, how to give and take and how to really listen to other peoples' opinions." She did not use collaborative grouping very often in her first grade classroom. I use it "very seldom, not at the (primary) level. If they were older, I definitely would, but in first grade, no. In all of my teaching career, whenever I was teaching the slower ones, however, I always did."

DIMENSION 4: CONTEXT

CLASSROOM:

Teachers need to be good managers to Teacher H partly because some of the children do not have much management in their lives. "I think management is of the utmost importance. Scheduling, routine and management and I think especially if the children come where there is not much management in their life." "{Classroom management} means well written plans and you know exactly where you are going and you understand the manual and the whole classroom physically and the teaching schedule is all organized."

Teachers need to pay attention to the social development of the child. "{Social development} is second place to academics. If they can read or do math really well, you can kinda' sort of condition them. We have citizenship awards and if they get too far out of hand, we have to, of course, call their parents." Teachers at Highland Grove sometimes "deal out their children" to other teachers when they have trouble with them. "I just had a little boy in gym period fighting and I put him in another teacher's room, and we do that sometime. I think it is the whole school. We use the buddy system. We take care of their (other teachers') bad kids. I don't like to use the word 'bad', but the little ones that need to learn a little more about how to behave. ... My lunch aid is fantastic. She was my student once and she can't read at all... the God's honest truth. She can't read a word. But she is real good with the kids because she really lines them up like a military officer... Like the little boy whose father is in jail. He was throwing sand in kid's ears and see, he is really disturbed. I put him in the back of the room, which

isn't good either because now he is more isolated than ever, but, um, it's quite a lot for the kids."

NEIGHBORHOOD:

One of the ways the neighborhood impacts the school is the time that teachers can spend safely working in their classrooms. Teacher H says "I have only felt that way (Not staying after school, etc.) in the last few years. I used to come early and always stay late, not I feel real scared going out here after say 3:10 or 3:15. .. {If } we all went out together, it would be so bad. But I do fear, it's not in the school that I am afraid. It's around the neighborhood...But there was not a lot of them (teachers) that did stay late when we could stay. I have to tell you, I'm sorry to say. But, I did and I definitely feel the pressure to get out of here. In the morning we have a breakfast hour, so there is a lot of activity so you can come as early as 8 o'clock. That is not a problem, that is a 1/2 hour early. But after school it is wise to get out of here by 3:15.... There have been purse robberies, a couple of times."

Teacher H saw that "functioning families play a key role....I just got one (student) that comes from a non-functioning family, he is telling me quite a bit of things that have happened in his life." Working phone numbers can tell you whether the family is functioning or not. "We don't have working phone numbers for the children we have to call most. It is kinda' interesting 'cause the children we don't have to call are in functional families whether it is one parent or two parent. I don't call a one-parent family, a non-functional family. I think a one-parent family can be much better than a two-parent family. You have these working phone numbers. That is another way that we notice that we only have one child paying for lunch a week. We have I'd say two-thirds will end up at the same phone number at the beginning of the year as at the end. And the third will change once and there are a few others that will change all the time. The children will tell you, if you try to call the mother, this phone is disconnected. The mother hasn't been able to pay the phone bill."

Teacher H described how the neighborhood changed over the last fifteen years or so. She has been teaching at the school 27 of her 30 years of teaching. "When I came here 27 years ago, it was all Caucasian and it was all like a middle class neighborhood where the children had two parents, a mother and a father, and the father went to work and maybe mother did too, and maybe the mother had part-time work. But it was a very traditional neighborhood. That was a long time ago.. we had the riots in (our city) in 1967 and (an area) which is adjacent here in this area was hit hard, as you know. Oh, they were hit very hard and it made national news and it destroyed (the mayor's) career.... It more or less did a whole lot of things that was beginning of (our city) going downhill, economically. It was beginning gradually, people started moving out and moving out not only, this is not power-related. It's economic. It was the white flight gradually, and the black-white thing started. It is commonly said that anybody that could get out got out of (our city). Well, anyway, we are in the central city here and we are right next to (a certain area), which has led the nation in, I forget, murders or something. (This certain area) is very dangerous, that used to be fantastic when I was growing up and when I first got here. This area was beautiful and it's not because of the color. It's because of the economic situation all right."

"This area was beautiful (before) and it's not because of the color it's because of the economic situation....gradually over the years we started getting it, more of the influx of children who did not have a two-parent family, with only, maybe, a mother, and they might be like on ADC and this type of thing. But they weren't clean and they were nice kids and they were, uh, I am not saying anything against them. They were nice and for awhile we had a lot of Chaldeans. We used to have two Chaldean rooms- a lower and an upper room. I used to have Chaldean technicians...two or three of them."

"We used to collect lunch money every day... and then gradually there became more and more who didn't pay for lunch because they were ADC or they qualified for various types of aid.... So gradually it went down; it wasn't fast. Then we started, I'd say

about the last seven years, we started seeing more vacant house, more drugs, like the kids all know about drugs around here... more vacant lots..more fires, burned out houses. It has reached the point where the immediate neighborhood has an awful lot of burned out houses." "Out of 24 students now, I only have one that pays for lunch and he is moving to the suburbs this summer. So, it gradually came. So it gradually became you could see it in the lunch count, you could see it in the children not having two parents and you could see it in the neighborhood immediately around here- the burned out buildings, the vacant lots and the vacant buildings and the crime here. It got more and more prevalent for the children to tell you in the morning about the crime the night before....What I am saying too is, if these murders and these kids who come in and say, 'Oh my father was shot, last night.' or 'My father shot someone last night.' or something, they are the extreme few. In your classroom there will only be one in two, or two and it will be ongoing all year. Those same children. The same ones over and over and the same ones."

Teacher H gave a vivid description of the day-to-day dealings with the children in her classroom. "But what I am saying is, if a child comes into my room and tells me that there was a fire on their street last night, that doesn't faze me, we go on with our work. If they tell me their father was shot or someone was shooting at their house, I might ask them a little more about it, and what I am saying is that it's not all the children all the time, it's a certain few children. " She also knows that her children may be murdered. "...three of my previous students were murdered, three of them and that's been in the last ten years. One little girl, and they all made the (local newspaper).... one was murdered by her babysitter, a 16-year-old boy, and it was witnessed by one of the little girl's brothers, who was shot to death. That was on the radio and on the television. Another one was shot by her stepfather accidentally. That happened right over not far (from here). He was having a fight with her mother and he wanted to kill her mother and then shot and killed the little girl and that was in the front page of the newspaper... and her parents, her mother and the grandmother go to that So Sad meeting every week. And then the other one was drug related, he was visiting his cousin in Highland Park and his cousin shot him to death and it was drug related according to what the paper said. And they were all, at one time, one was in my room in the first grade when she was murdered. The other one was already in second grade, she had just started second grade, and the other one was in third grade or fourth grade."

In reference to the question about respecting the African-American oral tradition, (Question 8.2), Teacher H believed that the children are going to have to adjust to the "prevalent language pattern." "I have to say, I think we should do whatever. They're gonna have to adjust, like they are gonna' have to adjust to the language pattern....so , I think that the most we can help, the more we can help them to adjust to the prevalent English pattern, and the literature pattern, speaking pattern, writing pattern. If they are gonna have to work, they are gonna' have to go' to college... but you are gonna have to live in this society. (It is) most helpful for the child, not because I want to force all the White stuff on them. I think they need to be prepared.... That is the best thing to do for the Black child right now... I can't see how we can do it any other way."

She echoed her response to the oral language pattern in her answer regarding the need for teachers to account for cultural and linguistic differences. She believed that children need to adjust and schools should not teach all the different cultures. "They need to learn to adjust to the situation they are in. ..And see we are trying to get them ready for high school, for college and for the world. And these bigger settings,School is not the role for that (teaching African-American culture). It shouldn't be. I think it's nice that the children have a certain amount of ethnic background that they like school and that they know certain terms, certain food and certain grasp.. but I don't think that should be teaching their mind....It's not that I am against their culture, but they are gonna have to (adjust). They all dress like that, modern American. They don't

dress like Afros.... If you spread yourself too thin, after awhile you will find yourself teaching about 25 different cultures."

Teacher J: Summary of interview by dimension

DIMENSION 1: CONTENT

Teacher J, a first grade teacher, was concerned about giving children "a purpose for whatever we are doing." Teacher J taught so that "they can read and comprehend and tell me about it." She also noted that they need to know phonics. "I use the phonics approach. They can mark the vowels. They can attack words. I also use patterned reading, sight words, language experience stories." She also thought it is very important for her first grade children to know that "school is not play. They can play at home." To Teacher J it is very important that the children realize that they are here to learn. In writing, she wanted to see "that they can write a story. All my students can do that now (in May). They do the sentences and write on one piece of paper. They can write complete sentences. Spelling does not matter at this point. I do correct spelling. They need to learn the correct spelling."

Teacher J used the basal for most of her reading instruction because "it works fine." "In (my primary) grade in September, I pretend that they do not know anything until December. I may be the last first grade teacher to be done with the reading books. Thank goodness, Mr. Hamilton understands and doesn't bother me about it." She was eclectic in her approach to teaching reading since she used the basal, songs, directed reading-thinking activities (DRTA), patterned reading- anything that works. She described learning to read as a sequential process and it began at the word level with phonics. "When reading for the first time, it (phonics) can help. After they are given purpose setting questions, I have them read the story to themselves first and do the workbook pages and then we read the story outloud." She supplemented the basal with phonics drill exercises. "I sing songs with phonics. The (reading specialist) says I must have the kit, 'Hooked on Phonics'. I don't. I just have songs for each sound and picture boards and the kids know their sounds when they leave here." In writing the students wrote a story once a week about a picture on the chalk tray. She taught them that stories "have a beginning, middle and end." They wrote their own spelling sentences from the spelling words.

In reference to the dialogues in Question 9, she felt that the direct instruction dialogue, Dialogue 2 was more likely to occur in her classroom. Dialogue 2, the more direct instruction-type dialogue, "tells information" and is "more effective. It allows for introduction and instruction to occur. I do both of these (D1 and D2). It depends on the subject, the time and how important the information is." She felt that the children need direct instruction. Her lessons often followed this pattern: "Introduction, instruction, guided practice, summary, independent practice." In reference to using direct instruction before using literature or cooperative groups (Question 8.1), she said, "how can you read literature if you do not know how to decode the written words? We have to teach to the CAT test. If they can't decode the written words, they cannot pass it. For non-readers that come in here, I teach phonics. Students have to decode a written word in order to understand/comprehend it."

DIMENSION 2: TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE

PERSONAL QUALITIES:

Teacher J, an Anglo-American teacher, had been a teacher at Washington Elementary School for 22 out of her 24 years of teaching. To Teacher J, a good teacher has to be "patient, devoted, dedicated. I stay out of their family business. Think about school only. I zero in on school." Her advice for a new teacher would be "discipline is first. You can be strict first and let up later. If you threaten, you must carry through. As a parent or a teacher I think it is okay to set up rules, regulations, standards and goals to be followed."

INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS:

Teacher J expected the students to attend to her lessons. "Teachers need the total group listening and attentive. You should not start the lesson until they are all there and zeroed in on whatever or wherever the lesson is supposed to be on." Teacher J had high positive expectations for her students. "I have control of my class. I expect good behavior and I get it."

Teacher J had high expectations for her children. Teacher J "tries to give love and affection, verbally, to her students with warm fuzzies, etc. I try to build positive self-esteem. I try to develop vocabulary. Everything that is done in my classroom is done to raise the total intelligence of each individual. I try to give them a purpose in day to day living and for the future."

CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS:

Teacher J felt a lot of pressure to live up to administrative, parental and district expectations. The district and administrative expectations were realized in the scores on the CAT test at the end of the year. "I care about the total end result in June. But I do teach toward the (CAT) test." "My job is a burn out job because of lesson plans, no support from the parents, and the Board tells us what to do and when to do it by the month. It is geared to a spiral curriculum not a mastery curriculum. I like mastery because they need it. You introduce something and there is no time to reinforce it for mastery." A new teacher needs to "teach to the CAT. Get the CAT test and teach to the test." "I don't like lesson plans. We have to teach toward the test. Yes, they are still learning, but I do not believe in teaching toward the test. It is important to get high scores on the CAT."

DIMENSION 3: STUDENT LEARNER ROLE

PERSONAL:

Teacher J recognized that some students already have some skills when they come to her classroom. It was also very important for children to have a good attitude toward learning. She accommodated them with a variety of teaching methods and is flexible in her assignment of groups. "Some students already know how to read when they come to me. One parent complained that they do not need to know phonics. It works best for children on the edge. Those that may be illiterate later. For some children, one day it just clicks. Then I put them in the top group and they function just fine." Children need to have a good attitude in order to learn. "A lot of children come here with a bad attitude. It is a 'make me' attitude. Parents have an attitude of 'You owe it to me. I deserve it.' Teachers have a hard time with that." Teacher J motivates her students with rewards. "I get my homework back. I assign it on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. It pays off for reinforcement. Anywhere I go I ask for 30 of everything--balloons, hats, etc. I give them to the kids for rewards."

COGNITIVE:

Teacher J felt that the children need to learn certain things in order to benefit from learning. "Children need to learn to follow directions. They must listen. I used to say, 'You can respect a person out of love or fear. If it is out of fear, it is okay. Love will come.' She considers success on academic tasks as a great motivator. "Children come to school and think they will learn. When they don't in kindergarten, they are disappointed. I find learning to be a great motivator."

The biggest mistake a teacher can make is "to expect too much (background knowledge). Don't expect that the children will know anything." The children at Washington Elementary do not have much background knowledge.

INTERACTIVE:

Teacher J used peer tutoring sometimes. "What I can't teach them, maybe a peer can teach them. They can relate to them better." To be successful in collaborative groups, they need to know "how to share". "To tell you the truth they don't collaborate much. In math, and reading sometimes they read each other's stories."

DIMENSION 4: CONTEXT

CLASSROOM:

Teacher J described a well-managed classroom. "Others have kids that wander and day dream.. How can you let this go on? I do not expect them to act weird. I have control of my class. I expect good behavior and I usually get it....I give them the evil eye. We have our rules. We abide by our rules. I tell them these are my rules. Some kids say, but my mother said I can do this here. I say these are my rules for my classroom. Have your mother come in to talk to me." Children knew what the expectations were: "I have a management system. I use these cardboards from the back of tablets. Each child has one. On one side are stickers with rewards for good behavior. On the other side are notes about changes in behavior that are needed."

NEIGHBORHOOD:

Teacher J said that she used to try to get help from the parents. However, now she feels that the parents are not helpful and, even can be counterproductive in her efforts. "I get no parental help. We take what we can get." "In first grade the children are wonderful if we can deal with them the way we feel we should. Parents get in our way." "Parents read aloud to their children once a month. I have mothers who are supposed to help their child with the homework, and they just write down anything for the assignment . I tell my students if you're not going to help your children, don't have children." She felt that generally, "Teachers are not respected and appreciated by the community."

In reference to including the African-American oral tradition in measuring school performance (Question 8.2), Teacher J believed that the children need to be taught "standard English" because that is what everyone else knows. "These kids write the way they talk. They need standard English. I say, 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do.' Actually, these children are bilingual."

In reference to accounting for the African-American culture when teaching, Teacher J believes "it is important (for teachers) to know that they are disadvantaged, socially, culturally and economically."

Teacher K: Summary of interview by dimension**DIMENSION 1: CONTENT**

Teacher K, a first grade teacher, believed that children will become readers if they know phonics. She had a conception of learning to read that highlighted the importance of readiness. This meant that there were certain steps that one needed to follow in order to learn to read. She stated: "You got to learn your consonant sounds, your vowel sounds. I think the attention should be there, to be able to retain information. (Some children) lose it once you look at it, some children do that, that is why you have to keep going over and over and over. (Knowing) Consonants sounds and vowels really helps."

Again the belief that learning is a sequential activity appears when asked about learning to write. "I would love to do more writing but my kids are not proficient enough to do reading. Once I can say, get the reading down, then the writing certainly comes. The kids improve in reading; then they are able to write." Learning to write is a matter of learning the rules of grammar and, then, drilling on the material until they get it. "I want them to be able to recognize capital letter words and be able to know if a period or a question mark ends a sentence. By the time June gets here, I drill, drill, drill on them. It doesn't register and stick with them. I have to remind them an awful lot of times that you have to start a sentence with a capital letter and 'let's end with a period or a question mark or exclamation mark'. Sometimes I have to prompt them to remember these things. They don't remember the punctuation part."

For reading instruction they followed the basal and the stories presented in the basal with the worksheets and skillsheets. She taught "mostly the skills that come along with the basal reader." They don't read a book everyday because they have the skill sheets to complete. "They read around 11 to 12 o'clock. An hour of reading every day. And I don't have them reading a book every day. They have reading skills along with reading. So they read one day and have a skill another day. And workbook another day and I go back and make them reread the story until they learn the words." She supplemented the basal with teacher-made games designed to help the children learn the words they need to read. "If you play a little game, it helps them focus on the word itself. I didn't have any kits or anything so I had to make up my own kit.. that seemed to work and we play reading games at least twice a week and it kind of helps them remember. You see it on the TV and you focus and they kinda' remember." Her focus was on the word itself, not the word in relation to other words in a sentence or paragraph which can help the reader understand the meaning of the word. She preferred drill and finds it particularly helps with children who come in partway through the year. "When kids come to you later in the year, you have to start all over and that is discouraging to a teacher. You have to start all over with these kids that don't know anythingI guess that is why I have a drill with these kids; we have a time for drilling and I guess that they caught on that way. I drill phonics and reading."

Her goal was for children to understand the meanings of words as words themselves not necessarily in relation to other words in the sentence. The children write but the teacher takes on the responsibility of determining the topic and form of that writing. "I sometimes write a poem and have them write the poem and recite it.... I pick up a topic- the schools helps out with this. They give a topic each week and all the children read on it. It depends on my time. I will put the topic on the board and sometimes I will write their response on the board and they can copy what it is and pick any response they want. And that is helping them learn to write." "Sometimes I recite words and have them write it. I do it every Friday. I read the words and I have the words in front of them and have them place the words in sentences and I have them copy that and that helps them write sentences.... I have to start like I said recite a word, and write it and write what I say. And write it with the periods and capitals and so on. They

like that, and I give them treats for everybody that knows it." She also used the DOLWE program.

Teacher K preferred the direct instruction dialogue (D2) because it is "just clearer." "The first one (D1) would not show a clear explanation of it. Dialogue 2 shows you a better way of saying what the main idea is. (The teacher) kinda broke it down in D2." She thought Dialogue 2 was "more structured" and was preferred because "it tells the children what you want to get out of them." D1 is "prying" and "prompting". D2 is "more structured", "performance setting." She believed that vocabulary and phonics are essential for these children because "we (African-Americans) are at a disadvantage.... The only way to get there is to learn phonics and vocabulary."

DIMENSION 2: TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE

PERSONAL QUALITIES:

Teacher K, an African-American, had been an elementary school teacher at Washington Elementary for 8 of her 11 years in teaching. To Teacher K the most important thing a teacher can do for the children at this school was to "be there" for them. She knew she played a part in their learning. "I play a part because I have to be there for them. I have to be an observer and I have to be, um, to show an interest (in) that I want them to learn." To Teacher K a good teacher was "a teacher who is motivated, who is, um, who has the children's interests at heart, who is always here, who is very seldom absent." She did not really specify exactly how the teacher needed to be there for them. For disadvantaged children, it is important to "just be here for them..a lot of personal one-to-one relationships with the children."

However, Teacher K seemed to keep her distance from the personal problems that the children might have. "I don't directly ask them what's your problem at home or anything. I don't do that.... I think that is personal. I don't know how people feel about prying into their...personal feelings and some things might be a little personal to them and they are embarrassed about it... I don't pry to see if momma is working, if you have food to eat ...If I see a problem, I say, 'Check on it' to the (truant officer). I think all the teachers are doing that now." Working at Washington Elementary "is a challenge to me. I feel I am meeting the challenge... but the kids kinda' warm your heart. They need some help, and then, my challenge is so great now that I want them to learn. Teaching here is a pleasure. I think we have comrade among our peers here. Our teachers and administration are great. So I really enjoy working here."

INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS:

Most of the teacher-student interactions that Teacher K described fell into the importance of drilling on topics. "I drill phonics and I drill reading." She recognized that the students count on her to give them the right answer. "I have to be visible to them, and they count on me to give them the right and wrong response." This statement also indicated that she believes there is only one right answer.

CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS:

Teacher K was aware of the need for the children to succeed on the standardized tests. This made sense to her because we are tested all our lives. Teacher K supports those arbitrary measures. Perhaps, she also then loses sight of the particular children's needs right in front of her eyes. "It is really important for the children to learn to read because the testing that we have here. And when they are able to read, they are able to read the test booklets, they are able to read directions and follow it...." The interviewer asked, "Why is this important?" The teacher responded, "I really don't see the significance of why it is so important but it has to be. It is a way of school systems, of evaluating. But, you have to be evaluated throughout life in order to see your accomplishing anything, if you go anywhere. For that reason it is important." Some of the curricular expectations are helpful. "The school helps out with this (writing). They give a topic once a week, and all the children write on it."

Teacher K also recognizes that she would "love to see them finish the first grade level book, and be ready for the second grade level. We are trying to get there." Again, she accepts the arbitrary, outside of her classroom walls measure of student learning.

DIMENSION 3: STUDENT LEARNER ROLE

PERSONAL:

Teacher K recognized that there were some children that were doing better than others in her classroom. She arranged her seating so that "I try to set them where the more aggressive students will be able to help the student who is slow, 'specially in reading. I have the top readers sitting with someone who is not doing well. "

COGNITIVE:

To Teacher K children needed reinforcement and drill if they were going to learn. Sometimes she used little games, "motivating things, a lot of rewards and praises and things like that. And I think that all teachers try to follow that format and try to (motivate).... I think it's working. The kids love rewards. They love to be praised." "I give them little treats, to give them a little motivation in here. To make them learn...."

INTERACTIVE:

To Teacher K group activity was fine within a game format. The class will sit on the carpet and drill with each other in order to learn. "I think group activity is great. I am learning to really implement it. It is a good activity for children. They learn from each other as we sit on the carpet over there. And we drill our phonics and drill our reading and we learn from each other. They hear a word from somebody else that they didn't know so they learn it too." "They help each other... We have our writing vocabulary game. I remind them, don't copy what your neighbor is doing, if your neighbor wants to help you, fine."

DIMENSION 4: CONTEXT

CLASSROOM:

Teacher K believed that good management can motivate students. "Management helps you keep organized... It keeps your lesson plans running smoothly. It helps motivate the students." If things aren't managed properly, she alludes to a ripple effect across the room. "If you have a poorly managed classroom, there would be always disruption going on. All sorts of things go wrong if you don't have management."

One of the management methods she used was the seating arrangement. "I seat the children where they won't cause a problem. The problem makers I will seat by themselves.I could say the seating helps. The talkers are not sitting together." She did use the Quest program occasionally. "They need to be reinforced more but I just don't have the time to do it every day. Because you have to do so much reading and writing and all that you got to put, (it is hard to do it) but they seem to like the attitude skills."

Social development was considered secondary or just something fun for the children to do. Curricular goals that related to social development were not an integral part of the curriculum. "They have the Quest program that helps the children with attitudes and behaviors. My whole lesson is not geared for that but, every once in a while, it breaks the monotony of the lesson and we try those little skills, behavior and attitude skills that they offer and the kids get a kick out of it."

NEIGHBORHOOD:

Teacher K will work with the parents if the need arises. She recognized that the children who come to school come with many problems. There are "children who are neglected, that come to school not dressed or eating properly, that have problems in their homes, single parent homes, drug users.... You get all of that."

Teacher K knew that there are two languages that the children are exposed to one at home and one at school. The at-home language, however, needs to be corrected. In reference to the need to respect the African-American oral tradition, Teacher K believed that children understand things better when it is in their own "slang language."

However, that language presents problems for the children. "I think it is better when it (DOLWE) is in their own language. It's better in the slang language. They understand it better. The problem comes when you have to translate it. I guess it would be better to teach it both ways. I am not into that- talk the Black language. I just try to correct them with the DOLWE program."

In reference to the need for teacher's to be aware of their own children's culture, Teacher K believed that children need to be shown both sides. "We are at a disadvantage because we weren't brought up, our forefathers were brought up certain ways, and they bring it onto their offspring. We (African-Americans) never learned to have our vocabulary brought to us in a way, the way it should..." "It makes them feel comfortable to be reading and writing in their own language. And you have to show another side too. You have to show both sides, so they can see the difference and the way they are supposed to learn, to move up the ladder in society. You are going to have to talk this way. They have to know both sides."

Teacher L: Summary of interview by dimensionDIMENSION 1: CONTENT

Teacher L, a preschool teacher, saw an important part of her role as preparing students to read, to get them "ready" to read and ready to write, "when it is time." Reading to her was mastery of a series of component skills and the development an interest in reading. She saw "putting the letters together is part of reading and phonics. So they know that they have to put a lot of letters (together) in order to put together a word, and vocabulary is very important." Teacher L would also like students to "develop a sense of liking to learn to read and a like to be read to."

Because of the age of her children, perhaps, Teacher L did not really think that what she did in the classroom taught children to read. "I don't think about reading very much. But I guess I should. In a sense, I guess we do it all the time." "We don't teach reading skills per se but we teach readiness skills. We get the kids in tune with alphabet recognition. We know that each letter has a sound and in the beginning (of the year) we don't get into the sounds. We save that for later. Initially we work on letter recognition that there are 26 of them and they all have different sounds and all have a different purpose. That is my approach to reading."

In writing, Teacher L recognized that it is important that the children know how to hold the pencil correctly. "The little muscles in the fingers haven't developed enough on how to hold it correctly so, you start little and we work our way up. Crayons are a little easier to use and so we start with the crayons and show you how to do that and advance to the pencils. The little muscles in the fingers haven't developed enough on how to hold it correctly so, you start little and we work our way up.... when you write you start at the left and go onto the right and we really don't teach them how to write their name. But there are some kids that are ready to do that, but I don't push it.... I guess the goal would be to mainly have an understanding about how you can go from the abstract to something written.. to be able to translate what is in your mind." "If I were in an (affluent suburb), I might do more enrichment."

Teacher L wondered if you would call many of her activities, "reading". She labels things around the room and children can read them, "You know that would be reading. I guess if that is termed 'reading', I guess." "We write stories, we read stories constantly. We are always doing language, talking, verbalizing things, and that is prerequisite to reading..." She didn't think her students are ready to grasp that the scribble writing that they do is really reading. "'I guess we write all year. If you can call it scribble writing because it is very abstract. They really don't understand that you write it down and then you read it."

Teacher L preferred the direct instruction dialogue because it gave a lot more information to the students. She also knew that "(t)here is a need for the children to be exposed to a variety of things" like literature and cooperative groups. There was a sense that the children need to be exposed to these things but she is not convinced that they are central to their learning what they need to know in preschool. There needs to be a "balance of being direct with instructions and staying on the task, and doing the basic fundamentals and also I think that there can be a balance there..., there is a time for there to be direct instruction and I also think there is a time that we can be a little flexible and ... (they can be exposed to) cooperative groups. I think there can be balance between the two."

Teacher L preferred the direct instruction dialogue (D2 in Question 9) because it gave a lot "more information, and she gave a lot more instruction to the students before they had a chance to read the dialogue. The teacher set the tone for that." Her response to 8.1 also indicated the importance of keeping some things in balance. "Children from urban settings need direct, explicit kinds of things. That kind of structure we talked about. But I also think these students do need to have that kind of enrichment (literature and cooperative groups). They are probably not exposed to a lot

of different kinds of (things) other children would get. I think it can be balanced and should be a balance of being direct with instructions and staying on the task, and doing the basic fundamentals and also think that there can be a balance there. Children need to be exposed to lots of things"

DIMENSION 2: TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE

PERSONAL QUALITIES:

Teacher L, an African-American, had been at Washington Elementary for all four of the years that she has been teaching. Teacher L believed that a good teacher at Washington Elementary nurtures the children and includes the parent in the nurturing circle too. To Teacher L the worst thing a new teacher could do at Washington Elementary would be to "set yourself above the children's needs.... it's nurturing, it is really talking to a parent sometimes. It's just you shouldn't set yourself above the needs of a child and that will include that parent, that extended family or whomever. I think you make a big mistake when you just can't seem to gear to that specific need of that child. You just miss the target."

A good teacher needs to attend to the effects of the environment on the children. She needs to build self-esteem, be positive, motivate and plan well. A good teacher "takes her job seriously. Who at all times will take it under consideration the environment and the world aspect of that child.(A good teacher) will do whatever she can to engage the child to learn. She will work her hardest. Because she has very little to work with most of the times and as far as the children's ability level. And she will spend a lot of time just letting the child know that 'I want you to do your very best and I know that you can'. And to build that self esteem. I think that is importanthave things ready when the children get here... a good teacher will do whatever she feels will help her children." A good teacher is also a good planner: "I always have something planned. I must have something each day for the children to be involved with. I cannot come into the classroom when we don't have a project of something or the routine is ready for you to do. I make sure all the materials are available . I make sure children have access to the equipment or whatever they will need."

INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS:

The most important thing a teacher at this school can provide the children is structure. In her interactions with the students during the day, Teacher L provided as "many experiences as I can". She recognized that these children need structure during the day. She didn't make them sit at the tables all day but they must follow the structures set up for that task- sit properly, clean up when they are done. She thought that it is very important to provide a clear structure for these children in particular. "Children from urban settings need direct, explicit kinds of things. That kind of structure we talked about." "When I walk into (another) classroom and kids are sitting at a desk, doing a task, that is structure. Staying on the task and being able to sit and attend to something, and appear to attend, I consider that a structured kind of program. But, (this age children) cannot be expected to sit at their desk all the time. We can sit for a few minutes at a time to focus our attention on something. The kinds of structure I mean is the routine of the day. Children know it is circle time: we sit on the carpet with our hands in our laps and we sit for a period of time, no longer than 10-15 minutes. When playtime is over, you must put the toys away. You can't do anything else until you are done. Um, the routine kind of daily things that you do. I think you need to have structure. I have seen some preschool classes that is basically all that they do, is just sit at the desk and do color sheets and stay in the line and write their names on a format and form the letter correctly. I think preschoolers need that flexibility of this right now.... yes, it is a different kind of structure. "

CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS:

Perhaps because of the age of her children, Teacher L did not say anything about the CAT testing or other curricular expectations.

DIMENSION 3: STUDENT LEARNER ROLE**PERSONAL:**

To Teacher L children need to be open to learning. Children at this school are very appreciative and open to learning for the most part. The teacher only needs to make a little effort to motivate them. "Mostly, they are open to whatever, the materials, the materials that are presented to them. They are open to learning. They ask questions. They are curious. They have the will to learn....They do have the desire. They are motivated, with just a little effort on the teacher." The students at Washington Elementary were open to learning as long as the teacher respects their willingness to learn. "These children are quite different in the respect they are very open to learning, very open to teachers who are willing and will treat them with respect. You need to build on that." The children were appreciative of what you do for them. " They are just like any other kids but their environment and their home setting makes you a little more sympathetic to their needs. They appreciate something a lot more than some kids do."

COGNITIVE:

Teacher L recognized that the children "are probably not exposed to a lot of different kinds of (things) other children would get." Some of the children have "never been downtown, um, just for a fun outing." "Children from urban settings need direct, explicit kinds of things....But, they also need that kind of enrichment. They are probably not exposed to a lot of enrichment." It is the job of the teacher to provide many experiences for the children.

INTERACTIVE:

Teacher L provided many opportunities for children to work together. "All the time, we work collaboratively at all times during the day. That is part of our learning process.... The room is set up for collaborative learning because I have centers and areas for children to play."

Teacher L believed that children can learn a lot from one another. "In groups children get the opportunity to learn from each other.... sometimes learning is so accidental because it is a casual setting and collaborative. You can be talking to a peer and you find out something and learn something just by a conversation." "They need to know that you can always learn something from your friends, look to your friends. It can give you an idea sometimes about what, how you can learn.... they have to learn in the beginning they had to learn together and cooperate, and they have to learn how to share and be considerate when we are in our groups. That is very important, especially with little children, because basically that is how we learn to get along with each other. We have to be friends here, 'You've got to learn to work together and that is just the way it is. It might be something about that person that you might not like but you still have to get along.'"

DIMENSION 4: CONTEXT**CLASSROOM:**

Teacher L believed that the social developmental needs of her children precede the cognitive needs at this age. She said, "That is our objective from the beginning. You have to learn to get along, that is most important. That is the way school is, when we come here we are coming here jointly, as a group. We are coming here for a purpose. We are all going to have fun and going to learn. And if we can get along, it will make things a lot better and we can do a lot more things if we can get along. That's the way it is. I have to insist on that, on how to get along. Sometimes we don't get into cognitive skills until we know how to keep your hands to yourself. 'You just don't say that to your friends at school. You must maintain some kind of behavior here.' And I will not tolerate anything less." In her grade level she really seemed to focus on the socialization necessary for children to succeed in school. The socialization is often taught, it seems, through conversation as a whole class or in collaborative groups. If

the cognitive comes along with the social, that is fine, but the social development is foundational.

NEIGHBORHOOD:

Teacher L worked very closely with the parents. She had monthly meetings with the parents where she takes roll and it posted the roll on the bulletin board of the classroom for the children to see. The children comment about whether their parents made it to the meeting. The children knew when their parents come to the meeting by the star after the parents' name. "Have a good relationship with the parents from the beginning. Have an understanding with that parent. If the child is in my room, we will be both wanting learning to take place. In order to do it, I must have your support. I need your help and, initially, if you do that, you won't, parents will know where you are coming from.... It helps by making parents know what is expected. (I say to them) 'I expect a certain kind of participation. I expect you to follow through by whatever, and, if I send home homework, I expect for those things to be done. And I expect you to follow through to make sure that they are done.' So, we have a good understanding. It can make things run more smoothly." "Children are coming from an environment where writing and reading are real issues because there are some parents that are illiterate and some of the children will come from homes where (there is) not a lot of emphasis on education. You might find that you have not only to work with the child but as well as the parents."

Teacher L recognized the contrast between the oral language at home and what schools expect. To her, it is just the way schools are. Teachers should know about the African-American oral tradition but teachers still need to teach the basics. In reference to the question about respecting the need for schools to respect the oral tradition of African-Americans (Question 8.2), Teacher L agreed that some schools ignore that oral tradition. "They (the children) do have a real oral background when they get to school. They know a lot about speaking. I guess that has to do with what they are exposed to at home. And when they come to school it is just another story all together. I guess it is true that the schools try to make them speak the White language. Well, the rap and the Black language is not what the schools are trying to enforce; they are trying to get back to the basics."

In reference for the need for teachers to account for the child's cultural heritage, Teacher L agreed that it was important. "I agree because you must understand what this child has been exposed to as far as his culture and his language. Because some things will be almost foreign to him when he comes to school. Because of the kinds of cultural things that are at home... It might perhaps make you in tune with his needs. And try to see the world through his eyes."

Teacher M: Summary of interview by dimension**DIMENSION 1: CONTENT**

Teacher M, a kindergarten teacher, considered that the learning to read and write was a holistic process. She saw the two subjects intertwined all day long. "I am one of these people that's into the writing-reading, whole language thing. I mean just reading to them as they are learning these skills is real important. They sit there and read these little picture books every day." "I think basically I incorporate writing in what they are doing with that reading. I think it is important that they write a lot." Teacher M began teaching her kindergarteners to read by creating an interest in reading. "I am talking about creating an interest in reading is where to start. We try to just be enthusiastic about words and what this is all about.. We start with interest.. often children come to school with that enthusiasm. 'This is where I come to learn to read.'" "At my level along with the skills, I want them to learn to make that (reading/writing) a real important part of their lives. I tell you I try everything. We even have a lending library this year." "Of primary (importance) is the value of reading. (If it) isn't there, if that isn't there, I don't think we are gonna have readers."

Teacher M stressed phonics only as it related to the context in which children need to use the "abstract" notion of letter sound. Phonics was only important "to help sense-making. We don't do any vowel sounds. Phonics is real important as a process to go along with all the other things in terms of developing this language." "I think in a lot of cases we don't have children write because they can't make the printed symbol yet. They are not writing, you know, and then we go into the fourth grade and they have to write paragraphs, and they can't compose a paragraph because they have never had to put it down on paper. If I taught at another grade level I would definitely have them do journals because I cannot separate the two. I can't separate reading and writing. It is just part of the process."

Teacher M wanted the children to learn about the connection between print and meaning when they write. "I guess what they have learned is that there are symbols that represent their thoughts and they can go on paper and they can be written and we can write it for them. And if it can be written, it can be read. They know at this point that those letter symbols have meaning, that writing means something. It is not just a picture." What Teacher M did was to "just provide all the things that we have talked about. The books, in relation to language and pictures to words and words to pictures and incorporate it into everything that you do. I can't think of anything we do during the day that isn't related to some skills, you will need for becoming good readers, successful readers."

Teacher M's goals for writing focused on the meaning that children need to get from symbols. Mostly, she wanted them to know that the symbols represent thoughts and, when they make symbols, they can communicate them to other people. Capitalization, punctuation, etc. were the technical skills associated with writing; they were not the writing process itself. "We learn about a period and a question mark. When I think about the things we can talk about (specific skills), I don't think of them as writing, I think of them as technical things, part of writing, I don't think of it as the process. They do learn what a period is and a question mark. Those are the technical (things), how we leave spaces between our words, and spaces between our sentence and what a sentence is and what an individual word is. I mean it was April before a lot of children knew that the letters were, a group of letters put together is a word. I mean it's just a whole lot of things that we can learn."

Teacher M used the basal because it taught them some basic phonics. "I teach phonics. I use the basal. I like it very much.. But they learn 15-16 beginning sounds, they learn how to decode words....They learn how to read some words in context. They have 15 or 20 sight words ... I call them sight words, I am probably using an old fashioned term. They learn some real good skills in this book." Children did a lot of

writing in her classroom- from journals to spontaneous writing on their drawings. Teacher M wanted her children to know that "if they have thought it, they can say it. If they can say it, either they can write it down or somebody can write it down for them. Isn't that what writing is?" "I always expect to see more spontaneous writing in their drawings and I haven't until lately. Now I am getting all kinds of it... Now I am getting a lot of letters and they got their letters all over it and they'll come up and say I wrote a story today and they tell me what it says. And then invented spelling is entering into their writing samples..."

Her classroom was set up with learning centers. It took several months in the beginning of the year for the kindergartner to learn how to use the centers. During one week, the students rotated through the centers. They worked at the centers independently for an hour in the afternoon. Recently, following the recommendation of her supervisor, she gave a workshop to other kindergarten teachers in the district at her grade level about how they could provide this structured environment in their classroom.

When asked to discuss the value of the two dialogues (Question 9), Teacher M did not have a preference for direct instruction method or social constructivist-type interaction. She said the difference between the dialogues was "child-centered as opposed to teacher-centered....Neither is more likely to occur in her classroom. They both occur and I keep them in a balance. They both teach very well depending on the situation." Even though she agreed that direct instruction was necessary (Question 8.1), she saw that direct instruction must be related to a purpose, to creating an interest, a motivation to read. Otherwise, direct instruction in phonics and vocabulary was too abstract for young children. "I feel the direct, explicit instruction in reading and writing focuses on phonics and vocabulary is an absolute necessity for the learning and reading processes. But, I cannot separate it from providing the motivation to see that is a valuable, pleasurable skill, that it has to be .. an important part of your life. I don't think it can become an important part of your life if you're only teaching them the technical things about reading, for two or three years and not providing them with any value of how this is valuable to them. What it will mean to them. If you can't teach them that, I don't know where you are going to I mean why do I have to learn all these letters? ... I am back to motivation, to wanting them to be readers." "I will direct this direct, explicit instruction to the reading of a book that we use which follows in definite sequence the learning of the letters, learning the sounds of the letters, using it in context."

DIMENSION 2: TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE

PERSONAL QUALITIES:

Teacher M, an Anglo-American, had been a teacher at Washington Elementary for five of her ten years of experience. She knew that the teacher plays a major role in planning the curriculum but a teacher also has to be responsive to these particular children's needs and be flexible. To Teacher M a good teacher plays a "major role. Major. Major. Major role." The good teacher has "flexibility, and good planning skills." A good teacher is "creative, knowledgeable, cultured." She says one of her important practices is planning: "I plan. I plan real thoughtfully."

With these particular African-American students, a good teacher needed to have a "knowledge and understanding of what is happening (in their lives)." "Don't presume that the kids all have the motivation to learn to read and write. (You need) to start teaching there." It is just plain hard work teaching at Washington Elementary. "It's just hard work. The demands are overwhelming sometimes. Children have greater needs than the situation I am in can meet, (I) suppose that is why it seems like it is real hard work all of the time. It's a real challenge. I think that just because the children have many needs and demands. It's a harder job than I've experienced before. I have taught preschool previous. I have been here five years teaching (primary grade). I

taught preschool before that in (our city). I have been in the private sector, taught college for six years in (our city). So, I have been in maybe eight or nine different schools."

INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS:

One of the ways that Teacher M responded to the particular needs of the children was to provide them with an independent structure. What that meant was that they had a classroom schedule of activities but they learned how to act independently within the structure. However, the schedule included a lot of independent decision-making by the children when they worked at the learning centers. It took a long time to teach how to act independently but Teacher M knew it is very important for the children. Teacher M valued providing structure for the children in their daily activities in the classroom because the children lack it in their lives outside the classroom. "I think I have said that some of the things (activities) have to be structured- everything that we do, the activities where a child is learning (are structured). I believe there is not enough structure in their lives. I am not sure about that but I think there might not be. (They should see a) beginning and end, and they see a middle. They see a process. Take a lot of things that happen in their lives that they don't really see that (process). They just don't. It is a developmental need. Children at all different ages have different needs." "Children need to know precisely what is expected and they can't do, what they can do. And if you are real consistent about that, there is a trust, I think that takes place between them and the teacher." "We have this big chart. The children see the structure. I truly believe these children need to see that structure.... I would say to people that all kinds of prechoice and making decisions on your own is real important.... These children need, NEED structure. They need a basis. Without that they are lost. There is no way I could have these children win, and do self-selecting activities at the beginning of the year." "We take it real slow, real slow.... I want to see independence."

For language development, Teacher M recognized that the children need to talk so she spent a great deal of time talking to the children. "I spend a great deal of time just- I let them talk and have conversations about everything, the more I can expose them to language (the better) because, they really do have language deficiencies. "

CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS:

Teacher M did not mention the curricular constraints of the CAT test nor DOLWE.

DIMENSION 3: STUDENT LEARNER ROLE

PERSONAL:

Teacher M recognized the many needs that the children have beyond the academic. "They really truly do not know how to act independently, many of the decisions have just been made for them." She taught the whole child so she considered all of these needs when planning her curriculum. "These children have the greatest needs of any of the children I have worked with...I guess when you think of education or teaching, I might think of dealing with the whole child and, as a whole child, these children have many areas where they have needs. Physically, socially, medically, which need to be dealt with."

COGNITIVE:

Teacher M used conversation to develop children's thinking and language ability because the lack of language development is "the core of a lot of things that have happened, that makes it hard for them." She puzzled over the reason for this lack of language development. "The size of their vocabulary is very small because they haven't had a lot of conversations with people. Even if they watched TV all day, they would have remarkable language facility. I am just sure they would because they would be hearing these words, (but) their language development range is extremely low. They just don't have the vocabulary." "...the limited vocabulary and the limited experience with the written form... a lot of these children do not associate the words in a book with reading."

Teacher M wondered why the children lack basic vocabulary. "I can't put my finger on why, most groups of five year olds have a lot to say and it might not make any sense but they have a lot to say. They usually have a pretty nice size vocabulary. They have words to describe things. They have names of things. Many of these children come and they don't have common names. They don't know the names of animals. They don't know the names of common objects." To teach them language, "it is a slow, slow process. It is almost like they missed something when it should have happened. I worry about that. I think about that a lot. You know a stage when all of these new words and ideas should have been coming up to their brains and weren't and now it's gonna' take a long time to build all that up."

She wondered if they have ever left the neighborhood and that is why they lack such vocabulary. "It is hard to believe, but I have really wondered-sometimes just hearing the way the parents have talked before leaving conferences- that the children have not been much farther than, than our neighborhood." She saw new problems in these children over the last few years. "We do have some children (at the beginning of the year).. a whole lot of us that are doing some of these lower level things and thinks like that, in terms of overall language. Communication is through gestures and pointing. I mean, I have lots of children that come in, they are nonverbal in here. I am not saying they are nonverbal children. But it makes you wonder how much language, how much vocabulary they actually have. Identify simple objects, or follow simple directions. It is real common."

INTERACTIVE:

Teacher M used cooperative learning every day when the children divided up into groups to use the learning centers. She saw the events and learning in her classroom as a "shared experience." For her children, "so much of what we do is a shared experience with the person sitting next to you. 'Cause I feel very strongly, that they are all a tremendous help to each other." She knew that the children can help each other. "I don't always know when the children need help. They have an awful lot to give each other that I might not be aware of. I have said (they know they need help with) simple things like showing a child where something might be, that they need to do something (that) might involve a reading skill that you know they are getting practice at by doing them, by helping another child they are practicing."

DIMENSION 4: CONTEXT

CLASSROOM:

To Teacher M, good management does more than just make things run smoothly. Good management can create a good feeling in the classroom where the teacher can meet one of the great needs that the children have- the need to trust an adult. "They need to know there is a plan. Real good planning. It's a trust thing. If I say to them at the beginning of the day, that we are going to do this... they look for that. They want a trusting relationship with the teacher and their peers and they want (to know) when someone says something, they mean what they say. I definitely sense that." "Children need to know precisely what is expected and they can't do, what they can do. And if you are real consistent about that, there is a trust, I think, that takes place between them and the teacher."

Social development was an integral part of her academic program. Again, she related her emphasis on social development to a recognized need that these particular children have. "I teach them to make choices and to live by their decisions and to see the consequences of what they do. At most of the centers there is a job to do before they use other materials. It's all on their own, it's a very independent time of day. And again they can't do that at the beginning of the year. they haven't been exposed to dealing with the freedom of making choices and if you haven't experienced that, if someone gave you a choice of two things- I think they maybe are told a lot what to do and they truly don't know how to act independently.. Many of the decisions are just made for them (at

home)...". In addition, she worked on the social skills. "(Their) social skills are not real good. I spend a lot of time just learning how to get along with each other, how to deal with things in the room and how to follow these rules and how to deal with each other socially.... A lot of the children come to the room, they- seriously- have not been anywhere where there has been that many children to compete with... Children that probably have not been inside a school and just being inside of that room with thirty other children is an overwhelming experience." "Many of the children don't have social skills. Maybe no one ever said to them, 'This is a toy that two people can use and you will have this toy again.'... In most cases it is just a matter of saying it to them. I want those children to leave my room knowing that, you know, that there are other people who might have something rather important to say to them. Self-respect for other things, respect for things, we don't seem to have that. We have to learn how to care for things in our room."

NEIGHBORHOOD:

Teacher M noted a deterioration in the children's skills and social behavior over the last few years. "It is different than it was 4 or 6 years ago for a teacher and that is because I see children with problems that I don't think anybody knows at this point (how to solve)... I think they are drug-related. I think they are alcohol-related. I don't think anybody has answers and I think we are seeing more and more of those children." "There are a number of children that come in-- and it's related to attention. Either nothing is going on (lethargy) or too much is going on (hyperactivity)".

Teacher M found that many of the children cannot pass the Brigance, a screening test at the beginning of the year. In the screening test, "there are ten body parts. All they have to do is point to the fingers, toes, shoulders, elbows, ankle, hips, ten body parts, (that is) very difficult for them. Some can point to only one or two. They have ten objects they see in pictures- (like) boy, apple, girl. They do ok, but the real simple common objects ... They just have an absolutely, horrible time (when) they have to match up, start out with shapes and they find one that is the same.... And the children that end up in my room have very poor motor skills. The first area I ask is their name. They get points for getting the first and or last name, their age, their address and their birthday. Many children know their first name and that is it." Teacher M does not blame the parents for the situation. "Certainly, (it is) not intentional, you know, 'I don't want my child to...' The circumstances, the situation is not there for them to expose their children to these things." "The differences I see with these children are mainly in terms of economics...I have worked at other schools. I see the differences as working with some really poor, poor children with, um; they are at a real economic disadvantage." A good teacher has to be "aware of what's available and agencies that can help different problems because you are gonna' have to deal with them...You need to become very aware of what's available where people can get what they need and where they can go for help."

One of the ways that Teacher M worked with the parents is by talking to the parents about reading and getting books into their homes. "I almost am to the point where I force books on the parents because they are going to read to these children, if they can read. And, I just make it a real point so that for me, as a reading teacher, at (my primary grade level) , to make sure these parents know that I feel this way about reading and they do too. And we are gonna' go all of these things to make sure that their children get a real good basis." "I encourage them to get books and have books that belong to them, books that are reasonably priced. But, still, it is an expense, and whenever I get things I give out books as prizes all the time, when they come to a meeting, 'Oh, here is a book for your child.' So, just really impress upon them that they need to read to these children first. That is step one. That is that they read, read, read to them all year." There was no library in the school. "It is one of the best things... bringing these bags back with their books in and getting a book. I got sick of these plastic bags and thought 'ok, This is gonna be one of the most important things for them this year.' They

walk out of here with a little cloth bag that says 'library bag' on it, and they just come back in and I have to read every one of those book reports to everybody, reading for characters and tell me what happened last in the story. And they are at the point now where they use the library so much, they recognize each others books. 'I read that, you know.' That's been real nice. The parents I've gotten a lot of reaction about it."

Teacher M recognized that the children lack some language skills taught in schools. She felt that teaching them written language did not necessarily have to ruin their African-American oral tradition. She believed that we need to make children aware of the importance of learning standard American written English but the choice is theirs to make. "Our children come in lacking oral language skills. I don't know why. I don't think that making them learn how to write is necessarily ruining that oral tradition.... Trying to make the African-American student white? Yes, I think that it is wrong and I am sure it happens. But I think there is a way to approach it, without doing that.... If eventually, standard American written English has to be learned- which I think at this point in time it does- if you are going to succeed with meeting what the standards are out there in the world, (it) certainly needs to be made obvious to the children, that it is a way that things might have to be done. That is no reason to not have the children write. I am sure that I have said a hundred times that I don't think children write enough and whatever form they are writing they should be writing."

Teacher M believed that a teacher in this setting needs to be aware of African-American culture and history. "You need to know about the culture. You need to know some of those oral traditions. You need to be aware of the historical things ... If you don't know their experiences, it is real hard to come to a common ground. If you are not speaking from their experiences.... You have to start with what they know best."

Teacher N: Summary of interview by dimension**DIMENSION 1: CONTENT**

Teacher N was the computer lab instructor. Throughout the week all the students in the school from first grade up to sixth came to her lab to learn about computers. At the same time that they come to the lab, she said that she teaches them how to be good readers. Her goals in reading, even reading directions off the computer, were "being able to comprehend what they are reading. I think phonics is the first step to reading. They need to know how to decode. They need to know how to sound out words, put the sounds together.They don't, the kids don't come to school with ... a wide experience with reading." Phonics is "a base to build around." In writing she had a sequential notion of how to succeed in writing. "Sentence writing to start with, what makes up a sentence, capitalization, punctuation, to build on that. To go into paragraph writing and different types of writing, but they have to be able to write a complete sentence first." Mostly, the children do mathematics in her computer classes. However, she expects to be teaching writing as word processing very soon. When she taught middle school reading and writing, she developed her understanding of reading and writing instruction.

Teacher N's methods centered on helping students discover for themselves what was "missing". That discovery process includes making mistakes. "I would rather for them to pick it up, discover it, and read it and say, 'Oh, I made a mistake'. Instead of saying, 'You need capital letter here'. I would much rather them discover their own mistakes and correct them, and me serve as a guide without giving the answer." What she wanted the students to discover was the correct answer, the proper way of doing something, the correct way of saying something.

To teach grammar and writing, she said, "(We) teach DOWLE, but sometimes they just don't see the connection. When they write, they don't put the punctuation. The subjects and verbs many times don't agree. But they have to see, they have to be able to apply it to writing. You correct them and stay on top of them and make them correct their language. Correct them verbally, (make them) say it properly." "Starting with the picture on the wall, describe what you see here....(on) computers .. you can see it right there. They can see it: does that sound right, do the subjects and verbs agree, is there punctuation there, is it capitalization there, (and) is there anything wrong?..."

She preferred the constructivist dialogue (D1) because "the student has a chance to find out for himself what the main idea is." She really liked the discovery method for her students but what she wants them to discover were the given meanings and rules. In response to the question about focusing on direct, explicit instruction, Teacher N did not agree that these students only need direct instruction at the expense of literature and cooperative groups. "I don't necessarily agree. Students need literature. That is one way to develop their vocabulary and cooperative groups that's another way of helping them focus on phonics and they can pick up vocabulary from one another."

DIMENSION 2: TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE**PERSONAL QUALITIES:**

Teacher N, an African-American, had been at Washington Elementary for 3 of her 12 years of teaching. Prior to this, she taught reading and writing at the middle school level. The biggest mistake a new teacher could make at Washington Elementary is to "destroy their self-esteem because they come in with so little." A good teacher should get involved and care about the children. "The kids pick up that you care. You have to be (caring)."

Teacher N believed that rapport with the students was important. Establishing rapport was essential to building self-esteem and good teaching. "Rapport has a lot to do with getting across the children, the rapport that you have with them. Establish the rapport with the children." She also recognizes the role of motivation in learning. "But what is important for me to do is to motivate or just, just spark that interest to learn."

A good teacher at Washington Elementary "has management skills, one that has rapport needed to, um... flexibility. There has to be a certain amount of dedication, even if it does, I mean, the time that you spend here you have to be- it has to come from the heart. And they (the students) can tell (if you care).... I can't get the students out of my classroom. They usually tell me it is the computers, but it's beyond the computer. I can never get rid of any students, I mean I would never get rid of students." "They (teachers) have to be real. You have to be willing to take a risk, you can't be afraid, if you see something happening."

INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS:

In her interactions with students Teacher N saw herself more as a guide than an dispenser of information. This followed from the discovery focus of her methods. "I guide. I teach. I don't want to just teach one way. I want them to see it in several ways and be flexible, to discover other ways of doing other things...maybe you can do it in another way... Apply the knowledge that you already have." "I would much rather guide or lead them to the correct answer because I think they would then be able to apply it. They would remember it better." "Get them to read, get them to think.... We as educators have to make them think." Teacher N believed that we must "make them think." She said this at least five times in the interview.

Along with getting the students to think, Teacher N models appropriate behavior and learning. The modeling shows children how to apply what they know. "If you want respect, you have to give respect and we talk about respect and pride and how I can tell if you don't have respect for yourself. These are things that we've got to model for them. To model pride and respect."

Teacher N recognizes that sometimes the children need someone to talk to. "I think that sometimes they need somebody to talk to." "You can't be afraid. children are children everywhere.... You can't be afraid to touch them, to talk to them." "They need somebody to trust. I think that sometimes they need somebody to talk to. But, sometimes you really have to get on their level, but you have to get them in a way that they can trust you and believe what you are saying."

CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS:

Teacher N was a lab teacher; perhaps, that was why she never mentioned the CAT or other curricular expectations. She spoke about the district writing contest but it was only in the context of getting her computers available for word processing.

DIMENSION 3: STUDENT LEARNER ROLE

PERSONAL:

Teacher N recognized that the children were perceptive about those adults around them. They knew which teachers care about their well-being. The children will learn anything when you show them that you care. "The kids pick up that you care. You have to be (caring). They will learn anything, everything. They will do anything that you tell them to do. And once you show them, once they understand that you do care and that you do care about them. We (teachers) will try to make them see how it will affect them in later life." Again, the caring like the respect was linked to an application.

Teacher N believed that a new teacher should know "that they are children and they need the same types of things other children need. They need the touching, the loving. They need to know that you love them. ... I give them real life experiences, what's going to happen if you don't learn because we know what is going to happen."

COGNITIVE:

Teacher N seemed to like the discovery learning method because it made children think. "Sometimes are kids are not trained to read. They want you to tell them the answer. They want the easy way out. When they get the easy way out, I don't think they learn well. The hard way is if they think. The answer to their question is there (on the computer), 'Just read it. What does it say?' Get them to read it. Get them to think....We

as educators have to make them think. Don't tell them the answer all of the time. Make them think what are they supposed to do. Think through whatever."

The students came to school with "lots of language. Vocabulary, language in general, but it is often not the appropriate language to expand upon in school." To Teacher N, they may have the language but they may not have the experience to benefit from schooling like other children do. "Because I think generally all children want to learn. They may not bring all the experience that other children may bring to school with them but that is the challenge here. Because they don't bring the experience with them. The kinds of things that I remember before I went into kindergarten, you had to know certain things before you went to kindergarten these children don't know. They haven't had the experience. They haven't been exposed to, I would say most of the students had not had any, a lot of exposure beyond the boundaries of this neighborhood. So, it's a challenge."

INTERACTIVE:

Teacher N had the children work together on the computer. Sometimes she put a high achiever with a low achiever "When it is the lower achiever's turn, the higher achiever kid of assists them in finding the right answer. Shows them. Doesn't do it for them. 'Don't give them the answer. Help them figure it out.'" "I am always stressing helping one another because sometimes kids are cold. They don't want to be helpful to one another. We learn to be helpful. That is a universal problem now, we haven't learned to be helpful. We want to shine over the other person. We have to try to change the attitude. If I can't help you, what is my purpose? College students do it all the time- (that is) a way of finding out the answer, acquiring the knowledge."

DIMENSION 4: CONTEXT

CLASSROOM:

Teacher N knew that "they must see that you as the one in charge." There were times when she felt she had to assert herself and be a strong manager. "I am the boss. I am the boss. They automatically know. 'Stop what you are doing. Close your mouth. Say nothing more, get listening.' And I wait." In addition, she did not hesitate to change the plans for the day to address a social problem. "Actually I do a lot of teaching (of social development). ...If we need to talk about (it), we talk. If there is a problem, we stop. If we see some foolishness going on and I think it would help the whole class, we stop."

Outside of her room in the hallway she has a success bulletin board where she has three phrases: Wise decisions, Be responsible, Get along with others. "You've got to send them messages. You put things up. I put up that success board....It is important that they make wise decisions and that they get along with others and learn responsibility. Even if they don't read it every day.... if they see it once in a while, something has got to sink in. Wise decisions and (I'm) constantly talking about wise decisions. Getting along with others... If just doesn't happen in the classroom, if I see it and maybe by chance they will pick up those subliminal messages. Being a self-sufficient responsible adult." She discussed and modeled these values for the children.

NEIGHBORHOOD:

Teacher N and another teacher started an after school program for parents. She believed that the school needs to involve the parents but that takes financial and personal commitment. "And we've got to look at the total picture.How deep are you going to go? I think that is really the bottom line, Are you willing to make a stand? Whoever. Make wise decisions, be able to work well with others, self-discipline was my first one. And be responsible. It will have to reach deeper than with the children. We have to get people in here for our black males; they have to see some role models. How deep are we going to go? What are we gonna do? How are we gonna get our parents in here? We didn't have the money to do workshops with parents this year. (Last year) we paid the parents to come out, we found that parents do not know simple regrouping with addition and subtraction. And how deep are we willing to go, in terms of commitment?"

Teacher N believed that the teachers and the school have to take some responsibility to make some changes for the children. The children at Washington Elementary bring different experiences to school and the school needs to respond to those differences beyond the classroom and into the community. "They are different because they bring different experiences. Poverty, drugs....they come with very little self-esteem, if any. (There is) the drug problem, we see all kinds of drugs with the school children. Just drug abuse." "After we make a stand, and of course we have to do the changing ourselves. You have to first take a look at number one, what can I do? Am I gonna just cut it off? 'Oh, I am not gonna deal with that. That is not my problem.' But it is. If you're gonna make a difference, how deep are we going to go?"

Teacher N knew that the children come to school with a language, but it isn't an appropriate language for school. They need to learn English. In reference to the African-American oral tradition (Question 8.2), Teacher N recognized the language that children bring to school with them, but she referred to it as "slanguage". She believed that the kids need to learn English, to learn what is correct, so that they can "engage in the work world." "Kids do come to school with a lot of language, (it) may not be the appropriate language that we are looking for, but they do come to school with lots of language. Vocabulary, language in general, but it is not often the appropriate language to expand upon in school If this is the language that we are expected to use in the work world, I wouldn't call it trying to make the students White (as in the Question 8.2). But giving them, almost, a second language.... Don't try to moralize or despise them for using the language but there isn't a moral healthy way to say that (they need to change their language)." "I took a class in language barriers... Sometimes you wouldn't call it Black English because I have seen the same kind of grammatical mistakes everywhere. I prefer to call it 'slanguage'. I will go to help them become self-sufficient in our society... To what society sees as appropriate and correct. If you continue to engage in the work world, in society to be successful, then you must look... there is no other way. Deal with the facts as they are. The facts are that they have to know English and have to be able to speak it and write it. And if you can't, then there is some disadvantage to not knowing."

Appendix I:
Description of Focal Teachers' Observed Lessons

Appendix I: Descriptions of focal teachers' observed lessons

Teacher B: The observed lesson:

On one morning there were two lessons observed. The first one was a mathematics lesson and the second one was a reading skills lesson. The mathematics lesson was about dividing fractions. It was basically taught as memorization and practice of the algorithm of changing a mixed number to an improper fraction, inverting and then, multiplying. There were three problems on the board.

There were two bulletin boards in the room. On one was the title "Super stars" which had posted some written stories from the students. The other bulletin board had some student social studies projects about countries around the world.

Before the lesson began Teacher B said, "If you do not want to participate in learning and can't handle this, you can leave now. Otherwise I assume you understand how to behave." No one left. Students then solved the problems on the board and discussed their solutions with the class. She proceeded through the lesson with a playful banter saying things like, "You guys are too tough for me today." "I can't wait to see those CAT (California Achievement Test) scores." "Do you understand? (Teacher B) gets upset if you say you understand something and you don't." "Chill out, relax, now."

The next lesson was a review lesson on summarizing. Teacher B started the lesson asking whether anyone had seen the Bill Cosby show the night before. Then, she asked the person to summarize what happened in the show. After the student summarized, the teacher indicated that a good summary of the show would include the "lesson": "Don't judge a book by its cover just like your momma and grandma say." Then, Teacher B asked Erick to recite the speech he gave for the district oratory contest. When he was done and we all applauded, she asked him to summarize his speech. Teacher B then proceeded to ask students to describe a number of other situations from their own lives. She pointed out that "Every day you have been summarizing events and including details. Looks like everyone is so good at this in here that they are going onto high school and finish and then onto college." The class then summarized the characteristics of a good summary. Finally, she asks, "Who thinks they are ready to go to the board and map the meaning of summarization?" One student went to the board and drew a circle in the middle with the word summarization. Then, the student added five circles around it. Each circle had a characteristic of a good summary: factual, sequential order, short-brief, logical-makes sense, tells a story. Then, the teacher pulled out a class set of booklets entitled, "Michigan Educational Assessment Program- Reading Related Study Skills." The class read several paragraphs in the booklets and selected the one of four sentences which gave the best summary of the paragraph. They applied the definition of a good summary from the concept map on the board. They did 3 exercises. Then, the teacher said, "We will do another one together and then go onto independent practice." The summarization lesson took one hour and a half. After the students did one of the items on their own, Teacher B closed the lesson by saying, "We should be able to put all these together and get the main idea now....From now on you will be summarizing." That was closure and the end of the lesson.

Teacher C: The observed lessons

During the observation in the morning, the children participated in two lessons: the reading of a story from the basal and doing the worksheets associated with a self-esteem program called Quest. The reading lesson was taught using one story out of the basal reading texts. Teacher C described the lesson as "typical". The teacher had only one reading group so the whole class was involved in the lesson. There were four students who did not have books so they had to share with others or they went to another classroom to borrow two books. The student desks on one side of the room were so close

to the chalkboard that the teacher could not possibly write on that chalkboard. The teacher mentioned to the researcher at one point that she did not like to write on the board. She often had the children write on the board. During the entire lesson the teacher sat amongst the students in a chair. The student desks were clustered together on one side of the room.

One of the bulletin boards in the classroom had a large display of the pronunciation key from the dictionary. Another sign in the classroom elaborated the SQRRR study method. There were written classroom rules hung in a corner: "1. Come in quietly. 2. Do not run or play in the halls or the classroom. 3. Listen to all directions. 4. Work quietly and do your best. 5. Return homework done correctly and on time." Another teacher-made poster described the rules for the Quest (a self-esteem curriculum) activities: "Quest- the gift of listening. Give the speaker your attention. Encourage the speaker to tell you more. Show you're interested by your actions."

Before reading the story in the basal, the teacher pointed out six key vocabulary words which were printed on a flipchart and underlined in sentences. The students defined each word based on the context of the sentence or by looking it up in the glossary in the back of the reading book. The teacher asked the students to read the title of the story and to think about the answers to three questions as they read: "Describe the mayor's office. Who is Mr. Foster? How did he feel when he was able to enter the race?" The teacher said the questions were designed for the students to have a purpose as they read. Students read two pages of the story to themselves. Students then read aloud and discussed the answers to the questions.

As they were reading, the teacher added a few questions which led them to identify the setting, Wyoming. Teacher C had the students refer to the map of the United States which was down, and find Wyoming. Then, they were asked to read another section. But, before they started, the teacher stated three questions to think about as they read. In one of the discussions about the story the teacher asked the meaning of the metaphor "face as hard as stone." Several students responded to the question before the teacher gave the answer. The student interpretations were: "all faced different directions", "never moved his face around" and "looked the same even in the summer time." After two more students gave responses, the teacher gave the correct interpretation of the metaphor. This pattern of asking two or three guiding questions and then having the students read silently or aloud followed throughout the reading of about half of the story which was about twelve pages long. After 45 minutes the teacher noted that the story was long and they would "stop here and continue tomorrow."

The next activity after reading was a peer learning activity where the two students worked together on a packet of handouts. The topic was "Why is alcohol bad for you?" Each pair had one packet so they had to work together to get the answers to the questions. The questions were on fill-in-the-blank worksheets preceded by a paragraph or two of text on the topic. The teacher did not engage the students in discussion about the topic. She did caution them, "You all need to read the information before you answer the questions on the page." However, the groups proceeded through the worksheets without too many questions. Following the worksheets, the teacher assigned an art project to each group: Draw a picture of what alcoholism does to a person. Several projects related to one of the previous activities concerned with drug use was displayed around the room. Students had drawn three life-size figures of people and cut them out. Then, they had added labels and drawings of the organs within the body which were affected by drug use.

Appendix J:
Summary of structured individual interview of focal teachers

Appendix J:Summary of structured individual interview of focal teachersTeacher B:

Dimension 1: Content. The lesson goal for Teacher B was to show the students that summarizing is a skill that you use in many areas of your life, "especially if you are trying to communicate orally with someone." In describing the lesson, the teacher used a lot of effective instruction terminology. She said, draw from their background knowledge what was really happening....it was teacher directed...without all of the guided practices... it was just a lesson that I was basically checking for understanding Did I need to reteach this again?" To make sure the lesson ran smoothly, Teacher C "made sure the students understood new words in the lesson, vocabulary, made sure the children were under control and understood what they were supposed to do." Effective methods- peer tutoring, mapping, general conversation, using "situations they are interested in", goal setting- "what is it that I am trying to learn, what did I learn." Teacher B works very hard to integrate what the students' know from their own lives into what they need to know. She taps their background knowledge and relates it to the lesson. What worked especially well in this lesson was that "they needed to relate to the television, the television programs, background information, no knowledge there. If I had not used the Bill Cosby show I would have definitely used the (basketball) playoffs." Sometimes she uses baseball trading cards.. "there are just so many different material you can read." A successful lesson is one that students can then take back and use. "A lesson is successful when a child is able or student is able to use the skill in other settings."

Dimension 2: Teacher Instructional Role. Teacher B believes that when she starts a lesson she has something "important to transmit here." The students have a "right to accept it or not". She learned how to use some of the dramatic things she used in improvisation classes to hold their interest. "You got to stretch your words... create a scene or scenario that they just... understand... (sometimes) We kinda get off (the track) and you bring it back but I put some background information in and (in this lesson) I sensed it might have all been there. (I) just pull it out of them."

"I am basically a compassionate person, I am a good listener now I understood what my undergraduate professors were telling me about about being a good or an active listener and um, you can pick up on so much and to listen to their accomplishments, what it is that they are trying to tell you. Especially in this situation you can't assume sometimes you have got to clarify it and come right out and ask them." One of the activities that Teacher B used was an open forum. "The last twenty minutes we might just open up and and call it 'open forum', and they just ask anything that they want, and I answer them. And it's agreed that I can ask whatever I want and they can ask me. as long as it's clean, won't cause me to lose my job (but, usually) I answer anything that they want to even if it may be a little embarrassing and put you on the spot. (I use) direct confrontation sometimes. But I had one child over there that I could not get through to, that won't talk and won't look at me. I will use that time for that. (I say) 'We are all here for the same thing, to be the best we can and ... to live and learn from each other.'"

Do teachers have control over student learning?" Depends on the environment of the students. Here, yes and no." Teacher B tries to be honest with them about where their skills are now and where they need to go. "You read but you are reading on this level. You are not going to make it and this is what your choices are, this is where you want to be.... I feel that just being honest with them. Especially with this, they like to know where they

are headed. It's not always a pretty picture, but it is a realistic one and every last one of them, they are frightened."

Dimension 3: Student Learner Role. Teacher B seems to often talk to students about making a choice in their own learning. She started the lesson with the statement, "If you do not want to participate in learning and can't handle this, you can leave now. Otherwise I assume you understand how to behave." When asked about this, she said "that was discipline. That was letting them know that we are beginning to start a lesson on something. That I have something important to transmit to you and you have the right to accept it or not." To Teacher B, "Everyone has their own potential and that potential can be developed in each and every child. If you just find something that basically they can take and feel good about, all you need is that one time that they can be stroked and they obtain approval from everyone. I work with Erick, Erick was almost a natural when I first discovered it, cause I would have not had any idea, but it was really when he first put it all together and got enough courage to do it (the poem) in front of the class it was just got a standing ovation in front of the class. It was just that feeling of being accepted that doing well and they can say I did something."

Teacher B recognizes that there are individual differences and potentialities among the students. She tells them that we "all develop at different levels....We never develop the same. There are things that (Teacher B) has not learned yet that others will teach me, including the students." Even with cooperative grouping, she seeks to help children recognize that we are different but that difference is valuable. "That we all have similarities and differences that they can learn from the lifestyle of someone else how they themselves tackle or handle a problem or their family would do it. (Cooperative grouping allows the students) Just to be able to come together and interact, and verbalize what it is what they like, how to look at problem or task in a different light."

Dimension 4: Context. Teacher B attends to the social development of her students. When asked about why she referred to the grandmothers and momma's in the lesson, she said, "Just to instill the sense of pride and self-esteem....you are in control of your own self.

Although you are in this (situation), it's not one of you who cannot go on to do that (something else). So we have these talks. They say that I am preaching to them sometimes, but they listen. They listen. That is the quietest time. Sometimes when I start doing this 'preaching' as they call it, it's because one of them was really angry, was really so disappointed, or had done something that is so just out of tune, so bizarre, or just refused to take the lessons. but they listen you can hear a pin drop." When asked, Why do you suppose they listen so well? Teacher B recounted the situation many of them face at home. "Because they don't hear it at home. I imagine my son would say, 'yah yah, we have heard this before.' But (to these children) oh, it's like, 'I didn't know that.' 'Thank you, no one has ever told me that I will read one day. I can read. I can go to college and I wouldn't dare tell you I want to be a doctor.' Parents will come to this school and call these kids some of the most outrageous names right in front of you. 'Shut up, shut up you...'. Kids grow up to this. That (part of the lesson) is just basically to try to build self-esteem."

One of the ways Teacher B attends to social development of children is through presenting them with moral dilemmas that might be familiar to them in their lives. "(I say), We are all gonna work up to be mothers, wives and whatever. And everybody has these families, (I ask) 'What would you do with the husband (in this situation)? You have been to the store. You try to cook dinner with ten dollars. You send him to the store just to buy three dollars worth of food....They come back with nothing that you need and not any change, and you need a dollar to ride the bus to work tomorrow.' And they (the students) would say, 'I wouldn't be bothered with them'....They will say I'm

not gonna be like that, you know, 'I am gonna take care of my wife. I am gonna do this. I'm gonna do that.' I said what you are gonna do is bring back the groceries?...." Teacher B feels she has a responsibility to "get them to sit down to establish some type of goals, to achieve in life. Where do they want be, and just keep getting motivated as long you can.... I can see the work of other teachers and that makes your job a lot easier , if you can just put that light there. They strive to hold on to it."

What do the students need beyond the district curriculum? "A good home environment."

Teacher C:

Dimension 1: Content. Teacher C's goal for the lesson was to teach the children how to "pick up factual information because there is a part of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) test where you had to do this." She created her own questions to "help them think because they only had three questions at the end of the story which did not suit my criteria." For Teacher C the methods that work better than others in teaching students to read and write are related to phonics. The children need "lots and lots of phonics and language skills. I know kids learn it in other ways but.. we have too many kids who cannot read...He is going to be a piece of a child if he can't read.....(When I taught first grade) First I taught sounds in isolation, then when you got to the reading (story) I would point out how they (the words) were built up." "First you have to know the words before you can comprehend what it is saying." A teacher would know if he or she were successful by "observation or tests".

Dimension 2: Teacher Instructional Role. Teacher C believes that teachers are responsible for student learning. "I feel the teachers are still responsible for the children learning. You can't use these (children's) problems as an excuse for not teaching them....But in spite of their problems you can do your best. You have to be mother and father and doctor, nurse, everything. Now you might not reach all of them (the children) but you will reach quite a few.... They might not be willing to talk or they may have problems or come in with problems, and you must listen to them."

Teacher C believes that the teacher needs to "kind of really guide them step by step." She likes to sit with them when they do the lessons because "the children like to feel close up to you. If you set yourself up as the boss, they might not express themselves like they would. If they felt real close to you.... He might open up."

Dimension 3: Student Learner Role. Teacher C believes that sometimes "I don't think they really know what they want to learn.... What they should learn and maybe sometimes.... Maybe sometimes let them do what they want to do. As long as it is constructive." Teacher C does like to get her students to discuss answers as illustrated by the discussion with the students about the meaning of "face as hard as stone." The discussion had several conversational turns. She said, "I didn't want to tell each one whether he was right or wrong until I got quite a few opinions. And then I told the one that was really right." She does, however, "work with all the kids that can do something, if they really want to work."

Teacher C believes that "Kids learn from kids." "Many kids will understand the other student quicker than they do me." "When I am working with a slower group I try to put a slow student with a fast student and that way, the faster student can cope... I set it up where the slow student won't be embarrassed.... With the capable student with the slower students, they really like it and enjoy it." With cooperative grouping, Teacher C believes that "They learn to accept each other as friends, they learn how to work together, taking turns." Teachers "should let the children work together....because they will have to work with people eventually." The gains to be made in peer learning are social not necessarily academic.

What do students need beyond the curriculum? Teacher C said, "I thank the district for reading, spelling and ... they need more arithmetic, they need a math text."

Dimension 4: Context.

Teacher C takes a firm managerial role in classroom. Teachers are responsible for student learning and they are responsible for setting up an environment where students can learn. "I try to establish myself at the beginning of the year with the children so that they would know what I will accept and what I will not accept. I try to

come in very firm and (show how I_ would be throughout the year. Make the rules. Sometimes you even have to be cruel in a sense and then lighten up."

Yet, when asked about the Quest curriculum, Teacher C indicated that "I just sit and talk with them and I tell them I know their home conditions.... I know that the parents (may) take drugs. I know if their parents might be on ADC or welfare. I say, 'But, you don't want to be that way. You want to get a good education. You want to get out of this rut.... You want a nice home. You want to go on vacations. You want to get out of this rut.' I give them the need for a good education." She said, "Maybe I am not supposed to teach morals but I do." Teacher C does see a way to involve parents. "Another thing the teacher should do is make the parent aware of their responsibility and maybe even tell the parent how he can help the child, because many of them don't know how to help them with the timetables (for example). Hold the paper. Let them study. Take the paper back. Sort of step-by-step."

Things have changed for Black children today. "Most have an opportunity to go to school and what really hurt me was that some people died for these opportunities and the children (today) never take advantage of it. I don't know why. I don't understand it. I don't understand what happened. I say the Jews will never let you forget the holocaust. They will never let them (the children) forget. I don't know why the Blacks do forget. I had the experiences down there (in the South) and the (children) don't know. And then they let their kids forget... but you should never let your kids forget from whence you came because it can happen again. And this time they don't even protect those (children). I really don't know what's happening to the Black kids, including my son. Take advantage of the opportunities that you have (Isay)... If I had the opportunities they had- See what we got is books. We didn't have the books (in the south). We got books from the White schools that they didn't want anymore. We got the chairs they didn't want and they fight over that. Not these kids, they have new books. They have everything that they need and that is something you try to do for your kids."

"When I was a child, after school this man will be there from the truck farm and would get us to go pick cotton to have spending money the next day. And I wasn't ashamed. My mother was teaching at the little school house. So many months after high school and so many years and then we got a certificate to teach. She didn't have a college degree but her mother taught school.... My mother put me through and my dad did too. I don't understand parents. We didn't have welfare in my home town. You didn't have no ADC.... I remember one kid.... There were five kids left after the parents died and there wasn't ADC or welfare to put in the family. Strangers would help you, not strangers people in the town would take over the kids.... That was just the way things went. They all really had to take them all. Somebody took care of them." That was in South Carolina in the early 1960's when Teacher C lived there before moving North. "My brother left (the South) and got a job in a restaurant. And he had to quit school to help the family. He sent me to college and I always felt that I like, he helped me and I helped somebody else, and you keep going and that's how you help to get your family out of poverty." "The only way we are going to get out of deep poverty is an education. That is the only way to go."

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