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TEACHER KNOWLEDGE IN ELEMENTARY LITERATURE-BASED
READING INSTRUCTION**

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Richard J. Mezeske

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THREE CASES OF
TEACHER KNOWLEDGE IN ELEMENTARY LITERATURE-BASED
READING INSTRUCTION

By

Richard J. Mezeske

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ABSTRACT

THREE CASES OF

TEACHER KNOWLEDGE IN ELEMENTARY LITERATURE-BASED

READING INSTRUCTION

By

Richard J. Mezeske

This study investigated the knowledge of three second year teachers who are graduates of a constructivist oriented teacher education program. It pursued the following research questions: 1). After a constructivist teacher education program, what are novices able and disposed to do when they instruct children in reading? 2). How do novices describe and explain their professional capabilities as literacy/reading teachers? 3). How and to what extent can/do novices act upon their knowledge, beliefs, and disposition when they implement their own reading programs?

Novices often struggle to make sense of what they know about reading instruction within the reality of the classroom. In this study, I describe the knowledge of three novice teachers about literature-based reading instruction, which appears to be shaped by many factors: the novice's own experiences in K-12 schools, experiences in a reformed teacher education program, the cultures of individual schools, opportunities for professional development, the pressures of state mandated testing, and the novice's own motivation and determination to practice informed instructional design in reading. In the end, these novices find it difficult to close the gap between theory and practice, between what they know intellectually and what they feel compelled to do by circumstances.

I then place the initial findings of this study (gathered through surveys, interviews, classroom observations, and reflective analysis of classroom discourse)

against the backdrop of Lortie's *apprenticeship of observation* (1975) and major theories of learning represented by Dewey (1904/1964), Lave (1996), and Spiro, et al (1988). In the end, reformed teacher education was not a strong enough influence upon the instructional decisions and actions for three novice teachers who taught reading with authentic literature. Other factors redirected the best intentions of these novices and derailed their efforts to use literature for learning to read, but also to use literature for reading to learn about the world, about others, and about self.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my son, Andrew, because I missed all of his eighth grade soccer games, to my daughter, Emily, because I was not there when she fell off her horse, and to my wife, Barbara, because in the midst of my graduate program someone asked her, “Are you and Richard divorced?”

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Chapter One

The Problem in the Field of Reading

There is consensus in the field of reading that we need reform-oriented, standards-based, learner-centered reading instruction in today's schools. What is not so clear is how such reform is to be accomplished. In order to contextualize this study, I will raise general issues of broad concern in teacher education (i.e., the ground). I will also describe a specific example of reform in teacher education at a small, four-year liberal arts college where reading instruction has served as the centerpiece of that reform effort (i.e., the figure) and I will raise general questions about learning to teach reading that informs the development of questions for this study.

David Tyack and Larry Cuban's (1995) examination of the extremes to which the reform pendulum has swung over the last century in K-12 school settings provides readers with a broad understanding of what factors traditionally color and shape educational reform in America. While not a history of reading instruction per se, Tinkering Toward Utopia, brings to the forefront the societal and political elements which continue to influence life in schools. More recent attempts to influence curricula and instruction in reading and the language arts are no less volatile. In March, 1996, a joint commission supported by the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) published twelve national standards for the English language arts. Embedded in this broadly worded document was a framework, a superstructure, if you will, intended to focus reading instruction in particular, and the language arts, in general, on learners making meaning, and away from systematic instruction in discrete skills. As was often the case as described in the Tyack and Cuban reports on reform, the political fallout from the IRA/NCTE standards was immediate and

vitriolic. Two sides emerged almost immediately--those in favor of and those against the new standards. Ironically, both sides in the debate over the standards generally agreed that reading instruction needed "fixing." Those opposed to the standards condemned them as progressive mush which focused too much attention on the processes involved in reading (and not on skills like phonics and spelling) and spent too much time on seemingly temperamental attributes of individual learners. Those in favor of the standards reminded the public that the standards were meant to serve as guidelines for states and school districts to design their own more specific performance and assessment standards for use on the local level. The controversy continues to this day and I know of no state or school district which has adopted the national English language arts standards as they currently stand.

That reading instruction is a concern of states and local school districts should be obvious to even the casual observer. For example, school districts in the West Michigan area have committed staff and resources to long-term involvement in the Literacy Learning Network which is a commercially based program from Richard Owen Publishers for introducing teachers to the theories of literacy as they might be put into action in the elementary classroom. Many have on-going building and district committees of teachers striving to find the most appropriate mix of learner-centered and skill-based instruction in reading and language arts (e.g. these range from a purely phonics-based approach to the so-called whole language approach). Michigan Governor John Engler has found an unlikely political ally in President Bill Clinton around their joint interests in promoting instruction and standardized testing for elementary children in reading. Given the politically charged nature of reading, the issue is not likely to die soon. Readers may find Block's Occupied Reading (1995) and Manguel's A History of

Reading (1996) interesting for their in-depth examinations of the political and societal pressures on reading and reading instruction throughout history.

There is also a consensus that teacher education needs reform. Note the professional teaching standards published by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The National Council of Teachers of English has also prepared the Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English Language Arts (1996). There are powerful implications for literacy teaching and learning embedded in the language arts standards jointly produced by the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English (March, 1996), and the reports of the various commissions and forums sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation/Foundation (Lucas, 1997), and the Holmes Group on reforming teacher education. Arthur Wise, president of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, has gone so far as to advocate the closure of all American teacher education programs not currently accredited nationally--almost eight hundred in number (McKenzie, February 19, 1998). While the Carnegie and Holmes groups encourage longer preparation for teachers and are primarily focused on teacher education in large research university settings, reform in the smaller four-year liberal arts colleges has not been ignored. Alverno College in Milwaukee, WI, has spent most of the last twenty years moving to a competency-based teacher education system. A major problem with reform in teacher education, according to Christopher Lucas (1997) is that there "is a paucity of hard evidence to support or refute any given structural configuration for teacher education" (p. 154). Lucas goes on to state that comparisons between four and five-year programs are inconclusive and open to divergent opinions. Hyperbole seems to be everywhere and contributes to the continuing volatile nature of discussions surrounding reform in teacher education. For reform in teacher

education in general, and reading in particular, Lucas points out that

A great deal depends on how the relationship between theory and practice in teaching is conceived. If indeed it were the case that the act of instruction amounted to nothing more than the exercise of a discrete set of skills, bereft of any theoretical setting or foundation, it would follow that learning skills drawn from the teacher's grab bag of tricks and practicing their application through simple apprenticeship would be all that teacher education required. That any such view is simplistic and misconceived ought to be obvious. Teaching is a fairly complex phenomenon and not something mechanically rule-bound, involving as it does a whole array of judgments and evaluative considerations, most of which are grounded in what the teacher knows, understands, and values as well as what he or she is able to *do* performatively. (p. 272)

Therefore, there is a danger for any examination of teacher education in general, and in reading instruction, in particular, to oversimplify and to portray teaching and learning within as the simplistic, step-by-step unfolding of a clear-cut process. To put Lucas' statement another way, notions and beliefs about what it means to teach children to read cannot preclude considerations about the teacher's prior knowledge, personality, apprenticeship of observation, and the complex contexts in which the teacher develops professionally. Nor can prior knowledge and experiences as they are personified in the learner be discounted.

Numerous reading methodology textbooks and resource books used in reformed teacher education help establish the perspective that reading education should reflect the newer methods of literature-based reading that are based on constructivist notions of teaching and learning and integration of the language arts (e.g., Tompkins & McGee,

1993; Roser & Martinez, 1995, and Au, Carroll & Scheu, 1997). Reading education must also prepare largely white middle class female teachers to teach diverse student populations. To do this, teachers and the programs which prepare them, must acknowledge and address what these novices bring to teaching: knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, dispositions, and their own apprenticeships of observation. Teacher educators need to help teacher candidates develop certain kinds of knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and dispositions and help them to be able to act on these attributes in their first years of teaching. Again, Lucas (1997) reminds us that “defining ‘good’ teaching in some generic, context-free sense . . . and devising an authoritative specification of the ‘effective’ teacher’s attributes likewise seem almost impossible . . . Accomplishing either goal with the precision or exactitude needed for the ideal to serve as a criterion for judging ‘best’ practice has proven a still more elusive goal” (p. 252).

We do know that many teacher education programs around the nation are trying to address the issues of teacher attributes, but little is known about what sense the teacher candidates are making of all this reform and innovation. The litany of suggestions for reforming teacher education is a long one (e.g., Diez & Hass, 1997, The Holmes Group, 1986, Lucas, 1997, among many). Much of the reporting on programs is descriptive and predictive: Program A does, would or could do this, program B does, would or could do that. Theories are put forth and strong stances are taken on which program configurations would produce the teacher who knows, understands and actively institutes “best practice” in the classroom (Lucas, 1997; Holmes Group, 1986; Diez & Hass, 1997). Few studies exist, however, which research the impact of such teacher education reform in the public school classroom. Fewer still, consider the ramifications of teacher education reform in small, four-year liberal arts colleges.

Reports of actual teacher education reform efforts are seemingly limited. The Alverno College story (Diez & Hass, 1997) has been unfolding for over twenty years and is not limited to teacher education. A centerpiece of the Alverno efforts is the recognition of the need for consistent and on-going research into the working results of reform, not only as they play out quantitatively or instructionally in public school classrooms staffed by Alverno teacher education graduates, but also into how content subjects are taught and learned on the Alverno campus itself. Alverno faculty members readily report the difficulties which arise over their own efforts to make sense of assessing teaching and learning in authentic ways over time. Mary Diez, of the Alverno Education Department reports that these “. . . difficulties, like those of any learner, are the result of our trying to do a better job with our students” (March 13, 1998). The current program is not a simple one and relies on a list of eight campus-wide abilities (i.e., outcomes) that define the general education/liberal arts curriculum. Departments and courses are focused at teaching for these abilities; thus the eight abilities are extended within the various Alverno departments and courses. Students are frequently assessed in these expected outcome areas from pre-admission to graduation. For example, students are expected to become articulate verbal communicators. As part of the application process, each applicant is videotaped during a lengthy pre-admission interview. If the student attends Alverno, that videotape becomes the beginning data in four years of documenting growth and improvement as a verbal communicator. The college has even funded and staffed an office whose sole purpose is to lead and coordinate research into the effects and results of reform in teaching and learning across campus. This data is readily available.

Alverno's case is the exception. Drawing on data from five years of study by the National Center for Research on Teacher Education, Tatto (1998) points out that in

general, “ . . . little empirical evidence exists in the teacher education literature on the influence of teacher education on teachers’ values and beliefs.” (p. 66). Tatto goes on to claim that

several conditions are necessary for the development of learning opportunities allowing teachers freedom to develop new understandings of teaching and learning. A necessary point of departure is the development of a theoretical view of learning to guide teacher education in which knowledge, curriculum, and learning are socially constructed; the curriculum and instruction are discipline based; the focus is on the teacher’s sense making; and authority is socially accorded (Cochoran et al., 1993; Condon et al., 1993; Schon, 1987; Zeichner & Gore, 1990).

Learning to teach is a constructivist process.. This program is situated within a constructivist-oriented education department at a small four-year liberal arts college.

It should be apparent that teacher education is trying to reform itself in order to reflect the latest thinking on teacher preparation. Reformers in teacher education are also striving to instill within the various program components (in this case reading instruction) the breadth and depth of theory, research and knowledge which reflects informed current thinking. This is so that novice teachers enter their initial teaching assignments willing to flexibly and intentionally instruct diverse learners.

This study proposes to examine curriculum and teaching practices related to reading instruction of three novice teachers who graduated from a reformed-oriented teacher education program. I had numerous questions at the beginning of this study, more than could possibly be answered in any one research project. What follows are some of the questions with which I began my study of three novice teachers’ instruction in reading who were teaching for their second year in upper elementary classrooms. Such

questions can advance our understanding of the broad issues imbedded in learning to teach reading, and can help us consider the ramifications of professional knowledge about specific strategies and instructional perspectives.

Central Questions

1. What do teachers who have recently completed a reformed teacher education program know and believe about the teaching of reading? What are they disposed to do?

Additional questions

- A. After preparation in a teacher education program where the faculty is guided by a generally constructivist philosophical orientation aimed at promoting literature-based reading instruction, what are novices able and disposed to do when they instruct children in reading?
 - B. What constitutes the professional knowledge, beliefs and dispositions in literature-based reading instruction held by these novice teachers?
 - C. What is the nature of this knowledge?
 - D. How do these novices view their own self-efficacy, i.e., their own power and ability to produce effective instruction in reading? How do they view their own ability to be adaptive?
2. How and to what extent can/do novices act upon their knowledge, beliefs, and dispositions when they implement their own reading program in their first years of teaching?

3. How do the novices describe and explain their professional capabilities as teachers of literacy/reading?
4. What is the school context in which these novices find themselves teaching reading? What school support is available to them? What challenges do they face in these contexts?
 - A. What are the referents for instructional decision making in reading of these teachers? (i.e., is it research and theory or personal prior experience?)
 - B. How and to what extent do novices perceive and explain their own levels of accomplishment as instructors of reading?
 - C. How and to what extent do novices understand the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of reading?
 - D. How and to what extent do novices use their understanding of the unique growth and development of children to analyze what is going on in classroom situations and to plan instructional activities [in reading]?
 - E. How and to what extent do novices use classroom feedback to structure the reading program?
 - F. How and to what extent do novices gather and collect evidence that children are learning and to adapt reading instruction?
 - G. How and to what extent do novices understand and use a range of teaching and instructional strategies in reading?

In chapter two, I will clarify how these questions changed, evolved, or matured as I began to gather data and think about the initial implications of the evidence which was

emerging from that data.

Academic Disciplines and Knowledge

The knowledge issue is an important one because there is considerable debate about whether reading and the language arts actually constitute a legitimate academic discipline. Peter Elbow's work, What is English? (1990), clearly lays out the parameters of the debate within the context of the 1987 English Coalition Conference which included English educators from kindergarten through college. Elbow relates the fevered discussions held by and with conference participants about English as a discipline. Literature (reading it and responding to it) and writing (especially as response) were viewed as distinct disciplines, but the two were most frequently separate and competing academic departments in colleges. Elementary teachers who attended the conference expressed little difficulty in also accepting speaking and listening as important and as language arts intimately meshed with literature and writing.¹

Can there be knowledge in a field which is possibly not an intellectual or academic discipline? The answer is not clear. Of course, there is a necessary knowledge of reading, a kind of metacognitive knowledge of the processes involved in teaching children to read. This would include, for example, knowledge of the developmental and emergent nature of readers and the interwoven complexities which bring young children to literate practice: the importance oral language development, concept of word, concept

¹ The 1996 publication of the IRA/NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts also include viewing and graphically representing as significant language arts. How these two additions would have affected conference debates would be interesting conjecture.

of story, and development of English syntactical knowledge, among many. Of course, teachers need to know the so-called “basics” of reading instruction. They need to have a knowledge of the literature used in reading instruction such as the canon and other literature that represents a broader range of ethnicity for children and adolescents, a broad understanding of the many genres represented in literature for children, literary award winners, children’s interests and choices, and the roles and impact of illustrations on literary understanding. I shall refer to this knowledge as subject matter knowledge (Grossman, 1990) in reading. Teachers also need a deep and broad knowledge of teaching strategies which promote learning to read and reading to learn in their classrooms. I shall refer to this knowledge as pedagogical content knowledge (Grossman, 1990) in reading. Naturally, teachers need a knowledge of children (e.g., physical, psychological and intellectual development from early childhood through young adulthood).

While the core focus of this study is teacher knowledge within literature-based reading instruction, it is important to consider other facets of teacher knowledge and how those may inform the questions the study proposes to answer. Below, I examine some ideas about teacher knowledge put forth by Deborah Ball, Pamela Grossman, and David Hanauer. Ball specifically addresses knowing in mathematics, Grossman in English, and Hanauer in reading.

When Ball (1990) discusses the subject-matter preparation of teachers (specifically in mathematics) she has the advantage of examining the roles of subject-matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge within the framework of an accepted discipline. By its very nature, mathematics is a far more quantitative discipline. The conclusion that angle A plus angle B plus angle C equals 180 degrees is true for

every triangle, but the “correct” way for a reader to interpret the actions of Maniac in Jerry Spinelli’s Maniac Magee (1990) is not so clear. In fact, whereas the correct sum of the problem always equals 180 degrees, there can be more than one correct interpretation of the character’s actions during reading. But whether the current conceptions of the language arts (reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and graphically representing) constitute a discipline in and of themselves muddies the waters for those studying the field. Much of the debate centers around notions that the language arts are a process, or series of processes, rather than a distinct discipline. Whereas English and literature and writing are legitimate disciplines, the whole of the language arts are not universally seen as such.

According to Grossman’s (1990) findings teachers should not count on disciplinary or content knowledge alone to solve instructional problems. Rather, teachers also need knowledge of how students come to understand a given topic or issue, they need a extensive knowledge of curriculum and deep knowledge of instructional strategies in order to plan meaningful learning options for a diverse range of learners. Therefore, it should be evident that we cannot simply state that teachers of reading need subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (Grossman, 1990) in order to successfully teach reading. We could most likely get general agreement that teachers of reading need a solid grounding in the pedagogical content knowledge which is embedded in reading and a solid understanding of literature, the theories which support literature’s use in reading instruction and the research and pedagogy which seeks to integrate all of the language arts in meaningful ways. David Hanauer (1997) provides a complex and complete description of teacher knowledge in reading and writing practices in schools. He relates literacy knowledge specifically to awareness of different kinds and purposes of

texts used in schools. His words illuminate the complexities surrounding notions about knowledge and explicate in a detailed manner the two categories of knowledge (i.e., subject matter and pedagogical content) used above.

Studies of teacher knowledge presume that complex networks of internal representations directly support the practice of teaching (Calderhead, 1991; Reynolds, 1989; Shulman, 1986). For the reading/writing teacher, this subject matter, knowledge base has a central role, since so much of literacy education involves making on-line decisions about complex tasks. In order to function in this intricate situation, the teachers' subject matter knowledge must include structural knowledge of numerous texts, procedural knowledge of various types of text processing, functional knowledge of the purposes and uses of text types, and conditional knowledge of when to use each type. In addition the reading/writing teacher must at the very least a working knowledge of the content and the interpretive paradigms of the different school subjects in order to be able to teach student appropriate literacy practices. (pp. 847-848)

Later, in chapters four, five, six and seven, I will attempt to explain whether the three novice teachers in this study are confident in their knowledge in these categories of knowledge about reading and whether they are able to put that knowledge into practice in their individual classrooms.

Hanauer's categories of knowledge (i.e., structural, procedural, functional, and conditional) which are listed above mesh very nicely with Grossman's findings. Both would state that teachers need more than subject matter knowledge in order to successfully navigate the challenges of teaching processes in the language arts and reading which are situated in other academic disciplines and make the landscapes less

tidy and more complex. The teacher should not rely on a single system or knowledge base to inform teaching. In chapter seven, I will discuss further how a more complex set of knowledge bases for reading instruction in particular, and teaching in general, can permit the teacher to navigate these complex arenas with flexibility.

Teacher knowledge should be transformative, not only for the teacher, but also for the students who learn in schools, and for colleagues who reap the benefits of shared inquiry into teaching children to read. Such knowledge goes well beyond the prescriptive view of what is worth knowing, the awareness that no one individual comes to school fully prepared to learn in the same way(s) as others, and that we can all learn from the perspectives, prior knowledge and experiences which others share. This transformative view can be illustrated through the works of Louise Rosenblatt (1938/1978, 1965/1995). She was one of the pioneers in research about reading who ventured to suggest that understanding reading, knowing about what was read, and being correct in one's understanding, must by its very nature extend beyond the pages of the book. Knowing is the result of a transaction, a negotiation and triangulation if you will, between the reader, the author, and the text. Knowing was also a result of the interaction between aesthetic and efferent reading. Our conceptions of reading have to recognize and respect the role that prior knowledge and prior experiences (thus prior beliefs about the world) play during the act of making meaning during the reading a play, a novel, or a poem. Conceptions of knowledge must appreciate the role that experiences and facts (correct and incorrect) must play in the construction of individual and corporate beliefs about the world, and how teachers teach. Proof of understanding what one has read cannot be limited to a recitation of the facts of the story.

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Richardson (1996) examines various aspects of teacher knowledge. Her wide

ranging consideration of teacher knowledge and beliefs, cites Alexander, Schallert, and Hare (1991) and their discussion of twenty-six different terms in the literature on literacy to denote important forms of knowledge. She reports further that they also believe “*knowledge encompasses all that a person knows or believes [italics mine] to be true, whether or not it is verified as true in some sort of objective or external way.*”

Richardson goes on to state that knowledge and beliefs are not the same, but that they are intertwined. It is difficult, at best, to consider one without the other. Like Rosenblatt, Richardson would agree that what we know and believe about the world, and how we know and believe in the world are tied together inextricably. It is probably less important that we understand that knowledge, beliefs and actions are tied together than we understand the extent of how, why and when and under what conditions they are tied together. Richardson seems to be saying, in a broad sense, that knowledge is a mixture of factual information, subject matter knowledge, the apprenticeship of observation, personal experiences with texts, and knowledge of learners.

The act of determining what teachers should know and be able to “do” in classrooms and understand about their own teaching practice and attitude is by its very nature complicated and often frustrating. Attempting to answer the query in a simplistic way is like trying to herd cats; it is not easy. The results of teaching are more frequently not immediately observable, the consequences cumulative rather than instant. Therefore, it can be said teaching children to read or to do math is not simply a matter of learning the steps of a process followed by instant success. Learning to teach children and understanding the learning process are much too complex for such a view.

On the surface, it seems sensible that teacher educators struggle to get pre-service teachers to recognize and overcome what Lortie (1975) calls the *apprenticeship of*

observation. Pre-service and novice teachers can often find the need for a deep and thorough understanding of both content and strategies for helping learners acquire and integrate that content (i.e., Grossman's pedagogical content knowledge, 1990) to be even more daunting. Given the highly charged political nature of reading instruction, it is no wonder that novice teachers are reportedly worried about knowing exactly "what to do" in their first classrooms.

It is clear from Feiman-Nemser's (1990) comments in The Teacher Educator's Handbook: Building a Knowledge Base for the Preparation of Teachers that teachers need more than a collection of strategies (i.e., pedagogical content knowledge) to be successful in the classroom as instructors of reading, science, or math. They need a clear sense of the conceptual understandings about teaching and learning which are emerging from such work; they need a deep cognizance of their own knowledge, attitudes and dispositions about teaching in general, and about subject-matter instruction, in particular. A large part of teacher knowledge is how it gets translated into classroom practice.

Many teachers believe that knowledge is best related to subject matter, to content in disciplines. Within subject matter, knowledge is frequently perceived to be collections of declarative and procedural knowledge. Hence in reading many novice teachers find comfort in the seemingly hard and fast rules of phonics, the rules which surround conventional English usage, and the apparently exacting rules for morphemic/structural analysis performed with new vocabulary. Reading is but one instructional area where

. . . . subject matter is seen as a fixed collection of facts, concepts, and skills that must be "learned" before they can be applied (Ball, 1988; Florio and Lensmire, 1990; Grossman, 1990; Leinhardt and Smith, 1985). For example mathematics is often viewed and treated as a set of discrete rules best learned through repeated practice.

Based on their own experiences as students, prospective teachers think of “doing math” as a matter of completing a page of forty problems. While reading and writing may be viewed as more creative, expressive, and pleasurable, many preservice teachers also regard these subjects as highly prescriptive and rule-based. (Hollingsworth, 1989). They consider approaches to instruction that are not rigidly sequenced or structured--or that encourage student collaboration--to be unsettling (Florio and Lensmire, 1990). Given these views of knowledge, it is not surprising that many prospective teachers believe that they already know most of what they need to teach (McDiarmid, 1992). (Feiman-Nemser and Remillard, 1996).

The reality in most reading classrooms is much different. Teachers find it difficult at best, and frustrating at worst, to apply these hard and fast rule-bound approaches with classes of diverse learners. Knowledge then becomes something very different. It is no longer the rigid application of information the teacher has learned. Rather it is the flexible and informed uses of this information in multiple ways that will guide learners to literacy. Knowledge is assumed to be actively used in this view; it is not a static unforgiving paradigm for teacher behaviors. In this study I want to help the reader understand to what extent novice teachers are able to use their knowledge actively, rather than statically.

Literature-Based Reading Instruction

Studying literature-based reading instruction in the elementary classroom is educative because of the many pedagogical permutations teachers bring to it. “Literature-based reading instruction can result in very different approaches and activities in classrooms” (McGee & Tompkins, 1995, p. 405). Literature-based instruction in reading

must then be carefully defined since it is not guided by a script-like teacher's manual typical of commercial basal reading programs.

A reading curriculum in which literary works, usually trade books, are the dominant materials for instruction, especially in the language arts, (Harris, p. 145) is generally referred to as being a literature-based curriculum. Numerous undergraduate reading methodology textbooks are available which describe such approaches to elementary reading instruction. Shane Templeton, in his 1995 reading textbook, Children's Literacy: Contexts for Meaningful Learning, views literature-based reading instruction as having the following components:

1. Quality [literature] selections [are] included *as they had been written originally*, rather than being adapted and adjusted according to readability formulas.
2. All illustrations appear just as they were in the original trade book.
3. Skills and strategies in the language arts are taught within the context of this literature not in separate skill oriented workbooks (p. 495).

It is true that publishers have quickly adapted the traditional basal reader to include this trade or real literature and have clearly strived to integrate all of the language arts in the newer basals, which are often arranged in thematic format. The teacher education program which will serve as the site for this study stresses the use of original literary works in guiding children to proficiency as mature readers. However, the faculty also stresses a balanced approach to reading instruction. For purposes of this study, I will define balanced reading instruction as providing "students with systematic, explicit instruction on skills and strategies in the context of authentic, meaningful activities [i.e., using real children's literature] (Au, Carroll, Sheu, 1997 & Templeton, 1995). In a like

manner, the hope is that balanced preparation for the teaching of reading will make sure that all graduates are at least aware of traditional basals and the newer literature-based basal reading series available for use in elementary school. Theorists whose ideas are consistent with the Hope College Education Department's position include, but are not limited to L. Vygotsky, M. Clay, F. Smith, K. Goodman, Y. Goodman, L. Rosenblatt, R. Probst, L. McGee, and G. Tompkins.

Probst (1998) recognizes that readers might need to know the reasons for which an author wrote a particular story or poem and that they might find a recitation about the images and "facts" employed by the author of such a piece as informative. But he also recognizes, like Rosenblatt, that the reader's understanding of the story can be enhanced and deepened by an appreciation of one's own prior experiences (and those of peers) with the world and with other texts.

Lea McGee and Gail Tompkins (1993, October, 1995) describe four perspectives which represent underlying conceptions about what it means to teach reading and to be a reader: reading as personal response; reading as knowledge of literary forms; reading as an interactive, strategic process; and reading as critical literacy (1995, pp. 406-411).

In chapter seven I will consider to what extent each of the novice teachers who participated in the study has incorporated these perspectives, or any others, into daily reading instruction plans. For now, it will be most helpful to simply consider the approaches to literature which each of McGee and Tompkins' perspectives suggest and the ways each orients teachers to literature and children.

The first perspective on teaching reading is one which recognizes the active role of the reader in developing a personal interpretation of the world which surrounds him. The focus here is on reading literature as personal negotiation for meaning.

The reader response perspective could be called the *reading literature* approach. This perspective focuses on the reader rather than on literature or reading instruction. According to this perspective, teachers help readers better understand themselves and their world through their transactions with literature. This perspective is related to Louise Rosenblatt's notions about aesthetic reading. According to this perspective, teachers are concerned that readers are engaged with what they are reading; that is, they are personally interested and involved. Further, teachers respond in various ways to a single poem, story, or informational book. These different and personal responses provide the basis for further exploration and learning about life and literature. (McGee and Tompkins, 1993, p. 153)

This perspective is helpful to me for clarifying my initial research questions. It is clear that I need to consider whether these novice teachers, in their instructional decisions, are assisting young readers in developing and understanding their own personal responses to the literature which they read in class. I want to know whether the novices are helping these readers appreciate the role literature can and should play in exploring what life is all about. Or is something else at work here?

Teachers who adopt a second perspective, the knowledge of literary forms perspective presented by Tompkins and McGee, stress, among other things, the value of recognizing and understanding figurative language and literary imagery as an avenue to a deeper understanding of literature. In cases described by McGee and Tompkins (1995), teachers "point out examples of descriptive language, including metaphors and similes. Students locate their own examples of effective descriptions and add these to a notable language chart (a large chart with descriptive language gleaned from the book) (1995, p. 408). Among many other options the teacher has in this perspective, readers are also

guided in comparing and contrasting heroes, noting changes in character dynamics, and capitalizing “on their intuitive abilities to recognize literary conventions” (1995, p. 408).

This perspective

could be called the *teaching literature* approach. According to this perspective, the more students know and understand about literature—literary elements, genres and authors—the more insightful their interpretations of literature and understandings of the information presented in literature will be. This perspective is similar to Louise Rosenblatt’s efferent reading, and it suggest that teachers can help students learn to appreciate and understand the structures of literature and authors’ and illustrators’ craft. Teachers help students use this information to deepen their interpretations of literature and extend their learning from literature. (1993, p. 153)

This second perspective is a workable frame for aiding me in considering whether these novice teachers are helping readers read for more than factual information. Are novices teaching literary structures which can be transferred from book to book, thus arming readers with the literary knowledge they needed to be successful across many reading experiences? Like the first perspective above, this one is also positioned to help me consider the referents which novice teachers used to inform their instruction in reading. Are these perspectives on reading by Tompkins and McGee, or any other framework, part of the professional knowledge these novice teachers use to plan for reading instruction in fourth and fifth grades?

A third perspective, the so-called interactive approach, was current and prominent for the novice teachers in this study as they worked their way through the Hope College teacher education program. McGee and Tompkins describe the interactive frame this way.

The interactive perspective could be called the *teaching reading* approach because this perspective emphasizes the interactive nature of all the processes of reading. The focus is on teaching many kinds of reading skills and strategies--comprehension, vocabulary, and word recognition. The interactive perspective suggests that teachers will both help students better understand and interpret what they are reading and will help them develop more sophisticated reading strategies. This perspective also has much in common with Rosenblatt's efferent reading, reading to remember information. (1993, p. 153)

My initial suspicion is that this perspective was a particularly powerful one for graduates of the Hope College program. The emphasis on reading strategies, comprehension, vocabulary learning, as well as word recognition, has historically appeared to be an area of high concern for pre-service teachers in my classes. Using this perspective as a lens to consider the teaching actions of the three novices in this study allows me to consider the extent to which this perspective is, or is not, as powerful an influence as I suspect it might be.

In a fourth perspective, developed later by McGee and Tompkins, reading is viewed as critical literacy and refers to the shaping of theoretical views of readers. But there is more to this so-called *critical perspective*; it could also be labeled the social justice and action perspective:

Readers [are] shaped (and defined) by multiple and contradictory cultural institutions. According to these views, readers respond to literature subjectively, based on their socialization into cultural viewpoints Critical theorists also recognize that at the same time that readers are influenced by certain cultural ideologies, they can also oppose or deconstruct the meanings suggested by dominant

ideologies. This means that readers must acknowledge that they unconsciously adopt subjective positions that compel them to make ideologically influenced interpretations of text . . . and use these interpretations to name reality . . . However, readers can develop stances that enable them to resist the authoritative interpretations suggested by dominative ideologies reproduced within the text. According to the critical literacy views, readers must learn to take a position in opposition to dominant groups in order to empower marginalized groups. Critical theorists recognize that marginalized “others” have the right to name their own reality and to articulate how the social reality operates for them. (McClaren, 1992 in McGee and Tompkins, 1995, p. 412)

This perspective is helpful because it provides a template for examining whether the three novice teachers are able to incorporate these components of appreciating literature into the reading curriculum for all children in an increasingly diverse society. Put another way, to what extent are these teachers helping young readers acknowledge the roles of their cultures within the American milieu?

Again, what this study is designed to examine is whether these novice teachers take advantage of any one or even all of these four perspectives, or any others, to inform their daily reading instruction. I want to know to what degree they embrace or avoid this philosophical territory completely, or whether they accept such structures as foundational to informed literature-based reading instruction. How novices navigate this instructional terrain can provide important information about their successes or lack of success in the reading classroom.

Why Hope College is an Especially Good Place to Study These Questions

Research is not conducted in a vacuum. It is situated; it has a context from which the subjects, data and interpretations are drawn. For the Hope College Education Department, the chosen site for this study, its eclectic conceptual framework (December, 1997, See Appendix B) reflects a broad spectrum of themes in teacher education which are related to conceptions of knowledge. The department has chosen to ground the knowledge base of its three certification programs in Feiman-Nemser's (1990) five conceptual orientations for teaching: the personal orientation, the technological orientation, the practical orientation, the academic orientation, and the critical social orientation. These orientations have been expressed for Hope College preservice teachers in what the department faculty has labeled as the Six Professional Abilities across the three levels of the teacher education program. Therefore, teacher knowledge is seen, beyond subject matter knowledge, as ability, fluency, and ease as an effective communicator, professional collaborator, curriculum developer, problem solver, decision maker, and scholarly educator (Conceptual Framework, December, 1997). (See Appendix B for The Conceptual Framework and clarification on the meaning and scope of each of these professional abilities.) Again, the department has used these orientations to stress the need for a flexible and informed knowledge base for use in classroom. They are not viewed as single, or even rigid, structures for teachers to adopt as professional and instructional models. They are, however, in direct alignment with the ideas of Grossman and Hanauer which I pointed out earlier in this chapter. The message for Hope College teacher education students is that they are to formulate a professional and philosophical framework or stance which ensures that they are deeply aware of the ways children learn and of the curricular and instructional strategies which promote learning. In a like manner, they must nurture various kinds of knowledge about procedures, functions,

structures, and conditions which affect teaching and learning.

The Hope College teacher education program which serves as one context for this study is a constructivist one. Its faculty are adherents of Tatto's (1998) earlier interpretation of constructivism (see page 7) and agree with Feiman-Nemser and Remillard's (1996) review of research in teacher knowledge, that teacher knowledge is "inevitably incomplete and changing" and that knowledge "takes various forms and comes from diverse sources" (p. 72). We must guard against too narrow a conceptualization of knowledge. Paradigms in research on knowledge "are shifting from a focus on what teachers do to a focus on how they think and then what they know and how they organize and use their knowledge" (p. 72). By necessity, such a view of knowledge must consider the ramifications of beliefs and attitudes and personal values on teacher knowledge (i.e., Lortie's apprenticeship of observation). With this paradigm of thinking about teacher knowledge in mind, I will, in chapter two, consider how the questions with which I began this study evolved.

In essence, the Hope College teacher education faculty agrees with Pamela Grossman, David Hanauer, and Donald Schon (1987) that the knowing is in the action, in flexible teaching based on a deep awareness of the complexities (and areas of knowledge) which influence teaching and learning in any classroom. Knowing in action is possible when action is supported by the philosophical superstructures which sustain a thoughtful approach to classroom teaching. The Hope College teacher education faculty

. . . shall use *knowing-in-action* to refer to the sorts of knowing how we reveal our intelligent action--publicly observable, physical performances like riding a bike and private operations like instant analysis of a balance sheet, in both cases, the knowing is *in* the action. We reveal it by our spontaneous, skillful execution of the

performance; and we are characteristically unable to make it verbally explicit.

(Schon, p. 25)

That broad preparation, experience, awareness, and understanding may be missing for many or most of the preservice teachers in this reform-oriented program. Their own experience may not be transformative. Rather,

. . . . language arts instruction [during K-12 school] was experienced as a transmission of knowledge rather than as a process of interaction and construction of knowledge (Brazee & Kristo, 1986). As a result their assumptions and beliefs about reading instruction may interfere with new learning and may be incongruent with present day research findings . . . Previous research indicates that preservice teachers' knowledge structures for teaching, although achieved informally and unconsciously, are strongly resistant to change. (Hollingsworth, 1989) (Bright & Craig, 1998) (p 6).

Because of the tension between the way the faculty teach and the way our preservice students/teachers learned, they need to know they are affecting their practice in the field. What educators discover can inform their practice and while not universally generalizable, can inform the practice of others.

Later, in chapter seven I will provide additional lenses for considering the dichotomy between knowledge and practice by raising issues embedded in various theories about learning for the reader to weigh. What is essential at this point is that the reader understand the very real complexity which shapes and muddies teacher actions in reading instruction, actions which are more problematic for novice teachers than for expert teachers. This study seeks to explore how knowledge and practice come together

for novice reading teachers.

Much has been written about the plethora of reform efforts which have taken hold for short or long periods of time in the United States. As noted earlier, one of the best and most recent titles is Tinkering Toward Utopia by Tyack and Cuban (1995). This volume is not simply a concise reiteration of the extremes to which the educational pendulum (primarily in the K-12 setting) has swung during American history. Rather, it is an important examination of what constituted various reform movements and the extent to which they were able, or not able, to take hold in American classrooms. The Holmes Group's Tomorrow's Teachers (1986) discusses major proposals for reform of teacher education emphasizing, in particular, a fifth year of internship or practice teaching. Grossman (1990), in The Making of a Teacher, contended that there were differences between English teachers who participated in teacher education course work and those who did not: in the materials they chose to teach, in their understandings of adolescent learners, and in the methodology they opted to employ in the classroom. Tomorrow's Teachers (1986) proposes a complete revamping of the ways by which teachers are prepared for classrooms--course work which goes beyond teaching about subject matter methodology; confronting issues imbedded in learning how to teach; examinations of current research on how children learn and so forth. As stated earlier, the Holmes project also advocates an extended practice teaching period under the guidance of seasoned master teachers. ProTeach, based at the University of Florida also advocates a fifth year for practice teaching (Kilgore & Ross, Sept./Oct., 1993).

All of these propositions have been integral pieces of the debates which have led to reform of the Hope College teacher education program. It is important to consider the environment of Hope College because the cases in this study are selected from among its

recent graduates. It is one example of an institution which is trying to institute classroom and teacher education reforms.

While the Hope College program has consciously chosen not to become a fifth year program because of the cost implications for students attending a private institution, the Holmes proposals and the Alverno model were part of a healthy debate among department faculty about what was feasible at Hope. Like other teacher education programs, the one at Hope College (where I am a faculty member) in Holland, Michigan, has been, and continues to be shaped and re-shaped by these reforms: the content of all of its courses, especially those in reading and the language arts has been altered, the pedagogy used in these courses emphasizes active learning, cooperative learning, and modeling by the teacher education professors of strategies, techniques and methods used in elementary reading instruction. The Hope College example is, like the Alverno model, one shaped by local ownership and control (Diez & Hass, 1997).

The “Local” Site

Until recently, the Hope College teacher education program, in existence since 1866, would have been described as a conventional one. In 1990, all of that was destined to change with the denial of accreditation by NCATE. The NCATE accreditation visit in April, 1990, resulted in denial of accreditation during the fall of 1990. The department and teacher education program were thrown into turmoil, followed by endless meetings to ascertain whether the department, and the college, would pursue NCATE certification in the future. The decision to appeal was made and on November 8, 1990, the department filed an appeal with NCATE as directed by the Hope College president, provost and divisional dean. National accreditation was restored in October, 1992. Ironically, the

college was, in 1998, being visited yet again by an NCATE board of review for the regular five year renewal cycle.

What does Hope College's NCATE debacle in 1990 have to do with the knowledge about literature-based reading instruction of its teacher education graduates? Everything and nothing. The debate continues about the efficacy and value of seeking and maintaining NCATE certification. The fact remains, however, that it was the original denial in 1990 which finally drove the Education Department faculty, in some cases kicking and screaming, into a long term, in-depth examination of the Hope College teacher education program, its motivations, its courses and the future direction of reading instruction. It was an outside impetus which forced the department and the college to begin a necessary and painful self-examination.

Other factors are important in light of the NCATE denial: approximately, one-third of the department faculty had changed through attrition at the turn of the 1990s decade; by the 1996-1997 academic year, only two veteran teacher educators (i.e., more than ten years experience with the department) would be on staff in the Education Department. There was a willingness among the newer and younger faculty to at least look at the issues and attitudes involved in the department curriculum and the NCATE denial. Additionally, in the midst of planning for reform of the Hope College general education course work, the college sent four teacher education faculty to a week-long workshop (June, 1994) on assessment and curriculum at Alverno College, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The issues raised about reform, curriculum, performance and assessment helped shape the debate within the Education Department.

Finally, in the early 1990s, the department had begun an informal process of gathering data about its recent graduates from administrators involved in the hiring

process, and from the elementary and secondary graduates themselves. The details gathered from the elementary graduates were stunning. Public school administrators reported that too many Hope graduates could not, or were not able to, articulate what it is they “knew” about the theories, research and major concepts about teaching in general; and about the knowledge bases in reading and in their chosen majors and minors. Additionally, too many graduates were unable to explain to another person just why it was they had chosen teaching as a profession.

Graduates in the elementary program reported back to the faculty in surveys (published within the department during the summer of 1993) that they didn’t “know” how to teach reading (or science or math or social studies). They loudly complained that the department faculty had failed to provide “the recipe” to them--they clearly wanted to be told what to do and how to do it. They felt unprepared and vulnerable in their classrooms. These reports quickly led the department faculty into discussion on matters as disparate as the purposes of the Hope College program (technician or mimetic teaching vs. transformative tradition²), the nature of the department curriculum and the knowledge base(s) which supported it, and what effective means could be used for making sure all graduates were true professionals who were fully informed, and flexible and adaptable enough to function in predominantly diverse classrooms.

By happy circumstance, these deliberations within the department began with in-depth consideration of the theoretical bases and research in the field of reading--for it was

²Mimetic refers to imitation--the teacher shows or tells; learners repeat just as shown. Transformative refers to teaching which encourages and allows for change, alteration of what is taught, so that learning may, in essence, be extended or changed. American Heritage College Dictionary (1993). 3rd edition. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

that segment of the Hope teacher education program which is required of all of its graduates. The arguments and frustration which accompanied these debates were probably necessary functions of any thorough and meaningful soul-searching, but suffice it to say that the reform of the Hope College teacher education program was and continues to be a result of these events. At this time there is a clear and strong social constructivist philosophical orientation (see Tatto, 1998) which threads its way through all course work in the department. This is especially so within the reading, language arts and elementary curriculum/methods courses. Faculty who teach these courses are constructivist in orientation and primarily promote a perspective on classroom instruction which “focuses on the process of how knowledge is built rather than on its product or object.” (Harris, p. 43) For the Hope College teacher education faculty

. . . reading is viewed not as a passive activity in which the reader attempts to “get” the writer’s message, but rather, it as an active process in which the reader “interacts” with the text to construct meaning. There is an agreement among researchers [and this faculty] that reading involves the prior knowledge, experience, attitude and perspective of the reader as much or more so than the characteristics of the text. (Bright & Craig, 1998, p.5)

Like my Hope College teacher education colleagues, I believe that teachers are best described as facilitators of learning--in the sense described and laid out in Feiman-Nemser’s *personal orientation* to teaching (1990). The personal orientation essentially emphasizes the developmental nature of learning to teach; it must be transformative and help the future teacher move from current conceptualizations about teaching to broader and deeper understandings about the profession. Facilitators help readers acquire these

needed skills through coordinated and thoughtful teaching and the use of real literature, as opposed to the blanket use of basal readers and commercial reading programs in general. “. . . . The basic assumption underlying this theoretical orientation towards the nature of reading is that reading is a communication process which involves interaction or transaction between the print on the page (letters, words, sentences, and discourse) and the reader’s background knowledge (language, structure, print, and human experience)” (Bright & Craig, 1998, p.5). Louise Rosenblatt, whose seminal works (1938/1978, 1965/1995) on readers and text led to what we now call reader-response theory, contended that we read for essentially two purposes, the efferent and the aesthetic. Efferent reading is done to accumulate information, to collect data, and to understand the facts. Reading aesthetically, on the other hand, is for enjoyment, for leisure, for intellectual and artistic and personal stimulation. The Hope College teacher education program stresses proficiency in both types of reading for its graduates and for their students.

At Hope College instruction in reading, the remaining language arts and assessment had been traditionally separate for years. During one semester in the early 1990s, the normal five sections taught in elementary reading (2), diagnostic reading (2) and language arts (1)--were all staffed by five part-time instructors. The revamped program has integrated reading instruction, the language arts, and diagnosis and assessment issues in reading and the language arts into four sections of two intensive reading/language arts courses developmentally arranged to focus on children from birth to grade two, and from grades three through six. Both are taught exclusively by full-time faculty.

Hope College is an excellent context for this study because it enables me to

closely examine what sense these novices have made of the program in which I teach and how that knowledge has been integrated into their daily practice as teachers. Teacher knowledge can be shaped and influenced by experience and theory. Hope College is an authentic context for considering whether that happened for three novice teachers.

Demographics and Hope College Teacher Education

Teacher education at Hope College is not unlike other programs program across the United States. Small colleges across the country are struggling with ways to attract and retain a diverse student body in light of the homogeneity which historically identifies them. Small colleges, Hope among them, are trying to prepare more teachers for a world which is rapidly diversifying racially, ethnically, and culturally. Considering how Hope College is attempting to do this can inform the efforts of all teacher education programs which operate in similar contexts.

There has been no time, and even less energy, since the original Hope College teacher education elementary study in 1993 to re-canvass recent graduates of the three certification programs (i.e., elementary, secondary, and special education [EI, LD]) to ascertain the long-lasting effect of the reforms begun in the 1995-1996 academic year. This is, in part, some of the motivation for wanting to consider the knowledge of recent graduates of the elementary reading and certification program at Hope College. An analysis of two or three cases of recent graduates' curriculum development and teaching and a description of their own statements of personal and professional knowledge and beliefs about reading can be informative. Examining how that knowledge plays out in the elementary classroom during reading instruction can be instructive to the subjects of the study, as well as to those shaping teacher education programs, not only at the "local"

level but for consideration elsewhere.

This is so for powerful political and social reasons. Like many teacher education programs, the Hope College program is populated almost entirely by white students. During the 1992-1993 school year, only 2.9% of teacher education candidates completing certification requirements were minorities. By the 1996-1997 academic year, this figure had risen to 5.9% minorities (Hope College Institutional Report for NCATE, 1997, p. 12). That means, however, that fully 94% of the teacher education candidates at Hope College are white. To no one's surprise, the vast majority of those white teacher education candidates are women--approximately 65%. This demographic is not shockingly different from many other teacher education programs, large or small, but it is significant given the rapidly changing demographics in public school classrooms--especially those classrooms in the Holland, Michigan, and West Michigan areas-- where many Hope graduates choose to teach after graduation.

A unique feature of the Hope College teacher education program is the required field placement which is coordinated between each of the six elementary teacher education courses (Educational Psychology, Exceptional Child, Literacy I, Literacy II, Elementary Curriculum and Methods, Classroom Management) and an area classroom selected for developmental, age, and subject appropriateness. Teacher candidates spend a focused time in these area classrooms from the very beginning of their course work through the student teaching semester. It should be apparent to any of these teacher education candidates that area classrooms *do not* look like their college classrooms. On the contrary, it is not unusual to be in a field placement for the reading and language arts courses in which there may be ten white children, seven students from various Hispanic cultures, and the remaining five to seven children from Asian cultures. [In my practicum

study, conducted in a local district, these trends were startling, though uneven, between buildings.] Of course, a number of these minority students do not speak English as their primary or first language.

So, like other teacher education institutions, Hope College must be vigilant in preparing teachers for the future who are fully informed and willing to teach students whose cultural, ethnic, racial, ways of knowing, and family structures differ so radically from their seemingly privileged origins. That is why a study like this one is so useful.

Why Study Knowledge in Teacher Education?

As a teacher educator, I also want to know “how the personal knowledge of teaching candidates can be used and connected to their education and development as teachers.” (Aitken & Mildon, 1991, 141). Aitken and Mildon go on to cite Maeroff’s view (1988) that “a stronger and surer knowledge base and a greater command of methodology contribute to a teacher’s power. They lend authority of a sort that allows a person to teach with confidence and to command the respect of students and colleagues. This is not power of the sort that makes people jump when fingers are snapped; rather it is the power that will enhance the education of students in contact with the teacher” (p. 150). The Hope College teacher education faculty aims to prepare teachers who can empower learners in the previously described diverse classrooms.

For purposes of this study, I shall limit considerations of what constitutes teacher knowledge to what Grossman (1990) labeled as subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge.

The Potential Contributions of This Study

A study such as this one can be informative for others in the teacher education field who face similar questions about the effectiveness of their programs. I want to know if teachers being prepared to teach elementary school reading within a reform oriented teacher education program claim to be and are ready to teach. After all, they are graduates of a constructivist-oriented teacher education program which is informed by the latest theory and research in reading, new understandings of how children learn, theories about the social nature of learning, awareness of multiple ways of knowing, the latest in brain research, and on-going considerations of the issues embedded in notions of what it means to learn and teach. In the end, I would like to know if that makes a difference in their own learning to teach reading. I also want to know more about the distinctions between knowing and acting on that knowledge in the context of reading instruction.

A study like this one can also be useful because it can help us ascertain whether and how a reform-oriented teacher education program has been able to influence the knowledge base and preparation for teachers in literature-based reading which not only honors the increasing diversity of the elementary school student populations, but also is improving the likelihood that these teachers are knowledgeable to the extent they can and do adapt and flexibly design instruction to meet the learning needs of their changing classroom populations. Briefly, then, a study such as the one proposed here can help us identify specific strengths and weaknesses in teacher preparedness in relation to the teacher education program offerings in reading, understand the issues, dilemmas and problems novices face during their first years of teaching reading (e.g., contextual issues the teacher education program may not have accounted for), and may enable the researcher to raise new questions for further study in teacher education.

As reported earlier, few studies exist which examine in meaningful ways the

knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and dispositions about reading instruction of graduates of reformed teacher education programs. Rather, reports about what might be and should be possible abound. In a small and limited way, this study can be informative to those wishing to appraise the results of reformed preparation to teach reading, in particular, and teacher education, in general.

How This Study is Organized

In the following chapters, I will lay out the salient evidence and findings which emerged from the observations of Kate, Mary, and Adam as they conducted reading instruction with an diverse population of fourth and fifth graders. In the process, my intent is to demonstrate just what it is these novice teachers claimed to know and understand about teaching and learning in reading and to ascertain the impact of that knowledge on actual teaching in literature-based reading.

In Chapter Two I describe the design of the research and explain how I collected data in its various forms. Next, I describe the data which was actually collected and how I arranged and categorized that data in order to make sense of it in light of the practice of Kate, Mary, and Adam. Naturally, embedded in that discussion, I will explain the research tools I used in depth and provide the reader with an understanding of how that data was used to inform this study. Throughout this section, I will discuss the continuing evolution of the questions I asked when I began the study

Chapter Three is best described as background which provides a context for beginning an analysis of teacher knowledge about literature-based reading instruction in the middle and upper elementary grades. First, I situated the three novices teachers in this study within the context of their teacher education cohort. Here I provide the reader

with initial explanations of the self-reported indices of the knowledge of beginning teachers, all of whom completed a recently reformed teacher education program. A series of Big Ideas in reading ranging from the central concepts and tools of reading to the policy issues are used as background throughout the study to compare and contrast the teacher actions of the three novice teachers with those of the larger cohort. Next, I provide the reader with an introduction to each of the three novice teachers, Kate, Mary, and Adam, who are the primary foci of this study. Finally, I address a quartet of themes which seemed to be common to the larger group of Hope College teacher education graduates, and to Kate, Mary, and Adam. Later, in Chapters Four through Seven I will frequently compare and contrast these initial responses to the later words and actions of Kate, Mary, and Adam.

Chapters Four, Five, and Six are similar in structure, but differ in significant ways as the details emerge about the knowledge and practice of the three novices. In each chapter, I begin with a commentary of the beliefs and practice of each of the novices, in turn, as that data emerged from the initial interviews, pre-observation meetings, the actual observations of reading instruction, and any discussions held to clarify and refine our mutual understandings about what happened in these classrooms. This is followed by a set of assertions I make about the practice of each novice teacher. I then work to confirm or disconfirm these assertions by a careful examination of the observation evidence.

Finally, in Chapter Seven, I propose what these findings about teacher knowledge and teacher actions shaped by that knowledge may mean for the teachers involved, for teacher educators, and for other teachers who are in their induction years.

Chapter Two

Methodology

I am a teacher educator in reading. Reading has always been important to me, both personally and professionally. My own teaching career started in a middle school where some adolescents had pronounced reading difficulties and I determined to improve my own professional knowledge in reading. Although at that time I had minimal knowledge of Louise Rosenblatt and her revolutionary ideas, these ideas have, in fact, become a central focus of my work in the reading field. I am, as a result, so impassioned about reading that I view this dissertation study as a natural outgrowth of my own professional work in K-12 schools and as a teacher educator.

So it was not surprising, to me at least, to eventually find myself involved in reforming the reading instruction and language arts courses in the teacher education program at Hope College which I described in chapter one. This dissertation, however, is not about reform in teacher education, although that reform serves as background for my study. It is about the knowledge novice teachers of reading believe they have about reading instruction in general, and of literature-based reading instruction, in particular. I also wanted to determine the nature of the impact that teacher knowledge had on teacher action in the classroom, what Erickson called “local meanings-in-action” (1986, p. 129). This study also examines the intended reading curriculum (i.e. as laid out in interviews and pre-observation meetings) with the enacted curriculum (i.e. what actually happened when these novice taught reading lessons). Peripherally, of course, reform in teacher education at Hope College provides a context for the consideration of teacher knowledge in reading. The beginning questions which I raised in this study initially emerged, in part, from my work as a teacher educator in reading and from reviewing the literature in

the field of reading. Subsequently, these questions are refined throughout the study by positioning them alongside the survey data from the cohort groups at Hope College, the interviews with the three novice teachers who form the main body of this dissertation study, and my observation of work they do every day in elementary classrooms. In the process, I also proposed several assertions about the actual intentions and practice of these novice teachers. In the end, I then challenged my own thinking about these assertions and the evidence which confirmed or disconfirmed them by considering the ways in which they fit with several theories about learning, by examining the contexts in which this teaching occurred, and by considering what all this meant in light of the apprenticeship of observation and the dispositions of novice teachers. In this manner, I triangulated the various data as they emerged.

As I have already stated, I began this research with questions about the knowledge of novice reading teachers *bubbling beneath the surface*—however, for me, this study ended up being prominently and openly situated in the professional lives of the three novices and their efforts to design meaningful reading instruction for a variety of children in elementary schools.

In chapter one, I have already mapped out for the reader the situation at Hope College which ultimately lead to the reconfiguration of the teacher education program in the 1990s. While these reforms made for a seemingly more coherent program for faculty and students, the reforms in and of themselves did not answer the nagging question: What difference did the reforms make? In the end, I also wanted to know the nature of the knowledge of these novices in reading instruction once it was translated into classroom practice.

In this chapter, I will describe in detail the evolution of the various components

of the process which led me to the conclusions I later post in chapter seven. Erickson reminds us, if we seek the broadly universal, we should first attend to “what is unique to the given instance . . . by attending to the details of the concrete case at hand” (p. 130). So, in focusing on three graduates of the Hope College teacher education program, I hoped to provide one more opportunity for understanding the knowledge of novice teachers in general, and novice teachers in reading instruction, in particular. The steps I followed in this research included the following phases and the development of instruments for use in each phase of the research: 1) the development of my initial research questions (these were first reported in chapter one and are refined in the sections which follow in this chapter); 2) the survey of graduates of the reformed teacher education program; 3) the selection of teacher cases and the interview process; 4) the observations and the subsequent and necessary thick description of teaching in literature-based reading which the three teacher cases conducted; 5) the development of assertions about the practice of each novice teacher which in a very real sense reshaped the original research questions and were followed by discussions of the evidence to support or deny those assertions. Once again, I turned to Erickson for making sense of these processes. Through systematic classroom observation, albeit over a short period of time, I intended to look for linkages (p. 131) between teacher intentions and classroom instruction and actions. What was the relationship between teacher education, teacher knowledge, and teacher action in the reading classroom? As the description of these classroom actions developed, it became apparent that I would need to generate several assertions about teacher intentions and practice. In the process, I described and developed evidentiary links for confirming or disconfirming my initial assertions about the three novices I was studying. These assertions and the discussions of the evidence for those assertions make

up the body of chapters, four, five, and six. The reader should not assume that this sequence was entirely linear. Rather it occurred more or less in this order, but as my thinking and ideas became clearer in one area, components in other parts of the sequence became sharpened and more focused, and were adjusted accordingly. For example, in chapter three I provide the reader with a detailed description of the survey response group. I then situated the three novices within this larger group in order to ascertain whether they seemed to fit the norm for this larger group, or whether evidence suggested they were different in significant ways. In this way, I was able to continually make and adjust conjectures about what was actually happening as these teachers taught reading.

So this study was an exercise in analytical reflection and logical analysis on the evidence as it emerged, in order to develop themes, develop assertions about teacher practice supported by *thick descriptions*, and for developing what I prefer to call temporary judgments and conclusions. My hope is that as more cases are studied and as more evidence emerges with other novices, we teacher educators and teachers of reading can only know more about what we do as craft.

Developing the Research Questions

In the following lists, I lay out the basic questions and processes that I needed to consider as my study began: the research questions, determining what artifacts would lead me to useful data for answering these questions, the methodology for gathering the data, and my plans for analyzing the data. These initial questions remained as constant influences in this study and were extended and added as I described above.

In this next section of Chapter Two I explain how I thought about my research questions, how I gathered data, selected teacher cases, and refined my interpretations as

the data emerged. I begin with a consideration of my initial research questions.

Initial Research Questions 1, 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D

1. What do teachers who have recently completed a reformed teacher education program know and believe about the teaching of reading? What are they disposed to do?

A. After preparation in a teacher education program where the faculty is guided by a generally constructivist philosophical orientation aimed at promoting literature-based reading instruction, what are novices able and disposed to do when they instruct children in reading?

B. What constitutes the professional knowledge, beliefs and dispositions in literature-based reading instruction held by these novice teachers?

C. What is the nature of this knowledge?

D. How do these novices view their own self-efficacy, i.e. their own power and ability to produce effective instruction in reading? How do they view their ability to be adaptive?

This set of questions originated with my initial thinking about pre-service teachers and the influences on teacher knowledge which have been examined by others in the past, i.e., prior knowledge, effective use of learning strategies and techniques, the efficacy of teacher education, and what it means to *know* something, among many. They were also influenced by the many long discussions I held with my teacher education colleagues at Hope College as we strived to find the answers to nagging problems in teacher education (e.g., How can we guarantee that our graduates know how to teach reading?). As my

study came to an end, these questions remained powerful and added a richness and complexity to the study which I had not imagined. Simply put, there was no uncomplicated answer to any of them, or to the questions which I discuss next.

Initial Research Questions 2, 3

2. How do the novices describe and explain their professional capabilities as teachers of literacy/reading?

3. How and to what extent can/do novices act upon their knowledge, beliefs, and dispositions when they implement their own reading program in their first years of teaching

Naturally, questions two and three are extensions of the ones I discussed on the previous pages, but for me they went further. They put the obligation for interpreting teacher knowledge on the novice and required the novice to explain the role(s) that knowledge played in planning for and implementing reading instruction in elementary classrooms. Clearly, I was then obligated to examine these responses and consider the evidence which supported, or did not support, the statements of the novices and the evidence of their actual classroom practice. But the essential purpose of these questions was to determine what the novices knew about their own capabilities in reading, and their own practical and theoretical knowledge used for enacting the reading curriculum in their classrooms.

For the next set of questions I found that it was helpful to label questions related directly to subject matter knowledge with SMK. Those which addressed pedagogical content knowledge were labeled with PCK.. Such coding reminded me to be constantly vigilant in my search for evidence and patterns which I needed in order to answer my

overarching questions about teacher knowledge in reading instruction.

Initial Research Questions 4, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4 E, 4 F, 4 G

4. What is the classroom practice in which these novices find themselves teaching reading? What school support is available to them? What challenges do they face in these contexts?

A. What are the referents for instructional decision making in reading of these teachers? (i.e., is it research and theory or personal prior experience?) (SMK)

B. How and to what extent do novices perceive and explain their own levels of accomplishment as instructors of reading? (SMK)(PCK)

C. How and to what extent do novices understand the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of reading? (SMK)

D. How and to what extent do novices use their understanding of the unique growth and development of children to analyze what is going on in classroom situations and to plan instructional activities? (SMK)(PCK)

E. How and to what extent do novices use classroom feedback to structure the reading program? (PCK)

F. How and to what extent do novices gather evidence that children are learning and to adapt reading instruction? (PCK)

G. How and to what extent do novices understand and use a range of teaching and instructional strategies in reading? (PCK)

This batch of questions (4 through 4G) bid me to consider the intersection of practice and theory in actual elementary classrooms where literature-based reading was believed to be the primary delivery system of instruction. They were broad in their

scope, but they also helped me to gather very specific evidence about a number of important areas in reading: assessment and evaluation, individual learning styles, teacher dispositions and preferences, evidence of learning, materials used, methodology, grouping, developmental issues, the ability and willingness of the teacher to be adaptive with young readers, and what tools they used to make that happen.

Table 2.1 The Data Collection Instruments

The six tools I used for collecting data for this study are described in the table below. These tools helped me to clarify the data and patterns as they emerged.

- A. Initial survey of three cohorts of Hope College elementary teacher education graduates to provide a ground from which to study the cases.
- B. Pre-observation interviews with three cases of second year teachers who graduated from the revamped Hope College program. The attached interview protocol and group responses to Pearson's Benchmarks served as the vehicle for formulating initial hypotheses.
- C. Observation of in-class reading instruction of three teachers--audio taped.
- D. Interviews, pre-observations discussions, observations, post-observation discussions.
- E. Follow-up interviews and discussions for clarification of instructional decisions made they made (e.g., content to be learned, strategics to be used by the teacher and learners, text used and so forth).
- F. I intended to use artifacts from the cases' teacher education experiences. In the end, these played a minimal role, simply because after two years, few were available. I did use artifacts from the teachers' instructional practices in reading.

Developing the Survey and Conducting the Survey

This study was initiated with a survey of several cohorts of recent graduates and current Hope College elementary teacher education students: those who student taught and graduated in the Spring of 1997, the Fall of 1997, and the student teachers for Spring,

1998. These parameters ensured that only graduates who completed the reconfigured reading course work at Hope College would be included in the survey report. Each participant received a modified version of P. David Pearson's *Benchmarks to Guide Individual Development of Teachers* (see Appendix A, p.318). I modified this instrument into its current form by adapting Pearson's benchmarks to more specifically reflect the particular questions I thought needed to be asked of second-year novice reading teachers: I added questions and refined others in each of the Big Ideas. It was my understanding that Pearson originally used these benchmarks to assess the current level of confidence pre-service teachers had regarding their own efficacy in the field of reading. In order to study novices, teachers who were in their second year of teaching, I had to ask more questions and ask for more complex reflection on actual classroom practice.

What I hoped to determine with such a survey was the nature of the confidence level of Hope College graduates regarding their subject matter knowledge (i.e., SMK) and their pedagogical content knowledge (i.e., PCK) about the teaching of reading. I collated and analyzed responses from the surveys to derive a "sense of the cohort." As I looked for patterns, consistencies and inconsistencies which emerged from the survey data, I actually color coded the data using post-it notebook tabs. I then used those findings to help me make the necessary adjustments and alterations to the original research questions and to the interview protocol before it was used with the cases selected for the study. For example, survey respondents overwhelmingly emphasized the role(s) of authentic literature in the teaching of reading. When I conducted the interviews with Kate, Mary, and Adam, I stressed these aspects of their practice to get a more complete picture of what they meant by literature-based reading instruction and how they planned to conduct such instruction. However, since the survey results are based on anonymous self-reports,

triangulating the survey findings was difficult. In only the broadest sense, the study of the three cases helped me to triangulate the feedback received in the survey. In the end, however, the *Benchmarks* survey allowed me to situate this study within the common pre-service course work in reading taken by all graduates of the program.

Piloting the Interview Protocol and Selecting the Teacher Cases

After the surveys were returned and I had acquired a sense of the confidence level in reading held by cohorts of recent graduates, I examined the evidence for patterns. These patterns are reported in the beginning of Chapter Three. For example, Hope graduates tended to express a high level of awareness about the multifaceted nature of learning and teaching to read. Among a plethora of facets affecting reading instruction, the recent graduates claimed to know that families were important, that multiple approaches to instruction were beneficial, and that teachers needed to be aware of and design instruction with multiple learning styles in mind. It was apparent that there would be no simple response which would explain the dichotomy between knowledge and action in reading instruction. It would, instead, need to be many layered.

I then piloted my original interview protocol which I had developed with the initial research questions in mind, with one survey respondent who would not be one of the novices selected for this study. This dry run of the interview protocol suggested issues, concepts and theories which needed to be addressed and were not originally included. I was also able to determine which questions were less helpful in pursuing the ultimate focus of the study. From that experience I refined my protocol questions and added others. It was clear to me after the pilot interview, for example, that I needed to ask more open-ended questions and use more probes, such as, "Tell me more about that"

or “Please, give me a specific example of what you mean by that “ or “Please explain what you meant by X.” In the end, it was almost always the case, that these additional probes helped furnish the data I needed to make sense of this study because the interviewees were not able to rely on cliches or pat answers. Rather, they had to get specific.

Investigating what novice teachers do within and beyond the first year of teaching was likely to inform my understanding of the nature of teacher knowledge-in-action (Schon, 1987) as it evolved during the initial teaching experiences for Hope College graduates. However, it was important to me not to become bogged down by nor to discount that substantial body of research on the induction year of teaching which describes that first year as being qualitatively different than any other teaching year (e.g. Feiman-Nemser, 1983, 1992; Featherstone, 1992, among others). First year teachers are literally engaged in the monumental tasks of survival and acclimating themselves to the district and building culture. They must decipher and then fulfill their many administrative duties. They must address classroom management issues and find and adapt their teaching “voices” to materials already in place. They also must dedicate considerable energy to the development of workable student-teacher relationships. In the end, they have less time than they should have to focus on subject matter issues. It is not that these new teachers are not thinking about reading or subject matter; they are just thinking about it in the contexts of all of these other issues. Each of these novice teachers still must deal with reading subject matter in the classroom. The concerns of novice teachers, however, frequently move the focus away from subject matter, literature-based reading, to other things. So I decided to focus on second year novice teachers. My hope was that by the second year of teaching some of the potboiler issues which affect the first

years of teaching may have settled down so that I could focus primarily on reading instruction

By opting to study second year reading teachers I decided to go directly to the heart of the subject matter issue: what are recent graduates of a reformed teacher education program inclined to do and able to do when they instruct children in reading? Peripherally, I wanted to know how their teacher education experiences might have influenced their instructional choices in the subject matter of reading. These teachers are briefly described below.

Table 2.2 Specifics About the Teacher Cases

The Cases	Grades Taught	The Schools
1. Kate--female	1. 5 th grade	1. Small central city, ethnically, culturally diverse.
2. Mary--female	2. 4 th grade	2. Suburb, ethnically, culturally diverse
3. Adam-male	3. 4 th grade	3. Suburb, ethnically, culturally diverse

The survey and the pilot interview were followed by in-depth interviews with three novice teachers whose lives in the reading classroom make up the bulk of this study. In an effort to appropriately represent the demographics for teachers I have described in Chapter Three, I selected three novices for this study, two females, and one male as shown in Table 2.2. Since I had decided to focus primarily on literature-based reading instruction, I felt it was important to study novice teachers who claimed to be actively using a substantial body of literature to teach reading. Hence, all three of these teachers were teaching in the upper elementary grades: two in fourth grade suburban classrooms,

and one in a fifth grade classroom in a small central city; all three classrooms and schools are ethnically and culturally diverse. Two of the novices are traditional graduates, in their early twenties; one is a non-traditional teacher education graduate in her late forties. Studying cases who all taught in similar grade levels assignments would allow me to compare and contrast what was happening in ways that studying a variety of disparate grade levels would not permit. It was also important to note that in the lower grades, literature-based reading could be qualitatively and quantitatively different from the upper grades. What I sought here was what Erickson described as “looking at events occurring at any system level . . . in the context of events occurring at the next higher or next lower system levels” (p. 143). The opportunity to consider classrooms events across a variety of reading groups within a classroom and also between and among the two grade levels and the three classrooms could prove useful in making sense of the teachers’ actions. While no configuration of cases would have a built-in balance for gender, age, academic major, life experience, and personal knowledge about teaching, I welcomed the discussion about the variables and attributes which would enrich a study of this sort. These attributes, in fact, are addressed extensively in Chapter Seven. I interviewed each teacher using the interview protocol included in Appendix C (page 337) regarding his/her personal and professional understandings of knowledge, beliefs and dispositions about teaching in general and teaching reading, in particular.

I was pleased as I began the process of reading and rereading the interview transcripts at how readily patterns began to emerge. Almost without exception all three novices made declarations or posed observations about assessment, reading materials, their own experiences in learning to read, specific strategies they liked or disliked, state mandated testing, the role of phonics in their instruction, and so on. Just as I had in the

surveys, I used colored tabs to mark commentary made by these novices about specific topics such as those listed above. In the final analysis, I was startled to notice how many comments had been made about the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), for example. The color coding was a great help in making certain topics and issues stand out during the data gathering, and during the analysis as well. See Table 2.3 which follows.

Observing and recording the teaching of these three novices was complicated by the uncontrollable factors and events which always affect classroom practice. Making sense of what actually occurred when these novices taught reading required me to consider all of the input all of the time. Table 2.3 lays out how I accomplished that.

Table 2.3 General Data Analysis

A. Triangulation of data occurred with the analysis of data and the consideration of evidence produced in the surveys, the pre- and post-observation interviews with the three cases (and discussions which resulted from those interviews), and from the classroom observations, and examination of artifacts from the cases' teacher education experiences and classroom instructional practice, and artifacts from elementary students in those classes.

B. I analyzed survey responses for a sense of the TE graduates—a starting point for considering patterns which emerged in areas of professional strength or need. Responses to Pearson's Benchmarks provided the initial measure for judgements in this section.

C. I used specific survey and interview questions about subject-matter and pedagogical content knowledge in reading and open-ended questions about those same areas. Then I analyzed the responses for patterns, consistencies, inconsistencies, variations and similarities in response. For example, it was informative to analyze the responses about the roles literature plays in reading instruction (from the survey and interviews) and compare those with the discussions about literature which took place in their classrooms (observations).

Gathering Data and Making Sense of It

At issue for me was a decision about whether this study ought to be focused on breadth or depth in considering teacher knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and dispositions about literature-based reading instruction. Observing each teacher long-term and throughout the school day would not only allow for insights into reading instruction, but also into how literacy learning and use of the language arts is encouraged (or not) throughout the curriculum and the school day. That choice would permit me to get at the knowledge the novices professed to have and to consider how they enacted that knowledge in the actual curriculum in the classroom. One or two follow-up visits would likely be necessary to each classroom to confirm or disconfirm assumptions. On the other hand, visiting each classroom several mornings during literacy instruction would engender a more concentrated view of instruction in reading, but less instruction in other subject areas. Naturally, visitations could be conducted two or three times a week for each case over a longer period of time, although I suspected that assertions about teaching and learning which emerge might be considerably more disjointed. In the end, I opted for three morning visits to each classroom during literacy instruction, in part because this was the least disruptive to the teachers, and because they preferred that option. In actuality, the third observation visit with two of the novices was canceled because district mandated swimming lessons for their classrooms were altered at the last minute and also because I was permitted a strictly defined amount of released time from my own teaching duties at Hope and had to return to the classroom. The interviews were followed by observations during Fall, 1998, in the classrooms of Kate, Mary, and Adam, the three novices finally selected for the study. In order to begin answering my initial research questions I planned to gather information in the following general areas as I observed:

1. What did the teacher have planned for reading instruction during my observation?
2. What were the teacher's reasons for those instructional choices?
3. How did this instruction mesh (or not mesh) with the classroom building or district's curriculum for reading?
4. How did the novice intend to accomplish the teaching and learning tasks that had been planned?
5. What indicators were available about classroom teacher beliefs on what children actually learned as a result of the reading lessons? What evidence supported beliefs that such learning took place?

I also needed to gather evidence of what actually took place during instruction. I did so through copious field notes and through audiotaping of the reading instruction sessions. Interestingly, all three novices readily agreed to participation in this study, but I was told in all three schools that videotaping of the teachers and elementary students would not be allowed. It was seen as too disruptive to normal classroom routine and was, in essence, an invasion of privacy. Since I did not have an alternative, I readily agreed to only audiotape the sessions when I observed. All dialogues referred to in later chapters of this study are from the transcripts of these tapes or from my field notes.

Embedded in the answers to these questions I raised above, were questions about the sources of these decisions (i.e. Were these decisions made based on personal prior experience? Were you guided by the structure and content of your teacher education program? If so, how?) What theoretical or philosophical perspective guided your decisions about this lesson? Naturally, follow-up discussions and questions to clarify events, comments, and actions were necessary throughout the process. I was quite

frustrated, in the end, however, by the limited access I had to these novices after the observations were completed. I was often hindered in clarifying an interpretation or understanding the novice's real intentions because, more often than not, phone calls were not returned; e-mails were not answered. I did return to each teacher at least once to discuss in person the series of questions I had about the classroom events I had observed. These meetings were often rushed and perfunctory. I do not mean to suggest that these teachers did not care to discuss their actions. I can only assume that their lives were no less busy after my observations than they were during my observations. In chapter seven, I make a series of recommendations for dealing with some effects of this "busyness" on studies of teacher knowledge and action in reading.

Posing Assertions About Novices and Looking for Patterns

Next came the task of transcribing all of the audiotapes obtained during my observations and of examining my field notes to determine the level of agreement with the transcriptions. I then began my search for patterns and important events in the reading instruction of each novice teacher. These events were examined in light of the teacher's intended instructional plans revealed during the pre-observation meetings. Then as I began writing, I developed a set of assertions about each novice's practice. For example, in chapter four I assert that Kate believed reading instruction should serve multiple purposes and should help readers make connections across many curricular areas. In the discussion which followed this assertion, I pointed out the evidence, or the warrants, if you will, which confirmed or disconfirmed my initial assertions about each novice. On the surface this initial assertion about Kate's practice was exciting. As my analysis continued, however, it became clear that these early assertions were ways of

pushing me further in my thinking about the practice of the novices. For example, it was true that Kate emphasized reading instruction within the social studies. What was not so clear was whether reading instruction always fared well within the social studies content area. These findings and assertions were also placed alongside the findings of the surveys to determine whether they fit those general attitudes about the efficacy of knowledge in reading.

At one point in the early stages of this study (after the surveys were returned and the interviews were completed), I remember being struck by the overwhelmingly positive and informed statements made by the three novices about the teaching of reading. I was pleased that they were self-assured, seemingly informed about the latest theory and research in reading, and that they spoke confidently about their plans for child-centered classrooms. This euphoria continued on through the pre-observation meetings before my classroom visits. Once I began analyzing the data from the classroom visits and reflected on what I had seen with my own eyes, the evidence helped me to compose a very different picture of what had occurred in each classroom. Kate, Mary, and Adam were not practicing what they had professed they would. I realized then that describing the knowledge about reading of these three novices would have to go well beyond a simple depiction of what they planned to do and what they actually did. It became apparent that more would be needed. I would need to consider theories of learning and compare and contrast the actions of Kate, Mary, and Adam with the tenets of those theories. Hence I drew on John Dewey (1904/1964), Jean Lave (1996), and Rand Spiro (1988) and his colleagues. It also was evident that I should examine these cases in elementary reading instruction in light of what we already know about teachers in other disciplines and perhaps at other grade levels. Here I turned to Pamela Grossman (1990) and her study of

secondary English teachers and, in the end, adapted some of my findings to reinterpret and extend those in her study. Finally, I realized that I needed to decide what elements would be most advantageous in moving novices beyond the instructional practices in reading which seemed to compromise the best intentions of Kate, Mary, and Adam. At the end of this study that element seemed to be more a series of elements and included recommendations for the induction year, and most importantly, long-term opportunities for novice teachers to reflect on their practice.

At the end of this study, I compared and contrasted my initial and later findings with established research in the field. These efforts at comparing and contrasting my findings, with evidence from previous studies and research was key to making sense of my findings.

Developing Conclusions

Chapters four, five, and six are my initial attempts at answering my original overarching research questions about the knowledge of novice teachers in literature-based reading. Later, in chapter seven, I examine the cross-cutting issues from chapters four, five, and six, and refine the issues and questions once again, not so much by rewriting them, but rather, by examining them through new lenses and with new evidence in mind (e.g., the theories of learning or personal dispositions and comfort zones of novices, and the growing understanding from the stories in preceding chapters). The process seemed evolutionary, rather than radically disjointed, as I moved through it. An example is question 1D in the list of additional questions I developed for the observations (see, page 43, this chapter): How do novices view their own efficacy, i.e., their own power and ability to produce effective instruction in reading? How do they view their own ability to

be adaptive? In chapters four, five, and six, I considered what these novice teachers did in their classrooms to honor their self-reported competence in this domain as they taught young children. The survey responses had indicated these novices believed strongly that teachers needed to keep flexibility in mind as they planned instruction. Even so, as the observations progressed it became more and more evident that in their daily practice these novices either ignored or sublimated the role of adaptability and flexible teaching. This question was refined to also ask whether a preferred philosophical or theoretical stance guided these decisions about instruction for these novices. In short, the novices maintained routines instead of flexibility and were not always able to state why that was the case. I discuss this propensity for teacher-centered reading instruction in chapter seven. Other questions in this list were also refined in similar ways. Question two about the extent to which these novices acted upon their knowledge, beliefs, and dispositions when they enacted their own reading programs was altered to also consider what liberated or constrained teacher action in the reading classroom. Finally, in considering how these novices used classroom feedback to structure their reading programs (question 4E above), I was forced to examine the prominent role that the MEAP tests had in shaping reading instruction in these classrooms. So, along the way, the original foci for this study were continually refined to reflect the reality of what was emerging as teacher action in literature-based reading classrooms.

It is important for the reader of this study to keep in mind the interconnected nature of an intricate lacework of factors, all of which have varying levels of impact on teachers and learners in reading: prior knowledge about reading or the apprenticeship of observation, the teaching contexts, intentions for teaching, the reality of the teaching situation, learning theories which inform (or do not inform) instruction, teacher education

preparation, and so on. So, in a very real sense, this dissertation is but a single lens on a very complex area for study: teacher knowledge in use in reading.

As I gathered data, my original research questions did not change so much as they were extended and made more complex to answer by the interviews. Early on, I asked question 4D, which I related above, and then added another layer of questioning to it. “Do these novices have a preferred theoretical or philosophical stance which shapes their decisions and choices in reading instruction.” In asking this additional question, I also added, “What liberates or constrains teacher actions in reading instruction? It was also instructive for me to essentially change roles in these processes. During the observations, I was an outside observer of the elementary children in the classrooms of Kate, Mary, and Adam. When I worked individually with each novice teacher, I was more a participant observer. Each perspective or angle informed my thinking.

In the next chapter, three, I describe the larger survey population, situate Kate, Mary, and Adam within that group, and begin the process of ascertaining just what happens when novices plan and deliver literature-based reading instruction. In chapter four I consider the case of Kate; in chapter five I consider the case of Mary; and in chapter six I consider the case of Adam. Finally, in chapter seven I bring together all of the evidence and issues about teacher knowledge in literature-based reading instruction to see what can be made of it.

Chapter Three

The People and the Schools--Backgrounds Considered

Myriad demands for reform of teacher education have been made of late. Buried within those demands are questions about the efficacy of such reform--do they make a difference? Questions can also be raised about the effects of teacher education reform on the knowledge of teachers. In this chapter I will provide background information about teacher education graduates who teach reading. First, I will detail the distribution of demographic data for three semesters of student teachers from Hope College who were surveyed for this study. The survey data serves as a backdrop for the primary focus of this study of individual teacher knowledge about literature-based reading instruction. The survey called upon respondents to report on self-perceptions of professional aptitudes and understandings of teaching and learning in reading instruction. It is from these groups that the three teacher cases in this study are selected. Included in these accounts are data regarding teaching majors and minors, age, and gender. I will provide an overview of the survey results, as well as commentary from individuals who chose to provide additional responses to the sections of the survey referred to as "Big Ideas". In the next section of this chapter I will introduce the three teachers who are the axis of this study, Kate, Mary, and Adam. I provide background information about their schools and discuss their personal involvement with reading and their approaches to teaching reading in the classroom. This information is gleaned from the three teachers' survey responses, and also from in-depth one-on-one interviews. Following these initial introductions, I will posit a quartet of themes which all three teachers raised during the interview process. These themes address the issues the novice teachers grapple with as they think about

teaching and learning in reading instruction: teacher as lifelong learner, the need for flexibility in teaching reading, balance in reading instruction, and assessment in reading.

The Group

During the summer of 1998, I distributed a survey to one hundred and twenty-six Hope College teacher education students who had completed their elementary student teaching during three semesters in 1997 and 1998. The structure and the content of the survey are discussed in depth in chapter two. Most importantly, I want the reader to notice the high rate of confidence declared by survey respondents in their own knowledge of reading and in their ability to employ this knowledge in the classroom. In fact, the preponderance of responses for almost every category was at the highest level of confidence, level four (able to adapt planning and teaching based on the components surveyed) or the next level of confidence, a level three (able to incorporate these factors into planning and teaching). A detailed accounting of these results is in the graphs beginning on page 67. The reports of these three cohorts of student teachers assist us in formulating an initial image of the self-efficacy in reading instruction of graduates who had recently completed the student teaching experience. The surveys provide a view of what is typical for recent Hope College teacher education graduates. Additionally, the survey data enables the views expressed by the three teachers who are studied in-depth to be situated within the views of the larger group. The individual teacher's views can be held up to the reports of the larger cohort to assess whether the initial conclusions about stronger preparation in reading instruction hold true for them. Through the three teacher introductions, described in greater detail in a subsequent section of this chapter, I will provide examples of just how this confidence gets translated, from the teachers'

perspectives, into daily classroom practice in reading instruction. Thus, the survey results are significant for the positive indicators they provide about knowledge and ability in reading instruction for three cohorts of pre-service teachers at Hope College.

Thirty-eight useable survey responses were returned (30% return rate) for the following: the Spring of 1998 (14 for 36.8%), the Fall of 1997 (10 for 26.3%), or the Spring of 1997 (14 for 36.8%). It should be noted that the three teachers selected for in-depth examination in this study represent the teacher education population at Hope College (i.e., two-thirds female, one-third male). The demographics of the responding group are as follows:

GENDER: 6 male (15.7%), 32 female (84.2%)

AGE: Range 21 to 49 years old
Mean 24 years
Median 22 years
Mode 22 years

TEACHING MAJORS: (includes three double majors)

Language Arts Composite	12	(Includes Kate Spear and Adam Thomas)
Special Education—LD	9	
Special Education—EI	3	
Science Composite	5	
Humanities Composite	5	(Includes Mary Reardon)
Spanish	3	
English	2	
Dance	1	
Communications	<u>1</u>	
	41	

TEACHING MINORS— (ten individuals provided no response)

Substantive	15	(Includes Kate Spear and Adam Thomas)
Science Composite	3	(Includes Mary Reardon)
Spanish	3	
Kinesiology	1	
Dance	1	
Psychology	1	
Language Arts Composite	1	
English	1	
Music	1	
Math	<u>1</u>	
	28	

In the survey (see Appendix C), I asked individuals to describe their level of accomplishment for becoming a teacher of reading in general and then to describe their own perceptions of specific categories of preparedness in nine areas labeled as Big Ideas. A self-rating of one (1) was for those individuals who believed they were just now developing a rudimentary awareness of the issues and ideas surrounding the teaching of reading. A self-rating of two(2) indicated an awareness of the ideas and issues surrounding the teaching of reading, but also that the respondent understood why these were important to consider. Those choosing a self-rating of three (3) were also able to incorporate these ideas and issues into the planning for teaching of reading and language. Finally, with a self-rating of four (4) respondents claimed additional agility in adapting planning and materials to reading instruction as dictated by the needs and circumstances in the elementary classroom. Thus a level four response also assumes competence in levels 3, 2, and 1; level three assumes competence at levels 2 and 1; level two assumes competence in level 1 as well.

In the initial survey tool, called “ A Rubric,” I asked respondents to label themselves at one of these levels regarding their overall level of accomplishment in learning about reading. Fifty percent of the respondents claimed level four proficiency. Thirty seven percent [rounded off] claimed level three. Four individuals placed their proficiency at level two, while one provided no rating. In general, the respondents viewed themselves as generally well-prepared by the Hope College teacher education program. In most cases, respondents placed themselves in the Level 4 or level 3 categories of teacher knowledge and teacher abilities. Supporting comments offered voluntarily by some students follow below:

Respondent #14

[I] believe my education classes at Hope have given me the background I need in reading awareness--but only with practice will I be able to adapt my planning and teaching to each circumstance.

Respondent #16

When I think about planning, I keep in mind that not all children learn in the same way nor at the same time. There are a multitude of issues that influence reading instruction which must be considered when planning and teaching: prior knowledge, interests, family background, language development, etc. Teachers need to be flexible!

Respondent #22

I feel that I am aware of the issues and ideas and can incorporate these into my plans. Due to my lack of experience, I feel that I have quite a bit farther to go in the area of reading instruction.

Respondent #38

I feel through my education I have learned many ways to assess and evaluate reading ability of students as well as detect reading difficulties in students. From here I am able to use the many strategies I have learned for reading to supplement and adapt my planning.

These sample statements are evidence that Hope College teacher education graduates (i.e respondents #14, #38) credit the program with providing them with not only an awareness of the issues and pedagogy involved in reading instruction, but also with instilling in them (i.e., respondents #14, #16, #22, #38) a clear sense of the need for flexibility in bringing their plans for reading instruction to fruition within the reality

which is daily classroom practice. Further, Hope College teacher education graduates view themselves as continuous learners.

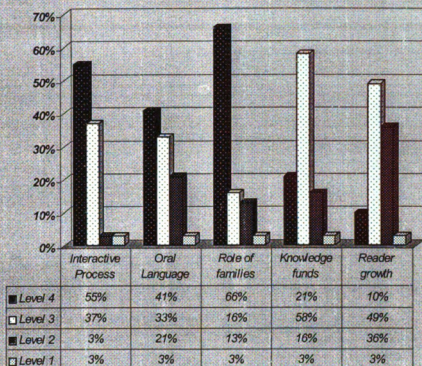
Table 3.1 which follows provides a summary of the Big Ideas in the rubric in Appendix C. These are the areas of strength and areas needing improvement as indicated by the respondents to the survey.

Table 3.1
Self-Perceptions About
Reading Instruction

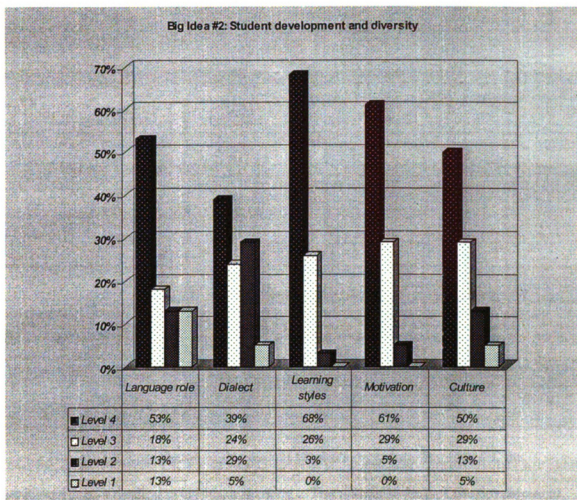
The Focus of the Big Ideas:	The Components—the respondents self-assess personal levels of competence in each area below:
Big Idea #1 —Central concepts, tools of inquiry and structures of reading.	Reading as an interactive process, oral language, families, knowledge funds and reader growth.
Big Idea #2 —Student development and diversity.	Role(s) of language, dialect, learning styles, motivation and culture in learning to read.
Big Idea #3 —Program management.	Role(s) of literature, the needs and interests of learners, learning centers, uses of individual and group instruction and scheduling time.
Big Idea #4 —Teacher repertoire.	Role(s) of and teacher facility in using discussions, instructional scaffolding, explicit instruction and selection of strategies.
Big Idea #5 —Assessment and evaluation.	Role of teacher's understanding of and ability to use the various forms of assessment, informal data in assessing learners, the use of conferences for assessment, and adapting instruction from data gathered during assessment.
Big Idea #6 —Reading as a policy phenomenon.	Roles of teacher's understanding of the varied perspectives on reading instruction, along with the debates about phonics, back-to-the-basics, the role of context and isolated instruction and their own personal position on these issues.
Big Idea #7 —Reading as content and subject matter.	Role(s) of and the teacher's understanding of genre, instructional organization, text structures, literary elements and the kinds of knowledge used in reading instruction.
Big Idea #8 —Attitudes, interests and aesthetics toward reading.	Role(s) of the personal connection to reading, societal influences, the contexts for reading, ownership and making sense in reading.
Big Idea #9 —Teacher as learner.	Role(s) of the teacher as lifelong learner, the various tools of inquiry, professional actions, evolving learning and altering learning over time.

It can be instructive, however, to examine the data from the surveys in another more detailed format. To that end, I provide graphs for each of the nine Big Ideas included in the surveys.

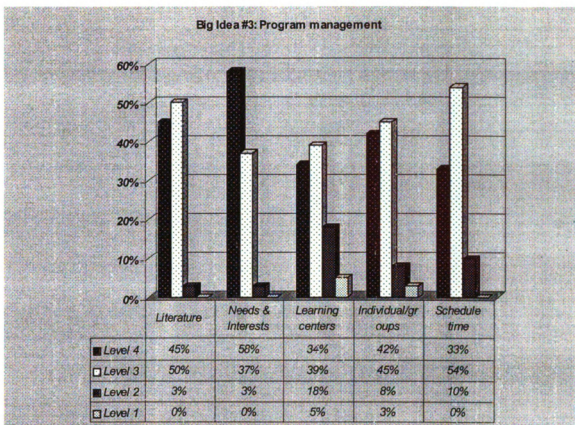
Big Idea #1: Central concepts, tools of inquiry and structures of reading



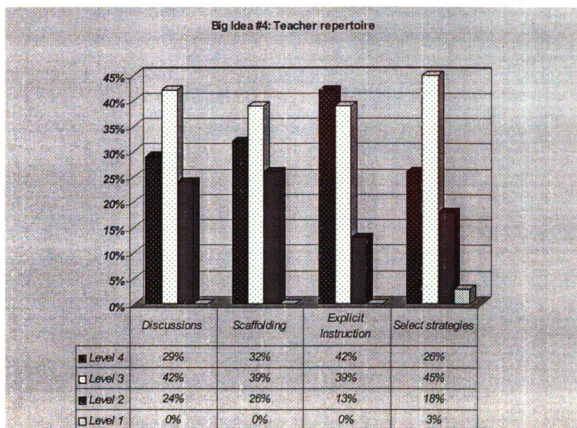
In each category of Big Idea #1, the central concepts, tools of inquiry and structures of reading, respondents claimed high levels of confidence in their understanding of the roles played by the conceptualization of reading as an interactive and constructive process, the importance of oral language development, the role of families and of general knowledge funds in learning to read. In fact, 74% or more of the responses were at level three or four. Respondents' confidence in understanding the role of reader growth was the only category in Big Idea #1 to register below 76%. It should be noted that while confidence levels three and four were also selected by a majority of the respondents for the reader growth category (i.e., 59%--49% claimed level three; 10% claimed level four) this figure demonstrates a confidence level relatively lower than the others imbedded in Big Idea #1.



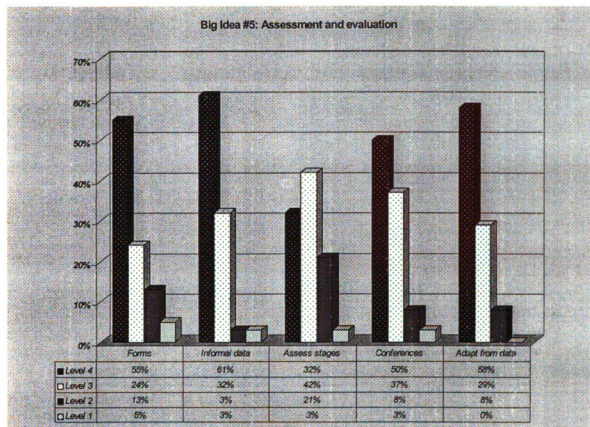
Confidence levels expressed regarding Big Idea #2, student development and diversity, remained high—in all categories, at least 63% of respondents claimed understanding at level three or four. While the data indicates that the student teachers assert a strong understanding of the role of language in the development of young readers, they are somewhat less confident about their appreciation of oral language (see graph, Big Idea #1) and of dialect (category two from the left, above).



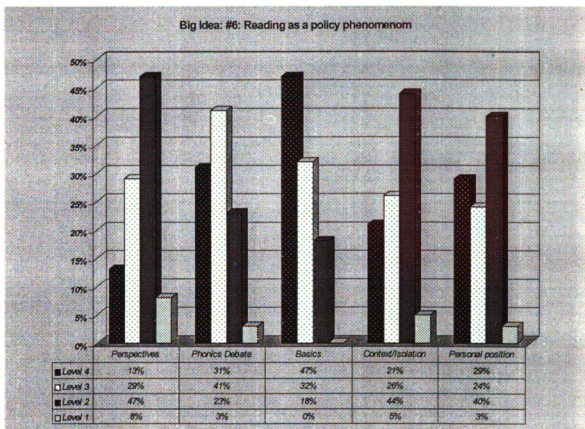
The level of confidence of the student teachers regarding Big Idea #3, the management of a reading program, is striking. The understanding of the development, use and management of learning centers is relatively weaker for these student teachers than their understanding of the following: the role of literature, the needs and interest of children, the design and management of reading instruction for individuals and groups, and the management of scheduling issues. Overall however, these cohorts of student teachers express a general confidence about program management. Later in this chapter I will comment on these results and compare them to the larger body of literature on the concerns of student teachers and beginning teachers (Fuller, 1968; Veenman, 1984; Kagan, 1992; Featherstone, 1992; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, Moon, 1998).



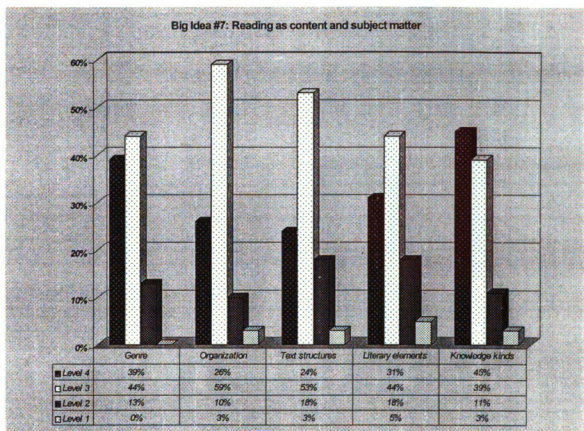
For Big Idea #4, the teacher repertoire category, student teachers were invited to rank their understanding and ability to employ discussions, to make instructional scaffolding decisions, and to design and develop explicit (i.e., direct) instruction as needed, and to select specific appropriate strategies for teaching reading in the elementary classroom. Interestingly, in all four categories, 71% of the respondents claimed proficiency at level three or four. These findings may be an expression of the idealism and enthusiasm of youth and new teacher education graduates, but they are consistent with the high level of confidence expressed in others parts of the survey. In later chapters I will compare the confidence expressed in interviews for the three teachers who are the focus of this study with their classroom practice.



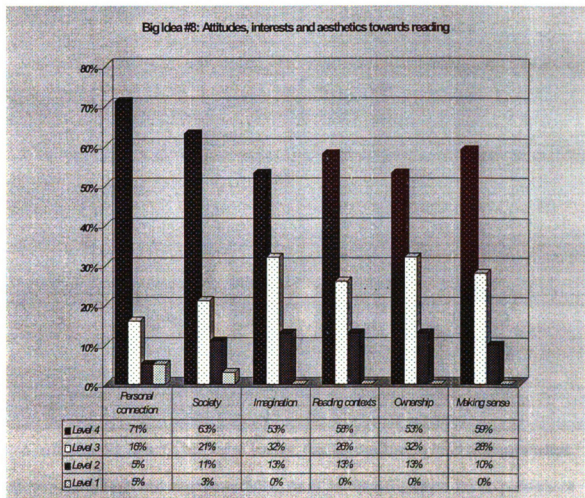
Given the current political atmosphere in the United States and in Michigan about the assessment and evaluation of education in general, and of reading instruction in particular, the respondents' replies about Big Idea #5, assessment and evaluation, should be reassuring. These student teachers claim significant ability in understanding and using a variety of assessment and evaluation options open to them (i.e., from formal assessment to more naturalistic forms of assessment like "kid watching")(Goodman, 1978). Additionally, they are relatively confident about their skills in gathering and using information at the various stages of reading development for use in conferences, and in adapting instruction and materials based on this data.



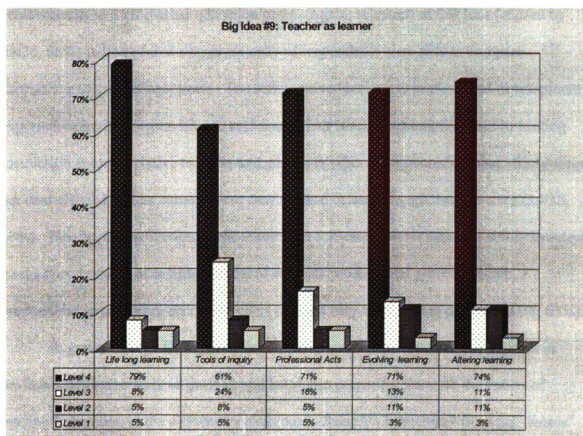
The data results in Big Idea #6, reading as a policy phenomenon, present a slightly different view of these three cohorts. They appear to be less confident of their understanding of the range of perspectives and opinions currently swirling about in policy circles. On the other hand, they are very much aware of the debates about teaching and learning to read through phonics and the so-called “basics” issues. Again, when asked to rank their personal understanding of the context of policy debates and to articulate their own opinions in these areas, they are less sure: 47% and 53% respectively. One wonders whether this reality is a function of the teacher education program trying to balance these issues with a solid procedural knowledge needed in order to function in the reading classroom, or a lack of actual teaching experience in using phonics as an instructional tool.



When questioned about Big Idea #7, reading as content and subject matter, reading as a academic discipline if you will, respondents again claimed high levels of confidence. At least three-fourths of the student teachers placed their knowledge, understanding, and ability to use these categories to teach reading at level three or four. They believe they know the genre available to them, how the various texts are organized and structured, and they understand the role of literary elements in helping children learn from text. All respondents are reliant on a broad storehouse of knowledge about reading and children who are learning to read.



As they did in the data displayed for Big Idea #2, respondents in this dimension of reading, Big Idea #8 (attitudes, interests, and aesthetics) chose level four or level three in all categories. This occurrence is also true for the dimensions in the graph for Big Idea #9, which follows. No more than 13% of respondents claim low levels of confidence at levels one or two. The strong personal connections claimed regarding attitudes, interests, and aesthetics in reading is significant (in spite of the relatively lower level of confidence in understanding reading as a policy phenomenon in Big Idea #6). It is clear that respondents recognize that their personal enthusiasm in this dimension is significant, and by translation, can and should be a significant factor when their students learn to read.



It is in Big Idea #9, teacher as learner, that the confidence level of these student teachers is demonstrated most powerfully. As in previous Big Ideas, the preponderance of respondents chose levels three and four in describing their personal understanding of the components within each dimension. In all categories above, it is important to note that 60% or more of the respondents claimed level four.

Finally, I asked survey respondents to select from among a series of so-called lenses for gauging personal progress and achievement in learning about reading instruction. Two-thirds of the respondents determined that they were using all four possible lenses for self-examining this growth. The personal lens asked individuals to consider how well they had achieved their initial goals and visions as teachers. Two-thirds (selected by 26/38, 68%) stated they had achieved their initial goals for learning about teaching. The comparative lens asked individuals to compare their efforts and

achievements to their teacher education peers. Again, selection of this lens (chosen by 25/38, 66%) indicated that a large majority of respondents were able to compare themselves to professional peers. The comparative lens across professional development experiences invited respondents to self-assess their level of accomplishment in reading instruction courses relative to effort and growth in other professional courses. Sixty-three per cent claimed a clear sense of how they worked in and through these courses (24/38, 63%). Finally, the professional lens asked for a self-rating about personal ability to select a set of professional standards in order to evaluate professional growth. Again, a preponderance of the pre-service teachers claimed they were able to do this (24/38, 63%).

In general, Hope College teacher education students view their experiences in professional course work as positive and helpful in preparing them for the reality of reading instruction in the elementary classroom. Sample commentary from the “lenses” section of the survey attests to this:

Respondent #16:

This program has fostered lifelong learning!

Respondent #15:

I didn't really have a vision when I entered the Education Department. I had no idea there was so much to learn! As I progressed through my education, I set goals and I have achieved them. I feel like I worked very hard to become what I am and accomplished a lot in four years. Since there was so much knowledge introduced to me in the past three years I haven't retained everything. But, I am confident that I will be able to effectively teach my own class. And, I know that as I teach more, I will grow and learn more . . .

Respondent #36:

As a teacher it is extremely important to reflect daily, weekly, and yearly. By comparing one's lessons, oneself with peers, or personal performance and making adjustments one is able to improve as a teacher. It is also important to set goals not only for one's students but also for oneself. You also have to have a way to measure your progress and [assess] if you have accomplished your goals.

It is important to note that with one striking exception, only positive comments were volunteered by the respondents to this survey:

Respondent #31:

"I must be truthful in saying that a large majority of my overall teaching in reading was learned by observing others and reading myself !!"

From this sample commentary, the reader can extrapolate a sense of lifelong learning among Hope College pre-service teachers. In a like manner, there is a sense of the confidence which these pre-service teachers bring to the profession regarding their own abilities to be flexible, to adapt, and to assess the need for day-to-day reflection and assessment on the job. In the next section of this chapter, I introduce and report the interview results for the three teachers are the main focus of this study. These three teachers participated in the survey, completed their first year of teaching reading in an elementary school, and began their second year of teaching in the fall of 1998. Chapter four will examine the actual teacher practice of these three individuals as they planned and conducted reading instruction in the elementary classroom.

Background Information About the Teachers and the Schools

Kate Spear. Kate Spear is a forty-nine year-old grandmother and minister's wife

who returned to college to complete her degree and teacher certification requirements after raising a family. She speaks Spanish fluently and has spent considerable time in Mexico and Central America working in the various Hispanic cultures there. She is a Language Arts Composite major and claims to enjoy reading of all sorts. Kate reports that she was always in the top reading group in elementary school and that even as a first grader she could already read. Her insatiable reading habit continues today. "If I have a book started, I will take every opportunity to pick it up and read it . . . I read a lot of nonfiction, because I had to . . . but, I still enjoy that, too, like all the reading I had to do for college credit. I thoroughly enjoyed it all. I would sit down and pick up a book anytime to read. I just love it." (Interview, 7/7/98, p. 10). Kate enjoys sharing historical fiction and non-fiction with her students and professes a particular affinity for the Lewis and Clark histories.

The school where Kate teaches fifth grade is described as an inner city school. Eighty per cent of the students qualify for free or reduced fee lunches. Kate describes the school as consisting primarily of minorities. While one-third of the students are classified as white, the remaining two-thirds are from the African-American community and various Asian and Hispanic cultures. Kate reports that "most of them come from broken homes. Very few of them live with their own mother and father, or have a mother and [a] father in the home . . . [There are even] a couple of abuse cases in my classroom" (Interview, 7/7/98, p. 23).

While Kate easily recalls her own success as a reader in elementary school, she is also quite dismayed by the very real specter of huge numbers of fifth graders in her charge who are poor readers. She reflects on the possible reasons for this occurrence: "I don't know if it was the students, or the teaching . . . [or] the approach to teaching, when

they ended their learning in first and second grade. I don't know if it's that this many students, are, you know struggling more today, . . . or if it's the way they're taught" (Interview, 7/7/98, p. 21). Kate is concerned about the snowballing effect that failures in early reading experiences generate, but believes that she is striving to organize her reading instruction to be supportive of her challenged readers. When asked whether her own success at reading colored her instructional efforts in the fifth grade classroom, she flatly claims that is not the case. She reports that she has endless patience (which comes from years of teaching piano lessons) in working with the struggling reader and that she works very hard to be attentive to individual talents and needs.

Kate claims that the diverse student population in her classroom makes planning for teaching and learning in reading a challenge. She points out that her fifth graders demonstrate a vast range of reading ability--from primer to early middle school. Kate worries that she may not be able to spend enough time assessing the strengths and needs of each student in reading. She also recognizes the considerable portion of her planning and instructional time which is focused on preparing her students for successful completion of the MEAP³ tests.

Kate, like Mary and Adam discussed below, believes children need a variety of reading experiences every day, including plenty of oral reading, in order to enhance their reading abilities.

The district in which Kate teaches is supportive of her efforts in teaching and learning in reading, in spite of the financial damage done to the district by the growing

³The components of the Michigan Education Assessment Program are standardized tests given in reading and math (grades 4 and 7), science, writing and social studies (grades 5 and 8), all subjects (grade 11).

number of charter schools in the area. Teachers are encouraged to participate in frequent professional development opportunities throughout the year (e.g., The Literacy Learning Network presented by the Richard Owens Publishing Company during the summer of 1998). A new technology program in the district, recently underwritten by voters, has greatly expanded access to electronic media for both teachers and elementary students. Kate reports that she has ample teaching materials and that district support in this area is complemented annually by the school's Parent Teacher Organization.

Mary Reardon. Mary is twenty-four years old and teaches fourth grade. Mary majored in the Humanities and took a minor in science. She takes pride in her ability to continually assess what students are doing during reading. She claims to use a variety of assessment techniques ranging from quiet observation of individuals and groups to the use of visuals as assessment tools. Mary is a firm believer in the value of oral reading. She states that oral reading provides her with the means to "listen to how they're [students] coming along. I think also, for the other kids to hear and to follow along and to focus on another student reading, they can either realize, Wow! this person . . . figures out big words this way, they can gain some confidence" (Interview, 7/9/98, p. 5).

Mary is a reader herself. She reports that she reads theoretical works, some practical books or articles and even some inspirational materials—all for the classroom. Mary even admitted to an occasional indulgence in Mary Higgins Clark best-seller novels. In the final analysis, she admits that she became an avid reader during her school years through the modeling of her educator parents and her teachers, but also that she became a true reader when her parents and her teachers stopped telling her she had to read. "When I wasn't told to do it anymore [and] when I moved out of the house . . . all

of a sudden when I heard about a book, and it sounded interesting, . . . I found myself reading . . . ” (p.7). She remembers reading in elementary years as a generally positive experience, but also remembers the teachers as “droning on in the background” (p.13) as she read ahead because she was bored. During these years Mary developed an affinity for tongue twisters and playing with words and the English language—a practice she continues today in her own reading classroom. Mary claims that when time permits she reads incessantly; when her focus needs to be elsewhere, reading falls by the wayside.

Interestingly, Mary reports that she spent a great of the time in her teacher education program doubting her decision to become an elementary teacher. Early in her course work she describes the materials, theories and ideas as not sticking with her very well because the end seemed so far off in the future. “By the time I got to the end, I realized, I better wake up, because I think I am going to make it. Then things started really sinking in . . . So the farther along I got the more [it] started to stick with me” (p. 65). She asked herself, “Am I tough enough to do this?” (p. 66)

Mary’s fourth grade classroom is located in an economically booming suburban neighborhood outside a small city. She notes the dramatic differences between her current teaching assignment and the parochial school she attended as a child. During her first year in the classroom, she had twenty-two children. “Six of them were ADD⁴ . . . Five were labeled special ed [sic]. There were maybe two others who were teachers’ kids, so they [were] raised to read . . . They understood the importance of school, and they were bright. [For other children] Mom worked first shift; Dad worked second shift and I don’t think school was important because Mom and Dad didn’t really go to school

⁴Attention Deficit Disorder

that much, either, you know, they made it through high school” (Interview, 7/9/98, pp. 17-18). Mary reported that she even contemplated calling in Child Protective Services regarding one child in her classroom. She believes that the children in her charge respond very well to positive support and feedback and that she strives every day to provide that positive atmosphere to counteract the perceived neutral or negative influences at home and in society.

Mary describes her school staff as one where the teachers “keep to themselves . . . ” (p. 18). The lack of communication and cooperation between the teachers is frustrating for Mary who recounts her own “surprise at how little they know about what’s going on with the other teachers” (p. 19). Recognizing that this need for more interaction may be a function of her own outgoing personality she expressed a need for more professional interaction and a personal need to understand why some teachers are out the door by 3:15p.m.. She also recognizes the fact that other teachers see the current level of interaction among teachers as appropriate and healthy.

The district where Mary teaches is very supportive of classroom teachers in providing the necessary materials and support staff (in special education and reading) to allow for flexible teaching. Additionally, there are ample opportunities, supported by the district central office, for professional development throughout the school year and the summer. In spite of this strong professional support, Mary finds “trying to meet the needs of every child really hard” (Interview, 7/9/98, p. 27). However, Mary believes that no single methodology or group of teaching strategies can provide the instructional support diverse learners need. She uses many approaches and claims that she does not hesitate to shape her instruction under what she called the whole language umbrella [defined as “emphasizing reading for meaning, the use of children’s literature instead of

basals and worksheets, and the teaching of skills in the context of reading” (Matson, 1996, p. 1)]. Mary also emphasizes teaching and learning the six language arts not only in reading class, but also within the context of the content subjects like math, science and social studies (Interview 7/9/98, pp. 39, 46, 53, 55), to integrate subject areas or to directly teach explicit skills. She describes herself as always fine tuning her reading instruction in light of the evolving needs and talents of her students (p. 68). Whenever possible, Mary strives to make lessons authentic by providing a concrete context within which her fourth graders can work on the lesson. She also works to avoid what she described as robotic, or rote experiences in textbooks and workbooks-- situations where learners unthinkingly complete fill-in-the-blank pages with memorized words or phrases.

Adam Thomas. Like Kate, Adam is a Language Arts Composite major. He is twenty-four years old and teaches fourth grade in one of the newest buildings in his suburban district.

Adam describes himself as an “off and on reader,” nonetheless he clearly enjoys reading. In his own words he states, “There’s [sic] times, especially in the summer, . . . when I get bogged down, I come home, and I’ll frequently read. But I really enjoy reading. Once I start reading, I usually polish off five or six novels in . . . a couple of weeks, but then I can go three months without reading anything at all” (Interview, 7/8/98, p. 5). Adam is especially drawn to the modern science fiction works of the Japanese author Murakami. As a child he was a binge reader and was really into reading series chapter books such as the *Encyclopedia Brown*, *Boy Detective* (Sobel, 1963+) titles. Even though reading was never a difficult task or chore for him in school, Adam usually read fiction (and almost never nonfiction) when he was told to read by parents or

teachers. His mother was a teacher aide and consistently modeled good reading habits for and with Adam, but he still describes himself as an average reader.

As stated earlier, Adam's elementary school is a new building in a growing suburban district; in fact, it is located in the same district as Mary's school. The building is well supplied with materials, has numerous instructional assistants and is a model of integrating technology into management and instruction. In many ways, the student body at Adam's school mirrors the school populations at schools where Kate and Mary teach. He claims that the general perception of other teachers in the district is that his building population is from the upper end of the socio-economic scale and that the teachers in the building are almost seen as "spoiled" because they have everything they need to teach. Adam avers that the reality is a far different matter. The student population isn't as culturally diverse. However, that fact is deceptive. There are students at most buildings in the district who come from very high and very low socio-economic classes with a large segment from the so-called middle class. In reality, the area surrounding this building consists of two very large trailer parks and large developments of homes costing more than \$500,000. The middle class population is relatively small. Another important factor in the district's perceptions of his school, according to Adam, is the activist nature of the teaching staff. In his words, the building's teachers are professionals who "really stand up and say, 'We want to do this, and we want to have it first here'" (p.17). The younger staff in this new building makes a difference.

Adam finds that the level of parental involvement in the teaching and learning in his school is inconsistent, at best. It is much like that of the parents in the schools where Kate and Mary teach. The parents who are well-to-do are heavily involved in the school—mothers and frequently fathers help out in the classrooms and participate in extra-

curricular activities as well. Adam's classroom draws heavily from the children who live in the trailer parks and whose parents either work full-time or simply do not care to be more involved in school and so, as a result, he had only five parents over the 1997-1998 school year who offered to assist him in the classroom.

It is important to note that in spite of Adam's aforementioned claim of being an on-again, off-again reader himself, that reading is the core of instruction in his classroom. "Reading is everything. Reading is writing. Reading, is you know, world studies. Reading is science. Reading is . . . your entire day" (p.23). While he claims the whole language philosophy as his guide, (defined as "emphasizing reading for meaning, the use of children's literature instead of basal and worksheets, and the teaching of skills in . . . context," Matson, 1996, p. 1) and additionally like Mary, Adam interprets this stance to mean that the six language arts are not only taught in reading class, but also with and through the content subjects, math, science and social studies), he also clearly strives for instructional flexibility, to adapt instruction to the needs of the learners in any given time and place in his classroom.

Assessment in reading instruction is a major issue for Adam. While he relies on daily observation of student reading, written feedback and conferences with students, Adam admits to heavy reliance on the Houghton-Mifflin literature-based reading series, *Invitations to Literacy* (1996). The testing which accompanies this series is the prime reading assessment tool Adam employs. He claims that as he gains more confidence in his own planning and teaching for reading that he will develop more of his own tools for assessing strengths and needs in learning to read.

Adam's district has long been the area leader in developing and using technology to enhance learning in the classroom. The district installed its own inter-building fiber

optic network over four years ago, established e-mail between rooms and buildings, and has consistently enhanced the number of computers available for student use each year. In a like manner, teachers in Adam's district have consistently been encouraged to participate in professional development opportunities for which they receive released time, and which they often attend accompanied by the paraprofessionals with whom they teach.

Kate, Mary and Adam--The Common Issues and Themes

When I began the interview process, I conjectured that common themes might emerge from the sessions which would provide a perspective for analyzing the classroom observations to take place later. After all, these novice teachers had taken similar course work during teacher education, they had completed their student teaching in the same geographic area, and they had been asked the same body of interview questions. While I was correct in that conjecture, I would caution the reader about interpreting that to mean that the three teacher cases responded in a robotic manner, echoing each other's exact words. Rather, in this section I want to point out areas where these three teachers share commonly held beliefs about some of the factors which affect a teacher's instructional actions in the reading classroom even though they are all unique individuals: the teacher as a lifelong learner, the need for instructional flexibility, the content and context of the basal and real-literature debate, and assessment in reading.

It is clear from data presented earlier in this chapter that the Hope College pre-service teachers have strong, positive views of their ability to teach reading in an elementary classroom. While they express the same confidence as the larger survey pool, Kate, Mary, and Adam are not without concerns about teaching. Like the vast majority of

novices discussed in the teacher education literature, they, too, give voice to real and perceived problems which range from methodology to classroom management. Later, in subsequent chapters I will present some evidence that supports Veenman's (1984) findings that novice teachers shift from the idealistic, progressive and child-centered view of teaching to a more teacher-centered, conservative approach to classroom reading instruction.

The following section describes four of areas of concern for Kate, Mary, and Adam which were threaded throughout their interview responses and which were used as initial yardsticks during classroom observations during reading instruction.

Teacher as Lifelong Learner

There is always the need to know more in order to manage instructional materials, pedagogy and learners well. The three teachers in this study are no exception. While they expressed their concerns in a variety of modes, Kate, Adam, and Mary believe that teaching requires elementary educators to be lifelong learners (see graph for Big Idea #9).

Mary's comments on the survey were:

Amen!! I am not a know-it-all. What makes my job so great is that, with continued learning, it is always getting better.

Adam's comments on the survey were:

A teacher needs to be reflective during and after lessons. A "good" teacher is able to see areas in which he or she can improve his or her instruction. You can't go into teaching having the perfect solution to every problem. However, with experience and reflection one can only be all the more prepared.

While Kate ranked herself at level four in all categories of Big Idea #9, she provided no additional commentary on the survey. She did, however respond to the idea of teacher as learner in her subsequent interview session. Kate affirms that she continually reads and studies during the summers “because I will teach in the fall” (Interview 7/7/98, p.73). This awareness drives her to learn more by collaborating with her peer teachers, by participating in professional development opportunities (e.g., reconfiguration of the district’s elementary social studies curriculum), by reading and preparing for the MEAP tests (and attending workshops on the economics section of the MEAP), by attending technology workshops sponsored by her district, by working with others in the district on lesson design and planning, as well as striving to better her understanding of the multiple intelligences and how they can play out in her classroom (Interview 7/7/98, pp. 73-75). Accompanied by professional reading, these activities and experiences have allowed Kate to develop what the two of us agreed to call “habits of mind” (p. 79) and which nurture her professional thinking.

Mary’s views are consistent Kate’s, but she states her case more directly and bluntly. “I don’t think I know enough. I probably [will] always need to know more about material, [I will need more] knowledge of motivation” (Interview 7/9/98), p.49). “. . . When people say you have to be a life-long learner . . . I totally buy into that” (p. 82). Later, she reported that when she finds herself frustrated with what to do about a given situation she goes to her mentor teacher [assigned by the district to all first year teachers] and yells, “Help!” (p. 49). Like Kate, Mary reads widely, especially materials about issues which address practical ideas and solutions to classroom work, and materials which are a mix of theory and practice (p.8). She offered the best-selling book on cooperative learning and managing classroom instruction, *Tribes: A New Way of*

Learning (Gibbs, 1994) as an example. Mary also flatly states that she finds refuge in her extensive files from her teacher education course work at Hope College; she revisits these often. She asserts that “TE helped a lot . . . TE shaped me” (p. 64, 69). Additionally, Mary believes that she is rejuvenated and is able to solve some teaching issues through opportunities to sit and think (p. 81). She also takes extensive advantage of her district’s so-called “option days.” These are professional development events which are planned by the district around a broad range of issues and topics (i.e., reading instruction, science, technology, etc.) and for which teachers are paid additional money to attend. Again these statements can be directly tied to the data in Big Idea #9, which demonstrates a clear commitment to the idea of teacher as a continual learner. Mary’s strong belief in and desire for more collaboration with her teaching peers in her building is still a powerful drive. In spite of the frustration she feels in her building, she wants more communication and more interaction. Such contact is integral to her belief in teachers as lifelong learners. (Interview 7/9/98, pp. 18, 82).

Like Kate and Mary, Adam believes that new teachers do not know everything they need to know. There is a strong need to go beyond what is brought to the first teaching position from the teacher education program (Interview 7/8/98, pp. 43-45). Interestingly, Adam declared that he never teaches phonics during reading instruction; rather he relies on others to do that (i.e., his building has several reading specialists and aides). Adam believes that these individuals are better able to address phonics instruction with the smaller number of readers who need it or can benefit from it. Adam can then focus on developing his skills in others areas needed by a greater number of learners in his classroom (p.26). “Phonics isn’t fun for anybody, I think . . . I don’t think it’s fun for the kids . . . And that’s part of the reason why I lean more toward whole language . . . ”

(p. 27). In a follow-up conversation held on December 18, 1998, Adam reconfirmed his belief that his aides or the reading teacher are better able to teach phonics. He does not feel personally competent enough to teach with phonics. While he had to “learn” phonics in his teacher education program, Adam states that he did not take it seriously and that he did not realize its value. He was intimidated by phonics when the subject was raised in his literacy courses. While Adam recognizes that phonics might be useful with some pupils, he seems to have chosen to opt out of the current debates about the efficacy of phonics in the reading classroom (see Big Idea #6) by passing responsibility for phonics to others in his school. Later, I will show that Adam does value and teach reading strategies, in spite of his aversion to phonics.

Adam does, however, believe that all teachers, not just beginning teachers, need to be reflective, need to collaborate with peers, and need to participate in activities which promote professional growth (Interview 7/8/98, p. 56-57). Adam places a high priority on the worth and value of reflection and states that he seeks out opportunities for reflection with both his teaching peers and his students. “I think [I am really good at] being reflective, and going back over and seeing what went well, what didn’t go well, you know, sitting down and trying to figure out . . . how could I have done it differently” (p. 34). Students are often asked to report on what worked and did not work for them in any given lesson. Adam claims to take their suggestions into account and he alters instruction when warranted.

The statements of these three teacher participants attest to the emphasis which the Hope College teacher education program does place on the need for teachers to be lifelong reflective practitioners (Schon, 1987, and Appendix B, starting on page 326). But the nuances of similarities and differences in how the three put their beliefs into

practice are important. Kate reads extensively and attends workshops to push her thinking. Mary yearns for continuous communication and interaction with her teaching peers, but has put an emphasis on professional reading which mixes the theoretical and the practical until such time as she is able to participate more openly with her teaching partners. Adam stresses the need for teachers to be reflective, to always be thinking about their own practice, about the reactions and feedback of learners, and about the input of professional support staff.

Like the larger body of survey respondents, these three view lifelong learning as an essential component of teaching and learning in reading (see graph, Big Idea #9).

The Need for and Purposes of Flexibility

According to Kate, Mary and Adam, the well-informed, well-read teachers of reading cannot be successful in the schools unless they are flexible in the classroom. While this flexibility comes, in part, from the extensive emphasis the three place on lifelong professional learning, it also arises from a clear, detailed knowledge of reading pedagogy, knowledge of learners, an openness to younger learners and their perspectives, an understanding of assessment/evaluation options, and to a deep understanding of the content and structure of materials available in the reading classroom (See graphs for Big Ideas #3, #4, #5, #7). The three teachers appear to be continually *checking the wind* in their classrooms by assessing the efficacy of texts, methodology, and groupings on a daily basis.

For example, Kate uses peer tutoring as one instructional tool to give flexibility and variety to her lessons. She took her cue in this area from her students who struggle with English. She noticed the frustrations experienced by these students and assigned

them peer tutors who speak both English and Spanish so that the bilingual students could essentially serve as a teacher aide. Kate reports, "It worked well this year I had some great leaders--some great kids who could do that. So, that too, was adapted according to [the needs] of students" (Interview 7/7/98, p. 3).

When Mary describes her decisions about student groups during reading instruction, she insists that when determining groups structures she takes her cue from her pupils. "I guess that would depend on the kids If they--as little people, if they relate well to each other, and can help each other and they're positive, then I would like them to work in groups of four" (Interview 7/9/98, pp. 3-4). Mary describes other grouping decisions throughout her interview.

Adam recalled that reading was often boring for him when he was in elementary school because of the ways he and his classmates were grouped for reading. "We had specific groups, and specific books . . . [They were] just plain book[s], there were no pictures. I hated going to reading groups. I hated reading. I hated sitting around the little table, and going around, you know" (Interview, 7/8/98, p. 11). As a consequence, Adam has opted to build choice into his reading program. He sees choice as a motivator. Choice is a motivator for Adam, but so is the social aspect of discussing a book which you have personally selected with someone else (pp. 12-13).

Mary believes that flexibility in the classroom is the prime means for avoiding boredom. She refers to her own penchant in elementary school for reading ahead because the teachers droned on in front of the room: "I understand boredom and I don't want that to happen with the kids" (Interview, 7/9/98, p. 47). Learners require multiple opportunities for what she calls "doing;" they need flexible grouping which changes often within a fun, creative classroom atmosphere (pp.15, 16, 33). Mary declares that she is

always looking for hooks--ways to help kids connect with the subject matter. Children need room to react to lessons and teachers need to be open to these reactions if trust is to shape the learning in that classroom (pp. 48, 78). Once, during a particularly frustrating lesson on dialogue, Mary spontaneously integrated some gourds on her desk into the lesson. She picked one up, used it as a telephone, spoke her lines of dialogue, and then tossed the gourd to a student who responded with additional dialogue. This activity led to concrete written work on the spoken dialogue (p. 33). Finally, Mary believes that the ways in which she organizes instruction and opportunities for learning affect her own ability and that of her students to be flexible. She describes in great detail her early organization of student groups into jigsaw groups where students became so-called experts. Her pupils were literally incapable of functioning under this label because they did not yet view themselves as experts. "It's scary to be called an expert. I won't do that again" (p. 56). She has since adapted the ways in which she uses grouping and roles within groups.

Both Kate and Adam stress the importance of student choice in building and maintaining a flexible teaching and learning atmosphere in their classrooms. Kate believes that she and the children can make good choices and be flexible if they have the tools (i.e., reading strategies like Reciprocal Questioning/Teaching (Cooper, 1997, pp. 386, 401; Tompkins, 1998, p. 88; Vacca, 1995, pp. 441-444), QAR (Vacca, 1995, pp. 220-222), and K-W-L (Cooper, 1997, pp. 112-116; Tompkins, 1998, p. 53; Vacca, 1995, pp. 210-214) in place which support decision making. Students have to be successful in school if they are to learn; for that to happen teachers need to be willing to adapt and change instruction according to learner needs and circumstances. Adam asserts that he can be flexible in his teaching if he is fully aware of what constitutes the prior knowledge

of his students in any given situation. He believes that choice is a motivator for learners and that his obligation to differentiate instruction can be made easier through such awareness. While he promotes opportunities for experiencing variety, repetition and practice, he also believes that personal knowledge of reading strategies like reciprocal teaching can prepare students for their own jobs as learners.

Kate, Mary and Adam all believe that there is no single methodology for teaching young children to read which works in all circumstances for all children. Flexibility is key. Flexibility is only possible if the teacher is well-informed and ready to model these behaviors. In this dimension, I am able to extrapolate from survey and interview comments that these three teachers agree with their student teaching cohorts that a strong teacher repertoire (see Big Idea #4) and a clear understanding of all of the components of reading as a content discipline (see Big Idea #7) are essential for flexible, adaptive teaching which places the child at the center of teaching and learning.

Balancing Reading Instruction--Contexts for Learning and the Basal/Real Literature Debate

The literature about reading instruction currently stresses the issue of balance in the reading classroom--balance in materials, methodology, assessment and so on. (e.g., see Reutzel and Cooter, 1999; Cooper, 1997, among many). While the teacher participants in this study often expressed strong preferences for particular materials and/or methodologies (i.e., Kate and Mary stress phonics taught in context of reading and writing), or a strong distaste for the same (Adam declared that he never teaches phonics), there is considerable evidence in the initial interviews which suggest all three are striving for a balanced reading classroom.

In describing her determination to establish balanced reading instruction in her classroom, Kate selects a specific example.

If we just teach phonics—that doesn’t stick with the students. I mean you have to [stress] both phonics and grammar as it comes up. I do not have grammar lessons every day, which some teachers do, in fifth grade in the other schools I called. I bring it up whenever it’s there. I bring up the grammar aspect, and then we’ll have some exercises in grammar only if it comes from the literature first. (Interview 7/7/98, pp. 28-29)

Mary reports that her search for balance is affected greatly by the range of the materials available to her. She describes a small anteroom within her classroom which has shelving loaded with twenty-five copies of numerous trade book titles for use in class. She also has a new basal literature anthology (Houghton-Mifflin, 1996) and an older basal if she wants to use it. Later she describes how these are used:

We had the Houghton-Mifflin reading in the morning, and that varied between reading a story, when the story was done, we did the skills. But that was an hour in the morning, When they came in from recess, from the noon recess, there was about a 45 minute or an half an hour writing period. And, then in the afternoon, that’s when we got into . . . the books, like the novels we had in class” (Interview, 7/9/98, p. 31).

In his search for balance, Adam stresses the need for teachers to adapt reading instruction to the needs of students. In several sections of the interview session, Adam describes his use of informational books and narratives, his use of varied strategies (e.g., QAR and Reciprocal Teaching) and an emphasis on choice for readers. Balance (which Adam seems to equate with variety) is grappled with below:

Anthologies have got, you know, shorter stories, and a lot of stories that they've seen before and have at home, maybe, or you know, there's maybe a movie out, but I also think it is important for them to be able to hold the book in their hand when it's not a big anthology packed full of stories, because when they go home they don't have an anthology sitting around they are going to read. I'd like to have a lot more, you know, where they pick books, you know, that are in the classroom and kind of starting a library in the back where I can have things where I have grouped them in levels, and you know, kids can sort of have free choice. (Interview 7/8/98, p. 49)

Kate believes that all children need frequent opportunities for reading, writing, speaking and listening and that this should be done in a setting where the teaching of phonics and a whole language approach to language development are mutually emphasized. She stresses that balance can be achieved only with a clear understanding of learner abilities, what skills need to be taught in any given context (i.e., her school emphasizes the MEAP in shaping some classroom instruction) and district grade level requirements for what learners need to know and be able to do. Once this information is available, it should be constantly altered based on new feedback about learners. Kate does not believe in a single approach to teaching reading in her classroom, in spite of the fact that as a child she was in a classroom which focused solely on phonics.

Mary believes that skills are important and stresses that as a teacher, "I am a mix" (Interview, 7/9/98, p. 34). Like Kate, she uses a multidimensional approach in the reading classroom and believes that it is the task of teacher education programs to promote a balanced approach to reading instruction (pp. 57, 86). When possible, Mary [as does Kate] prefers to help her children learn specific skills, phonics rules and grammar rules within the context of their own reading and writing, not through the use of

commercial workbooks (p. 70ff).

Adam goes further than Mary and Kate and declares that “reading is everything” (Interview, 7/ 8/98, p. 23); it is more than whole language. In reading, meaning is paramount. Children can be led to meaning if instruction is differentiated, and if there is variety, repetition and review of that learning. It should be noted that all three teachers use chapter books, novels, poetry and short stories, as well as basal readers and anthologies in their reading instruction. In spite of their strong desires to use only literature published in trade books in reading instruction, all three admit that the scripted teacher’s manuals available from the Scholastic Publishing and Houghton-Mifflin Publishers in their respective districts have been a comfort to them as they strive to balance all of the demands on their time and energy during the first year of teaching.

All three teacher participants in this study state a preference for real literature (i.e., trade books or chapter books) for formal reading instruction. All three school buildings have a commercial reading series, as well as classroom sets of novels and chapter books in stock for the teachers to use. Kate points out that her district has recently purchased a reading series published by Scholastic, Inc. (*Literacy Place, 1996*). She is unable to use it. While the series is literature-based, it is still too difficult for her fifth graders to read. Classrooms in her district do not have a range of the Scholastic materials to accommodate readers who are below or above grade, and, in any case, she believes the students prefer chapter books. Kate opts for real literature because her children are able to respond to it in authentic ways and it allows them to make connections to content subjects (i.e., her choice of historical narrative on Lewis and Clark and its natural connection with the social studies) (Interview, 7/7/98, p.56).

Interestingly, Mary feels guilty about not using the basal series available to her

students. While a distinct and clear response to questions about this guilt was not forthcoming, Mary basically doesn't believe that she can simply push the Houghton-Mifflin series aside and concentrate solely on authentic literature for reading instruction. As a result, Mary uses the basal readers in morning reading instruction to teach skills. She claims to use the series workbooks out of guilt and swears she will scrap those once she gets tenure (Interview 7/9/98, p. 70). During reading instruction sessions later in the day, Mary switches to novels for independent reading time where she emphasizes what she calls a whole language approach. While she readily admits that a literature-based approach requires more preparation because nothing is scripted, it is still her preference. She views her reliance on the scripted teacher's manual during her first year of teaching negatively and hopes to have more novels "ready" for her students to use during her second year (pp. 78-80).

Adam holds nothing back when he reacts to the issues in the basal vs. real literature debate. He is clearly pro literature. He views basals as too restrictive and says that his building principal does not intervene in his instructional choices as long as the MEAP skills are taught and student success is evident on the MEAP (Interview, 7/8/98, p. 48). Like Mary, Adam reports using the basal frequently during his first year of teaching—it was pre-packaged and saved him a tremendous amount of planning. During 1998-1999, he plans to use the basal series less and less, and novels more and more. According to Adam, teaching skills, grammar rules and the mysteries of English syntax make the most sense in a real, authentic context, one which is relevant to his learners. Adam believes this context to be real literature and a student's own writing.

For Adam, this relevance determines the fit between books and the kids who read them (p. 59). While tests can show mastery in reading, he believes that the writing which

children produce in reaction to their reading can be more informative about what is learned (p. 25). Mundane matters like spelling, according to Adam and Mary, should grow out of the reading and writing children do. The district in which Adam and Mary teach has grade level spelling lists. Adam attends to this list and goes well beyond it; Mary is not sure that it exists and refuses to inquire further about it, fearful that it will limit her teaching (Interview 7/9/98, p. 61). The situatedness of learning, Mary believes, has everything to do with “who the children are” (p. 36), their prior knowledge, and their need for meaning. Kate agrees, and states, for example, that she never prepares formal phonics and grammar lessons. Such lessons arise out of experiences of the children in her fifth grade. “I bring it up whenever it is there . . . I bring up the grammar aspect, and then we’ll have some exercises in grammar, only if it comes from the literature first” (pp. 28-29). She further states that as she teaches, she takes written and mental notes and addresses those issues when appropriate (p. 67).

In summary it is appropriate to state that Kate, Mary, and Adam are well aware of the debate raging within the profession about the use of basal readers and trade books in reading instruction. They appreciate the convenience of the commercial basal series in their buildings. They also fret about reaching all students with reading materials which speak to readers whose interests, prior knowledge and previous experiences vary widely as do theirs. What is not so clear is how their views on the debate are actually played out in the classroom. Naturally, these factors will be a primary focus of the next chapters. All three teacher participants believe that the reading lessons they plan for students should be contextualized and situated in the real work and worlds in which these children exist. All three stress meaning as the paramount goal of reading (and the remaining five language arts: writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and graphically representing) and

believe that meaning only occurs when it is grounded in the authentic experiences of children.

Assessment of Reading

When political foes like President Bill Clinton and Governor John Engler of Michigan join forces to promote a government imposed assessment in reading, it should not be a surprise that assessment in reading becomes a national issue. As demonstrated through the responses of the survey group in the graph for Big Idea #5, assessment is also an important dimension for student teachers who were surveyed. Assessment issues in reading are also an area of major concern for Kate, Mary and Adam. While all three individuals addressed on-going informal and formal assessment used in their classrooms, much of their commentary about assessment centered around the attention given to the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) in their respective districts. All three made it clear that the MEAP essentially determines their classroom curriculum and routine in the weeks prior to the January-February administration of the MEAP. They are obligated by their districts to focus on preparing students for successful completion of the various MEAP subtests. In a very real sense the MEAP becomes a state mandated curriculum for a portion of the academic year. All three teachers provide extensive instruction and practice for students in reading strategies like reciprocal teaching, QAR (Question-Answer Relationships), and summarizing. Adam puts this emphasis in a negative light: "I see the MEAP as something where reading strategies have really been pushed, especially in my district. [So children are] able to do a lot of those important things which are important to reading, but I think . . . a lot of the time the teachers are . . . focusing on . . . reading . . . but not reading for enjoyment, but reading to get the

questions that are going to be on the test” (Interview, 7/8/98, p. 35). All three are required to periodically administer running records (see Mariotti & Homan, 1997) to monitor student progress in oral reading. While Kate does this infrequently, Mary claims to do what her district requires; Adam claims that “I did not do running records at the beginning of the year” (Interview 7/8/98, p. 5). Outside of the requirements for the MEAP and the running records there are similarities and differences in the ways these three teachers view the role(s) of assessment in reading instruction.

Kate stresses the need to understand the prior knowledge her fifth graders bring to any reading event. This area of concern, of course, is akin to the categories embedded in the graphic display for Big Idea #2, student development. All survey respondents, as well as the three teacher cases, recognize the strong need for teacher awareness and knowledge about the stores of learning and the learning styles children bring to the act of reading.

Kate states that her emphasis is to assess what children have learned and comprehended through the writing they produce, through the questions they ask, and through their application and transfer what they have learned (Interview, 7/7/98, pp. 47, 49, 50, 58). Kate believes that she is obligated to continually monitor what students are doing in order to have a sound sense of what they are truly learning when they read. Thus she carefully “eavesdrops” on small group sessions, conducts discussion with individuals and small groups as circumstances warrant. This teacher monitoring is her foremost assessment tool. Because Kate is doing this monitoring all day, every day, she believes she is able to use her constantly evolving teacher knowledge of what her students know and don’t know as an assessment tool. She uses it to shape and configure reading instruction in her classroom (p. 72).

Mary is a strong believer in the need to teach specific strategies and skills to

children in the contexts in which they arise during instruction and learning. She describes her flexible approach to assessment in this way: "I think some kids are born with this ability to learn, and everything in their brain is in place, and everything logically makes sense when they learn. And some kids aren't born with that, and it needs to be organized in there I think that some of these strategies help to organize their brain" (Interview, 7/9/98, p. 53). As a result, Mary is constantly monitoring individuals and groups as they work; she administers pretests when necessary and provides direct instruction to students in specific reading strategies to help her assess what children know and can do (i.e., Directed Reading--Thinking Activity, summarizing, reciprocal teaching, KWL [Know, Want to Know, Learned], Venn Diagrams, and prediction, pp. 37-38). Mary models these strategies, her thinking about specific reading events and carefully observes whether her modeling is absorbed and practiced by her fourth graders. Her emphasis in reading instruction is on comprehension and she is equally willing to assess student learning through formal oral questioning, graphic displays of what has been learned, or written responses to narratives and nonfiction works.

Adam expects his students to prove mastery of reading lessons in their own writing. Writing helps these fourth graders express meaning and he continually prods them to refine and articulate what they know through writing, not only summaries, but in other written modes as well [stories, poems, plays, etc] (Interview, 7/8/98, p. 25). Adam worries that assessment in his reading classroom is often hindered by his need to know languages other than English in order to clearly communicate with all of his students. Like Kate and Mary, Adam is a careful observer who is always monitoring student performance in a plethora of groupings and settings. He prides himself on his ability to truly listen to his students (p. 35) and finds that doing so carefully allows him to gather

information on prior knowledge before reading instruction begins and then makes adapting his plans a relatively simple matter. Assessment and instructional planning, he claims, is largely a matter of “reading the kids” (p. 54). It is important to assess, then plan, not to plan and then attempt to force the student into that predetermined instructional mold.

As far as assessment is concerned, all three teachers give a prominent role to careful observation of readers and careful listening to the interplay of their comments and reactions to reading as individuals and group members. While the teachers prefer continuous, on-going assessment in the context of actual reading events, they each acknowledge the importance of the MEAP tests to their districts. Kate, Mary, and Adam confess that the MEAP drives a major portion of their assessment and evaluation agendas and determines how a major portion of reading instructional time is used.

Summary

Thus this quartet of themes (i.e., teacher as lifelong learner, the need for instructional flexibility, the content and context of the basal and real-literature debate, and assessment in reading) which emerges from the interviews with Kate, Mary, and Adam replicates important issues and data extrapolated from the survey responses of the Hope College student teacher cohorts. We can see from the preceding discussion of the survey and interviews responses that Kate, Mary, and Adam are very much like beginning teachers regarding their concerns and areas of confidence. Together, these individuals and the survey group mirror the concerns which come to light in the studies of beginning teachers by Fuller (1969), Veenman (1984), Featherstone (1992), and Kagan (1992), (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, Moon, 1998).

Mary, Kate, and Adam, like the student teachers in Frances Fuller's "Concerns of Teachers" (1969), share a common body of concerns and worries about being effective in the classroom. They, too, fret and worry about how successful they will be as teachers. During 1984, Simon Veenman published "Perceived Problems of Beginning Teachers" in which he reviewed the results of numerous studies of beginning teachers conducted primarily during the 1960s and 1970s in Europe, Australia and the United States. Not surprisingly, his commentary highlighted issues similar to those raised by Fuller in 1969. Veenman reported that beginning teachers were most concerned with classroom discipline, motivation of students, dealing with individual differences among students, and assessing student's work and relations with parents (pp. 153, 156). In a like manner, Veenman's commentary points out that

many studies provide evidence that students [i.e., pre-service teachers] become increasingly idealistic, progressive, or liberal in their attitudes toward education during their preservice training and then shift to opposing and more traditional, conservative, or custodial views as they move into student teaching and the first years of teaching. (p. 145)

Later, in chapter four, I will discuss the congruence of the statements made in the interviews by Kate, Mary, and Adam with their actual classroom practice in reading instruction.

Dona M. Kagan (1992), like Fuller (1969) and Veenman (1984) also writes about the patterns of issues and concerns raised by a broad range of studies which examined preservice and beginning teachers and the teacher education programs which prepare them for the profession. On the one hand, Kagan states, "Classroom teaching appears to be a peculiar form of self-expression in which the artist, the subject, and the medium are

one. Whether any academic program of study can prepare someone to practice it is perhaps a question no one dares ask" (p. 164). On the other hand, she cites a series of studies which confirm that preservice teachers are concerned about issues similar to those cited by Fuller (1969) and Veenman (1984). Kagan, however, points out the importance of personal biography (p. 141) in assisting these novices in moving forward. "Novices who entered with self-images more compatible with the realities of the classroom were able to adjust and learn from problems" (p. 141). Kagan also describes the willingness of teachers to "get involved" as a dimension with which to gauge their professional growth. Her report "suggested that a gauge of professional growth among novices may be a multidimensional knowledge of pupils and a willingness to see oneself (as teacher) intimately connected to pupil's problems" (p. 143). Initial feedback from the surveys and from the three teachers who were interviewed in-depth lead me to assert that the Hope College teacher education graduates believe they are prepared to be the novice teachers Kagan has described above.

This ability to adjust teacher behaviors and to solve problems is akin to the need for flexibility expressed by Kate, Mary, and Adam during their interviews. While Kagan's study relies less on issues raised by preservice and novice teachers and focuses more to those components of a teacher education program which seem to promote positive growth in teachers just entering the profession, her findings complement those of Fuller and Veenman. The more preservice teachers are exposed to authentic classrooms, the more procedural knowledge they possess about the day-to-day operation of a classroom and about instruction, and the more they see themselves as [lifelong] learners, the more they are able to "negotiate many social and political--as well as pedagogical--dilemmas"

(Kagan, p. 150), the more likely they are to be successful in their student teaching and their first years of teaching.

It is also important to note the emphasis which Kate, Mary and Adam all place on their students throughout the survey and interview commentary. Their worries about selecting the proper materials, meeting the needs of all students, motivation, and teaching skills while providing for choice are all indicative of a student centered professional. Pigge and Marso (1989), cited in Kagan (1992), put it this way: “The novices became less concerned about themselves and more aware of classroom variables as they progress through the program” [teacher education and student teaching](p. 140). Kate, Mary, and Adam have all stated throughout the surveys and the interviews that they view a flexible approach to such classroom variables to be an essential component of success in teaching reading. In chapter four, I will assist the reader in determining whether and how Hope College teacher education graduates actually fulfill the promise of the assertion made by Pigge and Marso.

Finally, the impact of personal biography is also stressed in Featherstone’s (1992) National Center for Research on Teacher Learning (NCRTL) Special Report, Learning from the First Years of Teaching: The Journey In, The Journey Out. Featherstone correctly points out the efficacy of Dewey’s claim that we learn not so much from having an experience (i.e., teaching) as we do from reflecting on that experience (p. 16). All three teachers discussed their memories of learning to read, both in and out of school, and all three claim to be influenced by those memories in their current decision making about reading instruction. Kate and Mary both stressed the importance of reflection which is called for not only in classroom instructional planning and assessment, but also in their collaborative work with grade level teaching peers and district level committee work.

Adam puts it succinctly when he describes reflection as a necessary skill required of all teachers, "Oh, I think being reflective, and going back over and seeing what went well, and what didn't go well" (Interview 7/8/98, p. 34).

While the confidence expressed by the Hope College teacher education graduates is high and could belie important changes in classroom practice, they are similar to student teachers and beginning teachers the world over--they do have significant concerns about teaching. Pajares (in Wideen, et al, 1998) suggests "that beliefs about teaching are well established by the time a student reaches college, that changes in belief during adulthood are quite uncommon, and that when changes do take place, they occur as a result of what he termed a conversion from one authority to another through a gestalt shift" (p. 142). Until we examine the congruence between the proclamations of these three beginning teachers and their instructional practice in reading, it will not be possible to determine whether they have made such a shift, and whether they are, in fact, better prepared and more sophisticated in their knowledge about what it means to teach reading. Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (cited in Wideen, et al, 1989) reported "that beginning teachers entered their program with the view that teaching was simple and transmissive" (p. 143). Further consideration of the actual classroom practice planned by Kate, Mary and Adam can help clarify whether they actually have replaced this transmissive lens on teaching with a more articulate and sophisticated one.

In any case, at this point, Kate, Mary, and Adam seem to be typical beginning teachers. While striving to help their pupils build habits of mind and positive attitudes about the value of reading, they struggle with the myriad demands upon their time, their minds, their physical and their mental resources used in designing and maintaining quality reading instruction.

In the next three chapters, I will examine how and to what extent three teachers are faring as they strive to put their knowledge, beliefs and dispositions about reading instruction into regular, daily practice in the first years of teaching. I will describe their planning and intentions for specific reading lessons and their actions in delivering those same lessons to students. In chapters four, five, and six I will weave in limited discussions of the similarities and differences between the three teachers, but I will include a systematic comparing and contrasting of the three teacher cases in chapter seven. In chapters four, five, and six, I will attempt to clarify how each teacher addresses the following subsidiary issues which are naturally imbedded in any discussion about instructional decision making. How and to what extent do the three teachers use particular referents for instructional decision making (i.e., research and theory, prior experience)? How and to what extent do the three teachers understand and use the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of reading in planning and conducting reading instruction? How and to what extent do the three teachers use classroom feedback to structure their reading programs? How and to what extent do the three teachers understand and use a range of teaching and instructional strategies to assure learning by all pupils?

I will describe my pre-observation meetings with Kate, Mary, and Adam. I will characterize in detail the literature-based reading instruction which was planned for the days during which I observed (i.e., content, pedagogy, groupings, and strategies to be used). Then, I will characterize the precise nature of the literature-based reading instruction which actually occurred in each classroom. In the end, in chapter seven, I will assist the reader in understanding how and to what extent the three teachers acted upon the knowledge and expertise they claimed during their interviews and pre-observation

discussions about reading instruction.

Chapter Four

Kate Spear

In this chapter I will argue that Kate Spear, like the other two novice teachers in this study, is a beginning teacher whose daily practice and vision frequently wrestle for control of her thinking and action about reading instruction. However, I will show that Kate is a “well-started novice” teacher who is actively and intentionally striving to incorporate the pedagogical content knowledge she learned during teacher education into the daily reading instruction she plans for her fifth graders. I will show that in the context of a structured approach to guide her pupils during reading (in the form of reading guides or packets designed for each novel), Kate has intentionally made room for reader choice, and that she does not limit grouping decisions to ability grouping. In addition, Kate integrates teaching and learning in reading and the language arts with content subjects, consistently uses feedback from readers to make instructional decisions, and consistently promotes verbal interactions and discussions between pupils and between pupils and herself in both large and small group settings.

In a very real sense, Kate has adopted what Bernstein (1975) called a weak frame. “Frame refers to the degree of control teacher and pupil possess over the selection, organization, pacing and timing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship Where framing is strong, there is a sharp boundary; where framing is weak, a blurred boundary, between what may and may not be transmitted (pp. 88-89). Frame then constitutes the instructional structure the teacher chooses for the classroom and the curricula. The concept of this frame will be a major consideration in my examination of Kate, and of the two remaining teacher cases, Mary and Adam.

A teacher who selects a strong or tightly controlled instructional frame makes most, if not all, educational decisions in the classroom. When teachers adopt a weak or looser frame students have choices about materials, projects and topics and they become an integral part of the instructional decision making process which takes into account their abilities, interests, preferences, schema , and preferred learning styles. In a weak, or loose, frame, students do not merely react to teacher directions and predetermined teacher plans. Rather, they actively affect the unfolding of the lesson and the curriculum by the choices they make and the feedback they provide to the teacher and each other. Not surprisingly, novice teachers find the looser instructional frame more of a challenge to implement. When kids exercise lots of control teachers are frequently less able to determine where the lesson is going at any given point during instruction.

Kate's instructional decision making is child centered in that her fifth graders exercise a considerable degree of influence over the "selection, organization, pacing and timing transmitted and received in the[ir] pedagogical relationship" (p. 89). In short, although she is a beginning reading teacher, one who is very much involved in the planning and design of instruction, Kate is also actively searching for ways to use her developing pedagogical content knowledge about reading and about children as learners to improve pupil thinking and learning about texts and her own practice.

Kate's Classroom

Physically, Kate's classroom is typical of the layout in school buildings constructed in the 1950s and 1960s. Her square classroom opens into a long straight hallway and is halfway between two exits to the playground. Two windows occupy the south wall (other windows were filled-in during the energy crisis of the 1970s) and a

large chalkboard is in the front of the room. Several bookshelves and a long work counter with a sink and storage underneath occupy the north wall. The room is tightly packed with student-sized tables and chairs; there are no student desks in the room. All of the children sit in chairs at the tables for all instruction, not just reading. Kate has numbered the tables to coincide with teams of children working together on any given lesson (i.e., group six sits at table six, and so on). During reading the children are arranged throughout the classroom at these six groups of tables. Typically, when reading groups meet *en masse*, Kate monitors one group, Brad Weston [Kate's teacher education intern] another, and a regular district teacher aide another. Three remaining groups are expected to manage on their own. On any given day, there is usually one public, whole group sharing session, followed by all students sharing within the smaller reading groups.

Posters all around this room seem to remind and support kids about being independent learners: capitalization rules (which Kate emphasized before excusing her pupils to lunch on the first day of my observations), basic math information, QAR prompts (right there, think and search, on your own, author and you), suggestions about what to do when you finish early (sponge activities), spelling suggestions, books read by students in the class, samples of student work, multiple intelligences (labeled as the different kinds of "smart"), and suggestions to guide summarizing, and getting at the facts when reading.

Like other teachers in her building, Kate also supplies a planner booklet to be used by each pupil to organize and outline the work each child needs to attend to on a daily and weekly basis (See Appendix D for a sample planner). This planner is meant to serve as a metacognitive structure to help pupils manage the time needed to complete assignments and to assist them in becoming more responsible for their own learning.

Kate regards the planner as an instructional management tool; it serves as a means for alternating the reading instruction time for individual learners and small groups of learners. Kate supplies the times she will work with the reading groups. Then children have to organize the time they will spend on math, spelling, writing, science and social studies. On any given day, Kate's pupils have a varied list of activities and subjects which need to be covered before heading for lunch at noon. Most often Kate allows individuals and groups to determine the order in which they will tackle these tasks and subjects. Her focus here is on independence, time management and attending to the getting the job well done in the following areas: reading, writing, spelling practice, math review, geography and map skills and math challenge. Each Monday, pupils are given a fresh "Student Planner" booklet to guide their decision making in these areas. By making choice a prominent factor in her planning decisions, Kate nurtures independence and pupil decision-making when they learn to read, and when they use reading to learn across the curriculum.

On any given day, it is not unusual to find Kate working with a reading group at tables, while other children in the room independently move on to other assignments ranging from map skills to math and spelling as listed in their planner booklets or posted on the board. Kate has designed this pattern for classroom activity and is comfortable with how it plays out. She trusts her students to remain focused and working.

Kate also recognizes the value and the need for physical activity in promoting learning. She and her fifth graders decide jointly when a morning outdoor recess is needed. This factor is a recent innovation in her school building. Often these breaks are not the full fifteen or twenty minutes taken regularly by the lower grades, but they demonstrate the efforts being made school wide which include the students in the

decision making processes. During my observations days, a short mid-morning outdoor break was always included. Perhaps surprisingly, the children often used the time outdoors to talk about their books rather than to run and play (10/6/98, Personal Observation, Field Notes, p. 9).

Kate Spear--The Pre-Observation Visit and Kate's Plans

This section is based on data collected about Kate's teaching and her classroom and instructional organization during my pre-observation visit. It also reflects my overall knowledge of Kate's notions of curriculum and instruction, and her thinking about learners which emerged over the weeks of our conversations together. This contextual information describes her general practices in teaching reading and her specific plans for the first day of observation.

On a typical day of reading instruction, Kate conducts what she calls a group sharing. This sharing time is actually a review of what has been accomplished in the lesson for each title up to that point. She often uses some of this time to read a book to the entire class while the children follow along. When the entire class is reading a single title, then reading groups are of mixed abilities. If the class is reading several different titles as they were during my observations, then Kate groups them by ability. She regularly offers students four book choices before assigning them to groups and promises each child her first or second choice. Choice played a significant role in Kate's own desire to read. "I liked summer reading when I could choose and read what I wanted to . . . [so if I decide which book we do in class] for two or three weeks, the next two or three weeks it's going to be their choice" (Interview, 7/7/98, pp. 10, 12). In this way, Kate said, she emphasizes metacognitive thinking and exhorts readers to choose books based

on what each child knows about her own interests, abilities, and skills. Frequently, Kate has had to steer individual children away from titles which are too difficult. She claims she is never iron-handed about this; rather, she stresses working at a level where readers can be successful. In this way, Kate is bringing into play what Handal and Lauvaas (1983 in Smith, 1999) have labeled the “personal experience” component of a teacher’s “Practical Theory” (p. 22).

Personal experiences are related to the person’s previous encounters with school . . . [and] the practical knowledge the student learns during his or her education, and values related to our judgment of what is ‘good and bad’ in education and in general A teacher’s Practical Theory is expressed in a different way in different situations, and it is part of the teacher’s tacit knowledge used in teaching. (pp. 22-23)

Kate prefers to divide her fifth graders into four, five, or six continuously changing reading groups. Sometimes pupils choose a group based on interest; other times she assigns them to a specific group based on her assessment of their abilities. She claims this is to “counteract having to do more with less” (Pre-Observation Meeting, 10/2/98, p.1). By this Kate means that she uses the reading time to integrate lessons on social studies with the reading. Her intention in these lessons is to facilitate literacy learning in general, while also expanding student learning in a content subject (i.e., social studies).

During our interview, it became clear that this integration is colored by Kate’s extensive knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of her students as readers. An example she offered in our initial interview is this: “I had some great leaders [in my class last year], some great kids. So [I] adapted lessons according to the students. My

basic [lesson] would include comprehension questions across Bloom's Taxonomy" (7/7/98, p. 3). Above all, Kate wants each reader to comprehend text, to actively read and to actively think about what he reads. Finally, Kate is personally interested in the social studies in general and especially in the Lewis and Clark expeditions; so her personal preferences come into play when she works to coordinate reading instruction and content subject instruction.

Kate's normal practice is to prepare a series of lesson guides for students to use during reading instruction (See Appendix D for examples). The following quote demonstrates Kate's intent to divide lessons into manageable chunks which serve as metacognitive models for her pupils and to help build structures in the classroom which support student learning and success. In our initial interview, she explained how these guides were initially developed.

Okay, first of all I . . . divide the book up into lessons . . . depending on the length of the book, how much I think the students could handle each day . . . I would divide it into, let's say ten lessons. That book [about Sacajawea] divides very well into ten lessons, so it would be ten days, which would span two, and possibly three weeks, because of the way you plan things, but different things come up, and so forth, so we found if I have ten lessons, I usually would spread them into two and a half to three weeks There would be questions. But I also would adapt those [questions] to the learning center students. I would create lessons, I would say, probably five to eight questions, again, depending on the length of the reading assigned for that day for the class with an adaptation for the learning center students. For the ESL kids—what I call the ones who struggle with English, I would pair them up with—I am fortunate to have a student who spoke very well in both English and Spanish in my

classroom. So, I always paired up my students who struggled with English with somebody. (7/7/98, pp. 2-3)

Kate draws from her pedagogical content knowledge base to make decisions. One evidence of this is that she matches English speaking and non-English speaking students in peer tutoring dyads. Another is along the same lines. She differentiates reading instruction for readers in her classroom, from the special education students to the students who are able to use more challenging material. Her personal knowledge of the students is extensive and allows her to be sensitive to individual learning styles and needs. The lesson guides which Kate regularly designs are tools for accommodating and managing a wide range of readers. It is in Kate's daily practice where the seemingly structured guides are altered to meet the needs of individuals and reading groups.

For the time during which I observed, Kate constructed a series of five lessons for four titles. The books were Racing the Sun by Paul Pitts (1988), Morning Girl by Michael Dorris (1992), Pocahontas and the Strangers by Clyde Bulla (1987), and Squanto, Friend of the Pilgrims by Clyde Bulla (1982). She intentionally designed this set of lessons as a social studies unit on Native Americans which was fully integrated with reading instruction. One intent was to "emphasize reading for reading sake--both oral and silent" (Pre-Observation Meeting 10/2/98, p. 1). My observations were scheduled during lessons four and five. While her students read these four titles, Kate hoped that they would absorb a variety of information about the culture of Native Americans. Clearly, in these instances Kate was adhering to her goal, expressed in our initial interview, of designing lessons which serve multiple purposes and for providing purposeful reading experiences at the independent and instructional levels of comprehension. Kate also envisioned these sessions as occasions to integrate teaching

and learning in reading and the language arts with the content subjects. Note that although Kate is a beginning teacher, she is actively reflecting on what lesson configurations will provide optimal opportunities for reader to make sense of the materials, skills and content they are expected to learn.

During our interview Kate emphasized the value of providing kids with models, structures, or frameworks on to which they could “hang” their learning. These structures (in this case the lesson guides) or strategies, then serve to help readers clarify what it is they know and have learned (Interview, 10/7/98, pp. 34-35). Again, Kate accomplished this, in part, due to her extensive personal knowledge of each reader in her classroom, as shown below.

The lessons which Kate constructed for Morning Girl and Racing the Sun were adapted from the school’s Scholastic, Inc. literature-based reading series. Even though these two paperback trade books accompany the series, Kate claimed that sixty per cent of the lesson material was hers. For the remaining two titles, Pocahontas and the Strangers and Squanto, Friend of the Pilgrims, Kate explained that all of the lesson material was hers and original (Pre-Observation Meeting, 10/2/98, p. 1). As reported earlier in this study, Kate did not use the Scholastic anthology because most of her students are unable to read the selections—they are too difficult. While the range of reading abilities in the classroom is extensive, approximately grades three through eight, the Scholastic reading series material in Kate’s room ranges only from the fifth grade to seventh grade. Materials for those pupils reading at the third and fourth grade are not included in her classroom set. Kate has been able to obtain a few copies of those materials from the third and fourth grade teachers. But this issue is less one of supplies than one of personnel to help manage the diverse groups, especially those students who

do not qualify for special education, but are in some ways just as needy. "That's why I . . . spend most of my time with those groups" (Interview, 7/ 7/98, p. 24).

During our interview, Kate noted that many of her pupils were poor writers. She explained that she gives these pupils the opportunity to produce drawings which demonstrate their understandings of the text. Many of these challenged readers have artistic ability; so this option keeps them engaged with the reading. In the pre-observation meeting, Kate reported: "Many of my students are incapable of writing any substantial quantity about their reading. Some of these kids frequently understand a great deal about their reading" (Pre-Observation Meeting, 10/2/98, p. 1). In an effort to get at what these readers do comprehend and to allow for readers' personal response to or interpretation of that reading, Kate provides drawing and art as an alternative to the written paragraph or short essay; I witnessed this practice during my visits to her classroom. She stated, "I allow some of the students to make a drawing for me, as long as they detail what I'm looking for [from the text] in their drawing . . . I had a lot of kids in my class with artistic ability . . . who are low readers, and they absolutely loved drawing" (Interview, 7/7/98, p. 6). She discovered this alternative during her student teaching, primarily as a result of listening to her students' comments. Because Kate's mentor teacher believed pupils should be paying attention to her, they were not allowed to draw during silent reading, or when the teacher was reading orally to the class. Kate reported, "Well, I started that way, and they were constantly saying, can we draw? Can we draw? Can we draw? . . . At first I said no. Finally, [I decided to] try it once [and] we'll try it and see how it goes. But I always want you to be listening [and] the picture always had to have something to do with the book we're reading . . . It was fabulous. I found them paying attention better than before, being more attentive after all . . ."

(Interview, 7/7/98, p. 7). This willingness to consider feedback from her students in order to adapt instruction is one concrete example of how Kate incorporates the pedagogical content knowledge from teacher education into her daily practice. She had a clear sense of what she needed to teach, but decided to be reflexive when processing feedback from children. Kate's exposure to a constructivist stance to instruction during teacher education and her understanding of the developmental stages of these readers permitted her to loosen her grip on how the lesson was conducted. In the end, her hunches were confirmed; the children seemed to thrive within this looser instructional frame.

As a result, Kate strives to find the means for all pupils to meaningfully participate in reading and writing about reading (i.e., for some students drawing equals writing). Kate stated that "the [greater] challenge [for her is] keeping the more gifted students busy and occupied . . . Because I [do] not have problems [working] with the slower learner, or the students who were reading below grade level (Interview, 7/7/98, p. 26). After years of teaching private piano lessons Kate claims to have endless patience with the hesitant or reluctant learner. On the other hand, she would like to have a broader range of reading materials so that she would have greater flexibility in grouping all readers (Interview, 7/7/98, p. 64).

Kate reminded me that her instructional plans are influenced, in part, by her own positive experiences with reading (Interview, 7/7/98, p. 20). This component of instructional design is demonstrated by what Handal and Lauvaas (1999) labeled the "personal experiences" piece of their Practical Theory. The instructional decisions discussed below are designed, at least in part, to provide similarly positive and supportive reading experiences for her students, while at the same time assigning to them responsibility for their learning (Interview, 7/7/98, p. 25). It is essential, however, for the

reader of this study to recognize Kate's emphasis on flexibility, on context, and on the need for the teacher to take clues from the actions and behaviors of students in her reading classes (i.e., Bernstein's "weak frame," 1975)(Interview, 7/7/98, pp 28-29). Given the challenges which most novice teachers encounter, Kate's ability to focus on reflexivity and feedback from children is noteworthy. Finally, Kate prefers to design lessons so that children can be successful. "... What I remember from [teacher education] classes is [the need for] ... success. The students have to be successful ... They need to enjoy [learning], too. (Interview, 7/7/98, p. 53). Again, it seems clear that Kate is consciously attempting to incorporate the pedagogical content knowledge she learned in teacher education into her daily practice.

An example of a reading strategy she learned about in her teacher education program which Kate strongly promotes to nurture success and independent thinking is QAR. QAR was developed in 1982 by Raphael to encourage readers to think about the location of answers to questions they encounter in reading and to encourage self-sufficiency during reading and question answering. Kate wants her students to think about the questions which are asked about stories, about where the answers to those questions might be found, and about what each reader brings to the search for those answers. In her experience, according to Kate, the QAR steps seem to benefit the slower readers most. "Some of them [i.e., answers to questions] are *right there*. Some of them are *what do you think*, or *what would you do*, or *do you think they should have done this?* ... I found that my kids that were a little slower did actually better on those questions than the factual ones. They did quite well because they were able to follow along" (Interview, 7/7/98, pp. 5-6). In Kate's classroom the QAR efforts are most often completed individually by students in each reading group. Kate then invites the children

to reconsider them again collectively in groups where the readers can alter their findings if that is warranted. In our interview, Kate explained how she uses QAR throughout the year:

When I began the school year, we would go through the questions; I would explain QAR and everybody who was in my class . . . can tell you every single question, what kind of question it is. They know that. And they got to the point where they were good at it. But then we would go through the questions first before they did the reading assignment. We would talk about yesterday's lesson; they were in between lesson three and four, okay, in the beginning of Communication Arts, we talk about yesterday's lesson. We [then] go through today's lesson, and we go through the questions. . . . Then I'll ask them what kind of questions, without reading, what kind of question do you think it is? And then they'll go through it and tell me what kind of question it is, whether it's right there, or in your head, or from the author and so forth. They would do that. Then . . . there are times where I will give them a reading assignment, they have to come up with QAR questions for each other, write them out and answer them . . . Originally they had to identify my questions . . . and then they were writing their own . . . They had great questions. (Interview, 7/7/98, pp. 30-31, 32)

Not only does Kate require her pupils to learn the basics about questions, she also designs situations which require them to go beyond simply finding a suitable answer. She wants each pupil to read for meaning; to think about the text and the questions which seem to be important to ask about a text; and to consider his or her own prior knowledge, experiences and personal responses to the literature in order to critically think about what is read.

In using novels for reading instruction, Kate has a dual purpose. First, she hopes to focus on material that children can successfully read and enjoy. In our initial interview Kate discussed the many months she spent during her first year of teaching trying to understand the appropriate mix of titles, topics, interests, and instructional tools which would work for her pupils. Her own struggle to do this demonstrates just how difficult it is for the novice teacher to work from a “weak” frame. In order to consistently scaffold student learning in such a frame, the novice teacher must have extensive knowledge, something all novice teachers struggle to develop. Another concern centers on how to use the novels to teach a content subject such as social studies. Kate believes it is natural to teach the skills and thinking needed in reading through material focused on a content subject.

Customarily, during the reading of these novels, Kate expects readers to write about factual recall, about their impressions during reading, and about personal interpretations after reading, as they progress through the novels. Within this framework Kate also reminds readers to take notes (i.e., jot down a brief reminder, a page number, or a noteworthy fact which can be a metacognitive clue and reference for later when time permits more focused attention to an assigned response). In this writing emphasis, Kate wants readers to know the factual information in a story, so each can go well beyond literal interpretations to personal responses and those responses which demonstrate higher order thinking. During our interview, Kate explained that she typically sits with one group and joins in the reading of the text, and subsequently starts each child on the writing portions of the lesson. For Kate writing is thinking.

Another emphasis in the lessons I observed is finding and using literary devices and figurative language (i.e., similes, metaphors, personification) in the novels read by

the children. Again, these literary devices serve as models for these learners in their own writing efforts , and they are solid examples of how Kate attempts to give pupils the learning tools that lead them to higher order thinking and success as readers. Kate emphasizes these literary devices in her efforts to help readers use their knowledge of personification, similes and metaphors as learning tools. Such tools permit learners to transfer their knowledge of such devices to new encounters in reading and writing and to enrich their understanding of what they read (Interview, 7/7/98, p. 58). Thus, figurative language becomes a frame of reference for future learning. As a beginning teacher Kate is still struggling with “getting it right,” but she is working very hard to connect her own experiences in learning to read, her experiences in teacher education, and her classroom instruction with an extensive knowledge of pupils developed through careful kid watching. By “kid watching” I mean that Kate uses multiple opportunities to ascertain what her pupils are actually doing in a lesson, how they seem to be processing information and making sense of it, and how they attempt to apply what they have learned. Whether it is during the whole group reporting sessions held each morning or whether it is carefully listening to children read orally in small groups, Kate is striving to adjust her teaching based on what she learns about how children make sense of the text with which they are interacting.

So, in short, the information that Kate supplied in the interview prepared me to observe lessons in which four reading groups read four different, yet related, titles which Kate also tied to the social studies curriculum. Typically, while these activities were going on, Kate tried to participate in an entire reading lesson with a different group each day.

At this juncture it is appropriate to outline six assertions about Kate’s practice in

the reading classroom. Readers of this study should note the evidence which supports these assertions within the milieu which is Kate's classroom and consider them a synopsis of the descriptions provided so far. Furthermore, the six assertions serve as an organizer for thinking about the descriptions of Kate's actual classroom practice which follow. Assertions one and two, for instance, relate primarily to Kate's intentions about curriculum and instruction. Assertions three through six, on the other hand, relate more to her understanding about learning and learners. These six assertions about Kate's thinking and practice were extrapolated from our conversations and from the data collected during interviews, pre-observations visits and the observations of the reading instruction. In the end what we have then is a portrait of her intentions and her actions.

ASSERTION #1--Because Kate believes instruction should serve multiple purposes and should promote connections across many areas, she plans for reading instruction which promotes writing, thinking and learning in content subjects.

ASSERTION #2--Kate provides pupils with models, structures, or frameworks for learning in reading which focus primarily on comprehension and higher order thinking, so students are able to use these as templates for learning in other areas.

ASSERTION #3--Kate recognizes that in daily practice children require multiple opportunities to learn a skill or concept at different levels of sophistication, and she uses the extensive knowledge she has about each of her students to adapt instruction to meet their needs and preferred learning styles

ASSERTION #4--Because Kate believes children need to be successful in order to learn, she consistently shapes that success through the regular use of learning tools or strategies which promote independence, choice, flexibility, personal responsibility and higher order thinking.

ASSERTION #5--Because Kate values classroom feedback from students when she plans for instruction, she carefully designs lessons based on her understanding of their evolving sophistication, their disparate interests, their need for skills, and their preferred learning styles.

ASSERTION #6--Because Kate believes learning occurs in both social and individual settings, she consciously structures her lessons to provide for a variety of grouping patterns and learning situations.

Now I will furnish evidence which shows how Kate puts her beliefs, as expressed in her interviews and pre-observation discussions, into practice.

The Observations--Session One

Readers of this study will be able to better appreciate the description of the actual lesson observations by examining the sample frameworks Kate designed for lessons four and five. Frameworks for lessons four and five for *Morning Girl* and *Racing the Sun* are located in Appendix D, page 343. In order to provide a sense of the range of thinking which Kate was attempting to promote in these lessons, I have labeled the questions or statements with my own interpretation of the corresponding level of Bloom's Cognitive Taxonomy (Bloom, et al, 1956), Knowledge (K), Comprehension (C), Application (AP), Analysis (AN), Synthesis (S), Evaluation (E). Questions in these guides ranged from those which seek purely literal responses (i.e., In what way did Mother help Morning Girl to see what she looks like?) to those which were more open-ended and asked the reader to analyze, synthesize and evaluate (i.e., Which way do you think is better? Why?). These initial questions, along with the verbal questions raised in discussions groups, are concrete examples of Kate's intentionality about challenging readers beyond

the literal or factual levels. In addition to the study guide questions in Appendix D, I want the reader to note the range of questions which Kate asked during the following exchanges and her attempts to encourage her fifth graders to figure out what kind of question was being asked, so that they could do a better job of thinking about an appropriate response.

It is important to understand that Kate's pupils were not simply reading the texts silently and individually, nor were they simply reading orally in groups to get through the material so they could respond to the guides Kate prepared. Rather, as Kate worked with her pupils, she verbally modeled her thinking about how to approach the text and the questions she prepared in order to encourage thinking about the text, the comprehension of the text. In fact, she believes that her weaker readers do much better at questions which do not seek simply the literal or factual answer in these group configurations because they are able to follow along and witness the thinking of other readers (Interview, 7/7/98, p. 6). Later, I will show how Kate used these small group sessions as a sort of "give and take" with her pupils. Importantly, she provided guidelines to shape student responses, but did not limit student responses to these guidelines.

The morning began with the so-called high reading group working through Racing the Sun by Paul Pitts (1988). Students began the session with a book talk or review of what was read and discussed the day before. This information was reported publicly to the whole class by Dora and Sam. Unlike Mary and Adam's practices which will be described in subsequent chapters, Kate frequently used these public whole class sharing sessions to stimulate interest, promote questioning and critical thinking about texts. Two children, Dora and Sam reported that Brandon (i.e., the main character in the book) was a boy whose Navajo parents were professionals who lived in a modern suburb. Grandpa came from the reservation to live with them. Grandpa irritated Brandon because he was old-

fashioned: Grandpa chanted at bedtime and he woke up at 5AM to run after the sun as it rose in the sky.

Kate offered a set of prompts for the students to think about as they continued to read the book in groups. She began with a literal question and proceeded with a series of varied comprehension questions.

Kate: Who is Brandon's best friend ? [Ham is the best friend].

Kate: Have you learned anything about Navajo culture? Like what? Can you think of more?

Dora: Navajos chant.

Lloyd: Family is very important.

Kate: What does Brandon's Grandpa think Brandon's family is missing by living a modern life?

Dora: Big families share.

Kate: How/what does Grandpa think about his son being a college professor? [No Response was forthcoming] (Observation Field Notes, 10/6/98, p 1).

At this point, the pupils moved to their respective reading groups. They did this quietly and efficiently—they seemed to know what they had to do and what was expected of them.

In the Racing the Sun group was a student named Jack. Kate reported to me, "Jack had taken his ritalin that day and [so I] allowed him to remain in the classroom for reading. When he does not take his ritalin, [I send him] to the Learning Center room down the hall where he can be monitored closely" (Observation Field Notes, 10/6/98, p.1).

According to Kate, Jack is almost unmanageable without his medication. It is important to note that he is placed in the highest reading group in the class. Because Kate is aware of

Jack's high-level reading ability she strives to find the means to include him in regular, daily, reading activities. On any given day, determining Jack's position within the group reading structure requires that she be fully aware of Jack's medication status. When Jack does not take his ritalin, she considers what is best for the larger group of fifth graders in her charge and sends him to the Special Education teacher.

Each child in this group, Jack, Dora and Lloyd, read orally in turn which allowed for a vibrant discussion. I will show later how this contrasts with Adam's practices (the third case) where students were expected to read passages prior to meeting in their groups. When a passage of particular interest emerged, Kate frequently inserted commentary. For example, Dora read from page 64 of Racing the Sun, "My heart started pounding its way to my stomach."

Kate: What does that mean? (Pause) Is it a metaphor? (Pause) Is it a simile?

Dora: It's a literary device.

Kate: Yes, what kind?

Dora: Personification.

Kate: Good. On your worksheet, write "page 64." You can go back later and describe the literary device on that page, fill it in later.

Interestingly, Kate did not pursue explanations or statements on the meaning of this example of personification. But she did ask a set of specific questions which helped her ascertain whether the readers were making concrete connections between their prior experiences with figurative language and the current story being read. Kate is becoming very proficient at modeling and teaching reading strategies with literature and at building basic literary knowledge. But she is also missing opportunities for deepening reader

knowledge by connecting it to responses to literature. Louise Rosenblatt (1938/1978) would want Kate to teach the literary devices mentioned above, but she would also want Kate to help readers go well beyond efferent reading for answers to connect with the aesthetic responses the devices evoke. Rosenblatt would encourage readers to probe their personal responses and to examine them in light of the literary device and the context of the reading situation and their own prior knowledge. Reading also serves as a fine model for writing--style, word choice, voice and use of descriptive language can all be emulated and adopted by aspiring readers and writers. In any case, the more experienced reading teacher might would help children explore their answers to her questions more fully. She would assist children in going beyond the literal level of comprehension when they respond to such questions. Put another way, however, Kate could have been “spot checking” to determine whether Dora noticed the figure of speech or literary device which appeared in Racing the Sun. My own interpretation was that this “spot checking” and the reminder to take notes about a reference to page 64 in Racing the Sun served as a metacognitive reminder for Dora to go back later and develop her own comments about the literary device. Kate then invited Lloyd to read.

Her interactions with Lloyd demonstrate how she encouraged readers to refer to their prior knowledge about reading in order to better understand the current text. Lloyd used his finger to keep his location on the page; he lost his place when he failed to do this. Kate stopped Lloyd and inquired about a word which Lloyd struggled with, *shirttail*. Kate suggested that Lloyd separate the word into two which would make sense to him. Lloyd immediately pronounced *shirt* and *tail* and proceeded to read fluently assisted by finger-pointing. Subsequently, however, he began to race and started ignoring punctuation, especially periods. Kate reminded Lloyd about the role of periods, which she called

sentence breaks.

Kate: What happens when you encounter periods in a sentence? What role do they play in the dialogue?

Lloyd: [No response was given.]

Kate: They often separate two different speakers. (Observation Field Notes, 10/6/98, p. 3).

Lloyd read on, smoothly at first because he attended to the periods. Soon, however, he started to stumble when he encountered another unfamiliar word, *leisurely*. After two attempts, he successfully pronounced it.

This excerpt demonstrates how Kate followed through on her commitment to engage the prior knowledge of readers, and to stress the importance of syntactical knowledge and phonemic awareness in fluent reading. She supported a struggling reader by providing specific, appropriate prompts about long and short vowels to guide his decision-making in these areas during reading. In our initial interviews Kate stressed her use of the K-W-L structure, for example, to determine what is that readers know about an issue before reading. Kate believed that frameworks such as K-W-L, QAR, Reciprocal Teaching and discussions provide structures to help all readers, but especially deficient or struggling readers, to get at the meaning of text (Interview, 7/7/98, p. 35) and to serve as tools for continued learning

Jack was next to read. He mispronounced “akkaknowledge” which Kate did not correct or even seem to notice. Unlike Lloyd, Jack used no finger pointing and did not lose his place, but he did fidget constantly with his pencil. Kate required Jack to read a sentence again on page 65 of the text and asked the group : “Is he asking a question? What do you think Brandon is saying? What is he having trouble with? Me? What does

it mean to have “trouble with me”? This exchange is an example of Kate leading her readers through a series of questions which ultimately move them beyond single word, literal, and factual responses. Before Jack could respond, Dora piped in.

Dora: I know it, but it’s so hard to get it out!

Kate: Was Brandon upset with Grandpa in the shopping mall?

Dora: Brandon was embarrassed, his grandpa dressed sloppily, talked funny.

Kate: What if Brandon was with all of his friends? Would he think it was cool or embarrassing to have Grandpa find him?” [Note: Grandpa was sent to the mall by Brandon’s parents to find Brandon].

When she got no response from Jack or Dora, Kate asked the question in another way.

Kate: Would you have felt comfortable with Grandpa in the mall? Why? Why not?

Jack: My father is a Mohawk Indian.

In spite of Jack’s attempt at diversion, Kate continued her attempt to elicit a response

Kate: Is Brandon really most worried about Grandpa or about what his friends think about his Grandpa? About Brandon with Grandpa around?” (Observation Field Notes, 10/6/98, p. 3).

Kate’s questioning here was an example of thinking aloud. Her own thinking then served as a model or structure which her fifth graders then could emulate, and hopefully transfer to new learning experiences. As I state in Assertion Two, Kate was directly modeling the sort of thinking and behavior she wants her pupils to adopt. If the learners are able to develop and adapt these tools for personal use, they will be able to hook their own learning to these tools and structures for easier future use.

Again, there was no response from Jack, Dora, or Lloyd. Subsequently, Kate directed the members of this reading group to guide sheets for lesson four. She asked, “What kind of question is number one on the page?” The actual question from the study guide was: What did Grandpa teach Brandon about family? Karen was asking readers to figure out what type of QAR question this one was. She was seeking the *think and search* label for this question. Kate also reminded the readers to check out the QAR poster in the front of the room for a hint. She told the group that they would return to this question later in the reading. Eventually, Jack, Dora, and Lloyd all reported that Brandon was worried about being embarrassed by his Grandpa in front of his friends.

During this exchange, Kate provided a certain amount of encouragement and teacher scaffolding for these readers. She allowed the readers to hear her thinking about the passages. She wanted these readers to make a decision based on the evidence in the text. In fact, one of Kate’s stated goals is to have learners make these kinds of decisions for themselves. As stated in Assertion Five, Kate used the feedback from her pupils to alter how questions for reading assignments are to be answered. Previously, Kate used to have readers complete an entire reading assignment before she allowed them to complete the guide sheets or worksheets. After the students raised the possibility of completing questions and answers while they read, she changed directions and now lets her pupils do just that—complete questions as they read. She reported that pupils find the smaller chunks of text help them read for a purpose and to stay focused on the text (Observation Field Notes, 10/6/98, p. 4). This decision was in direct response to feedback from students which she solicits and receives on a regular basis in the classroom. Across the board, Kate is striving for her pupils to become independent learners. “When [I] see them doing something on their own without me assigning it, that’s what I like” (Interview, 7/7/98, p.

71). In fact, this transfer of skills to independent learning situations is a sign of the success of Kate's planning for reading instruction. The actions of her pupils provided substantial proof that her modeling has worked. Thus, Kate's classroom behavior verified that Kate, a beginning teacher, in fact, makes and alters classroom instructional decisions using the feedback from her pupils.

At this point Kate intervened in the discussion to state that she would read a few pages until Jack, Dora, and Lloyd decided who would read and how many pages each would read. The section she read was about Brandon coming home after the encounter at the mall. Grandpa made it home first and reported to Brandon's Mom and Dad. In the next part of the story, Brandon entered his parent's bedroom where his Dad was solemn and his Mom was red-eyed and teary.

Kate: What does solemn mean? Why is Dad solemn?

Dora: Something serious, not happy, something is wrong.

Kate: Yes, he's sober. (Observation Field Notes, 10/7/98, p. 5)

Kate reminded this group to reread and to read further to confirm those guesses and to determine if more information was available about the mood in the bedroom. Brandon expressed his anger at how his Grandpa was different, how he shouldn't be chasing Brandon at the mall. Brandon began to cry.

Kate: When Brandon is crying his tears are "diluting his anger." What does that mean or indicate about Brandon?

Dora: He changed from anger, to sadness, to being ashamed of himself.

Kate: What is the phrase "like a stupid little pig" an example of?

All: Simile.

Again, Kate made no attempt to ascertain the meaning of this simile. But the group

members did write down the page number on their study guides for later reference (Observation Field Notes, 10/6/98, p. 9). Clearly, Kate could have probed further to determine the depth of the understanding these readers elicited from the simile. She could have also helped readers “investigate” or examine their personal responses to being compared to “a stupid little pig.” Dora could have talked about how she determined that “diluting his anger” meant to move along an emotional continuum from anger to sadness and shame. All participants could have considered the literary weight of “stupid little pig” and the impact it had on their thinking about the story. Finally, each child could have been asked to talk about the value and uses of the simile and similarly worded devices in their own writing. Such a discussion could well have ensured that these readers understood not only the factual aspects of similes, but also their aesthetic value in enriching the meaning they acquire from reading and the meaning they convey in their own writing. A more experienced teacher would have likely seen that this was not accomplished.

Now Dora read orally and Kate took a moment to monitor the other groups while still seated with Dora’s group. While Jack read, Dora corrected his pronunciation of “wouldn’t.”

Kate: Jack, look back at the word *understand*.

Jack: He repeated it correctly and indicated that he knew the meaning.

Kate: Does that make sense, Jack? I understand your thoughts?

Jack: Nods [Yes].

In her next statement to the group, Kate models her own evaluation of information in the story in order to help these fifth graders decide what is next, or what makes sense.

Kate: Look at question number two on your worksheets. [Brandon was

embarrassed when his Grandfather showed up at the mall. Later, he was ashamed of those feelings? Why?] Are we at this part in the story where we can answer this question? What is really happening when Brandon is ashamed of his Grandfather? Grandfather claims he would never embarrass Brandon and that he knows he doesn't fit in this modern scene. He only went to the mall to buy some garden supplies, not to follow Brandon. Grandfather says, "You should have trusted me. I understand many things . . . [page 68 in *Racing the Sun*].

Kate: Now take a minute or two and write your answer to question number two.

Write what you think about the issue of trust, feelings and embarrassment. Interestingly, Jack, Lloyd and Dora did write, but they also talked out loud to each other about what they thought was important in answering this question (Observation Field Notes, 10/6/98, pp. 5-6).

In Assertion Six, I stated that Kate believes learning occurs both within a social setting and by individuals working independently. The particular example above of public and verbal interaction of the group members in her classroom is tangible evidence that Kate actually follows through on her beliefs about the social aspects of reading in her classroom. Kate was expressly trying to get each child to think about what had been read and to re-check that thinking with his or her prior experiences and with each other. When the children wrote a response each was having to re-think opinions and assertions and consider the evidence in the text before the responses were recorded. In our initial interview, Kate explained how she encouraged her pupils to read text in groups, to discuss the focus questions together to clarify the question and possible answers, and then how each individual was expected to write the answers to the questions independently (7/7/98, p. 9). In such an instance, Kate is cognizant of the tools of inquiry and practice which

readers need in order to confirm or disconfirm thinking about a story, and of the effective role of the social group in accomplishing that end. Collective thinking can and does promote clarification of thinking about text. Consequently, she structured the reading lessons such as the one above so these social and independent stances were employed on a regular basis. In essence, Kate used some aspects of a weaker instructional frame (Bernstein, 1975) to allow for the emerging discoveries these readers were making about questions and texts. She did have fairly tight control over the pace, timing and sequence of this conversation, while at the same time her overall curriculum allows children to make those choices. Kate assumes a very active role in the instruction of her fourth graders.

Classroom management issues are very clear in Kate's classroom. She insured that everyone had a job and a duty; each was to be busy working on worthwhile activities—not goofing off. As Kate frequently moved about the room, members of other groups approached her individually for assistance. She quietly and efficiently did this. She returned to Lloyd, Jack and Dora and the three reported out to her what they had been discussing and writing about trust and feelings of embarrassment. The responses to Question 2, Lesson 4 responses are reported intact from each child's worksheet and show the results of their conversations about Brandon.

Guide Sheet Question: Brandon was embarrassed when his grandfather showed up at the mall. Later he was ashamed of those feelings. Why?

Lloyd: Brandon was ashamed of himself because he should of [sic] trusted his Grandpa because he was there to get seeds.

Jack: Brandon was ashamed of himself because he though[t] his Grandpa was going to embarrass him, but he was buying seeds.

Dora: Brandon was a ashamed of himself because Grandpa later told him that he was just there to buy seeds. Brandon should have trusted him.

Lloyd, Jack, and Dora continued to ponder question two (above) and discussed their reactions to the question with Kate. Kate extended their thinking about question two by asking, "Would Grandpa do this [embarrass Brandon]? Why do you think so or not think so?" (Observation Field Notes, 10/6/98, p. 7). She added a reminder to the children about the value of re-reading their own writing and thinking critically about responses, "Does what you have written make sense?" (Observation Field Notes, 10/6/98, p. 7). Importantly, Kate was guiding these readers about the need for making connections with previous learning experiences and for using the reading group as a social tool of inquiry for clarifying thinking about what was read. This instance again exemplifies major components of Kate's stance on children and learning. Success in learning comes from possessing tools or having strategies in place which promote independence, choice, flexibility, personal responsibility and higher order thinking. As stated earlier in Assertions Four and Six, Kate believes learning occurs both within a social setting and by individuals working independently, working in a variety of decision making situations where they practice their thinking and their skills.

As the reading continued some of the other groups started to fidget and get louder. It was now apparent that the four learning disabled pupils, who were pulled out to the Learning Center to work with the special education teacher, had returned to the room and changed the climate and atmosphere almost immediately. Kate reminded me of this.

Jack began reading aloud again. Dora jumped in at page 70 and read the section about names.

Dora: A name doesn't make much difference. He didn't need to change his name,

but it doesn't matter so much that he did. What he can't change is the human being once named Kee and now called Keith [in other words, once an Indian, always an Indian—names don't matter].

Kate: Tell me in your own words what that means.

Here Kate sought to get Dora to re-tell the passage in order to estimate her comprehension. In our initial interview and subsequent discussions, Kate emphasized that one purpose of verbal summarizing and retelling was to allow the teacher to get a measure of comprehension (Pre-Observation Meeting, 102/98, p. 2).

Dora: Changing your name doesn't change your personality or your Navajo culture.

Lloyd: Changing your name doesn't change who you are (Observation Field Notes, 10/6/98, p. 7).

Dora continued to read this section. Kate reminded the readers to frequently check the name pronunciation and meaning glossary at the back of the book if they encounter a Navajo name which they don't know or can't remember (e.g., *Shinali*—paternal grandfather or grandmother). As a beginning teacher, Kate alerted these readers to the resources available to them for making sense of their reading and for being successful at reading.

Lloyd then took over reading on page seventy-one and stumbled on the word, *reminiscing*. The following exchange was an example of Kate's stated belief that children have to be successful in order to learn. She was guiding that success by modeling her own thinking.

Kate: Lloyd, please read that sentence again. Try the context to see if you can pronounce the word and figure out what it means .

Lloyd did this successfully and declared that *reminiscing* meant that Grandpa was telling

Brandon about his life on the reservation; he was remembering, and thinking about the past.

Kate: Do you or your parents ever think and talk about the past? [All three nod assent.] This is the same thing.”

As Lloyd continued to read, Kate stopped him and requested that he reread another section which had given him trouble. Lloyd miscued on the word “arrangement” and went back to read it. Lloyd succeeded by phonemically segmenting the word: a-rrr-ange-ment.

Kate: Does that make sense?

Lloyd: Yes.

Lloyd then read the word *gestured*, mispronounced it with a hard g sound [g as in gun]. Kate demonstrated a hand gesture [to show someone waving good-bye] and asked Lloyd if that made sense. Lloyd changed it to soft g sound [g as in giraffe]. Lloyd again encountered a tough word, this time “pancreas.” He said *pan-crease*. Kate explained that the E and the A are separate sounds. Lloyd immediately understood and said *pan-cre-as* (Observation Field Notes, 10/6/98, pp. 8-9).

This exchange provided evidence of Kate’s continuous encouragement for the use of specific strategies readers need to employ when they encounter unclear information, new vocabulary and unclear meaning in text. In this instance Kate encouraged Jack, Lloyd and Dora to use their knowledge of context clues and phonemic awareness in attaining a clearer sense of what they had read. Thus, this emphasis is directly connected to Assertion Two, in which Kate strives to assist readers in building structures and frameworks onto which they can “hang” their own learning—in a real sense building prior knowledge about learning. The exchange also demonstrated Kate’s understanding and use of a range of teaching and instructional strategies in reading to assure learning by all

pupils. Unlike some beginning teachers who may employ a single favorite approach or strategy which they understand or like, Kate uses a variety of strategies and techniques, just as she was taught to do during teacher education.

At this point Kate took her turn reading and on page 72 asked what the word *foundation* meant in: “All the success I’ve had really came because of the foundation he gave me.”

Dora: Foundation is background or training.

Kate: Why did Mom keep getting up from the dinner table to “get something that we don’t even need?”

Dora: She is sad, she is crying and doesn’t want to be seen.

Kate: Go back to page 69. See if we can find some important issues or facts here that emerge later on page 72. Let’s look for the information about the importance of family. [This is the section Kate referred to earlier and said she would return to it.] (Observation Field Notes, 10/6/98, p. 9).

It should be noted here that Kate asked her students to use reinspection of the text (*Racing the Sun*) as a tool to clarify understanding of that text. Evidence about the efficacy of such techniques (embedded in the previous list of assertions) follows. Again, these are examples of how Kate takes the cues given by her pupils to encourage them, to redirect their efforts, and to help them refine their thinking about texts.

Lloyd, Jack, and Dora found the section on page 69 where Grandpa says “A person’s family is the only thing that continues from one time to the next, from one person to the next. I am a mixture of all those who came before me and each day, I am adding to myself. I passed on myself to your father . . . and now to you. Each day you add to that which you’ve been given and you will pass it on to your children. It has always been this

way. To forget that upsets the balance of the earth” (*Racing the Sun*) .

Dora reports: Each person is part of him and vice versa. Family goes on and on.

Jack began re-reading chapter 8 of *Racing the Sun* again on page 74.

Jack: “The shame wrapped tighter around my chest.” [Brandon is embarrassed about his behavior toward his Grandfather and is telling his friend Ham about it]

Kate: What is that?

Dora: Personification.

In the novel, Jack reads Ham’s story about his own loud, deaf grandfather.

Kate: “Would you be embarrassed to have a grandpa like that?”

All: “Yes!”

What follows demonstrated Kate’s stated goal of teaching her fifth graders strategies and ways of thinking which promote comprehension during reading, but also nurture independence and personal responsibility for learning. The tool is reinspection of the text.

Kate read a section on page 76 which contained the phrase “quiet as a Boeing 747”. She asked what form of literacy device this statement was.

Larry: A simile about being loud, it’s sarcastic.

Jack: (Reading further about Ham and the snacks available in his kitchen). They were “taste sensations” and we have “free access” to them (p. 77 in *Racing the Sun*).

Kate: Explain what that means

Dora: Good stuff and you can get at them.

Jack: What is cellophane?

Kate: The clear wrapper on the crackers you have in the lunch room--[connecting with the familiar--frame of reference]

After Jack read again, Kate stopped the reading and inquired about an unusual word.

Kate: What does UGA mean on page 78?

Lloyd: Underachieving Goof-offs of America.

Jack reads orally to end of chapter at page 79.

Kate: What does it mean when Grandpa replied, "Not all summer." to Brandon's statement about weeding and watering the garden they are doing together?

Jack: Grandpa might die.

All: Grandpa might go back to the reservation.

Kate again moved the readers back to the worksheet.

Kate: What kind of question is the last one on the worksheet? At the end of the chapter, why does Grandpa say, 'Not all summer'?

All: Author and you [i.e., the QAR category]. (Observation Field Notes, 10/6/98, pp. 10-11).

Again Kate consistently encouraged the use of specific strategies readers can use in order to make sense out of their reading as noted on page one this chapter.

Kate then instructed these three readers to label each question on the worksheet for lesson four for QAR categories [1 is think and search, 2 is think and search, 3 is author and you because you need to read the book, 4 is author and you.] Kate told the three to finish the worksheets independently and to check their planners to determine what was next in their daily plan and determine when they would be able to finish questions 3 and 4.

At this point Dora approached me and announced in a matter-of-fact manner: “I don’t like answering the questions on the worksheets. I just like to read. But answering the questions is good for you. When you read your brain is going like [Dora draws a straight line in the air]. When you answer questions and you are thinking your brain is going like [Dora draws a zigzag line] (Observation Field Notes, 10/6/98, p. 11). This perceptive and astounding comment bears testament to the effect (at least in part) of the wisdom of Kate’s instructional decisions. Some of the readers in her classroom are thinking about the ramifications of what they are learning. In a very real sense, Kate’s emphasis on learning how to learn supports Assertions Two and Four in which the meaningful practice she builds into her instruction establishes models, structures and frameworks for learning to assist her pupils in constructing their own learning. This is done in an atmosphere which nurtures success and higher order thinking.

Observations–Session 2

The second day of observations included a lengthy and detailed corporate consideration of the previous day’s reading of the four novels about Native Americans, followed by a return to the small reading groups. Kate began by leading the class in a large group session of the K-W-L strategy in which all readers participated. Kate was using the reading of the novels as a stepping stone to the upcoming social studies unit on Native Americans, and as a means for all readers to share information about Native Americans gleaned from all six of the novels read in the class. She wanted the readers to collectively notice the similarities and the differences in the information they were learning from the novels.

This connection between reading instruction and social studies was illustrated this

day by a demonstration of the K-W-L strategy for the whole class. This was a lively, active session during which most of Kate's pupils offered suggestions and ideas to include in the K-W-L. Children's contributions under the K Section (What I Know) of the session were recorded on the chalkboard and consisted of a range of statements about the lives of Native Americans: Native Americans used canoes, had horses, walked a lot, lived in hogans and tepees, didn't waste anything, made their own tools, didn't have mirrors, were often nomadic, lived by rivers, used buffaloes, and wore a varied manner of dress. Several children offered the names of several tribes--Navajo, Apache, Shoshone, Cheyenne, Cherokee and Blackfoot. When one child offered Powhatan--Karen pointed out that she was not familiar with that one, but would include it, so that everyone could check on it. On the issue of Native American women's clothing, Kate brought in her own experiences with Central American tribes. She reported that the components of the dress of the women in the various native cultures (i.e., color, fabric choice, designs) was determined by the tribal group or culture. Often the men wore regular clothes.

Under the W section (Want to Know) children offered the following questions:

How do they get bones in their noses and ears (and why)? What do they eat? Where do they live? How do they make their own tools and what are the tools made of? Where and how do they get medicine and paints? Why do they use feathers? What do they drink? How do they care for their hair? What do they sleep on? How do tribes communicate with other tribes? Do they still live in tepees today? Where do they go to school? How/when/where do they gather food? What do they make their housing of? What's the size of their housing? Do they have writing? Oral language? How/when/where do they fish? Where do they use the bathroom? What do they drive? Do they have hospitals? How do the women make make-up? What do they write on? Do they use metal? What

are the games they do for fun? How do they make jewelry? Moccasins and shoes? Do they have pets? Which animals? How do they brush their teeth?

Kate made an attempt at getting every single child in the room to contribute to the KWL. She often gave prompts and suggestions and then promised to return to that child after a short time for thinking. She also reported to her pupils that she would use this KWL information to plan the upcoming Native American unit. She made it clear why they were doing the KWL exercise.

Again, the reader has evidence that Kate has developed a set of patterns of practice which heavily influence her instructional decisions. In the description provided above, the reader has evidence of Kate using the input and feedback from her students as laid out in Assertion Five to shape and formulate future instruction based on their prior knowledge and interest in the subject of Native Americans. Additionally, reading instruction conducted on the second day provides evidence which supports Kate's belief that reading lessons should, whenever possible, serve dual purposes as in Assertion One and demonstrates that children need to be successful by using tools and strategies in order to learn as in Assertion Four. Thus, what follows is evidence of Kate's conscientious planning and practice in building a successful climate and structure for learning in her classroom, a climate which Kate attempts to change and adjust as her pupils develop a more sophisticated set of skills aimed at building structures, tools and strategies for continued learning.

At 9:46AM the Morning Girl (Michael Dorris, 1992) reading group shared its previous day's reading and understandings with the entire class, just as was done during observations on the previous day. As was Kate's practice during earlier reading events—an individual or reading group shared. The composite report on this day was delivered by the

group members Barb, Lois and Lena. It went like this in such rapid fire fashion that the speakers were not identified in field notes:

Star Boy compares himself to a bat because he stays awake all night and sleeps all day, he moves about at night. His sister Morning Girl wanted to see her own face in the water. Star Boy always threw a rock in the water when she tried [to see her reflection] during still water times, so she had been foiled when attempting to see herself. Star Boy lost his Dad's canoe when the tide took it (i.e., they live in the Bahamas). His father said he would rather build a new canoe than lose his son, he couldn't replace Star Boy!! [At this statement, Kate inquired as to whether this was fact or opinion—kids opted for opinion]. Star Boy pretended to be a rock and hoped that his parents wouldn't find him; he was hearing them but would not acknowledge their calls. Kate asked the presenters what tribe Morning Girl belonged to and why it was important to understand that this tribe lived on islands. Kate answered the tribe [i.e., Taino] part of the question herself. The presenters stated that water was important for fishing and transportation (Observation, 7/7/98, p. 3)

Thus ended the report on Morning Girl.

Before dismissing her pupils to their respective reading groups, Kate suggested that they all check out their plan book for the day to determine how they would have to manage their time. She reminded the group that was reading a book about Squanto to begin with the math and geography lesson posted on the board and that she would read with them later at 11AM. These conspicuous reminders about time management again served as models of teacher thinking and messages to learners about how to think about their own learning obligations.

The following commentary is from the Morning Girl group—described as the lower ability group by Kate. The group began the day with lesson 5 today (see Appendix D, page 343); the group consisted of Barb, Lois, and Lena. Kate began by emphasizing specific strategies which would help ensure their personal success during today’s reading session as described in Assertion Four: prior to reading the novel, Kate had the girls orally read the questions on lesson five worksheet in order to decide which kinds of QAR questions these were. She was promoting a pre-reading strategy which served as a means of setting the purpose for the reading (Observation Field Notes, 10/7/98, p. 3). Kate used the QAR inquiry to guide these readers in their thinking about what they were going to read. She strived to prompt a focus for the reading to come, and emphasized the use of a specific strategy which would assist them in formulating appropriate responses to these questions. Question number 1 was “Read the first paragraph and make a prediction. What do you think is going to happen?” Question number 2 was “describe the storm in your own words.” Questions three was “How did Star Boy know that the situation was really serious? Question four was, “How did he feel?” Finally, question five was, “Write about a strange Taino custom.” (See Appendix D, page 343)

As the group reading began, Barb read the first paragraph and stumbled on the word WARNING; she said WARMING. She read very carefully and slowly—but not haltingly. Kate did not correct her.

Kate: What are dark boulders scattered on the wet beach?

Lois: Rocks.

Kate: What is the viewpoint or perspective in this chapter?

Barb: It is told by Star Boy.

Kate: Read the beginning of the chapter again in order to make a prediction for

question one. Now can you make a prediction? (Observation Field Notes, 10/7/98, pp. 3-4)

Kate assisted the girls in attending to words and images in this paragraph (i.e., rocks). The girls then wrote the following predictions on their personal worksheets:

Barb: I think a storm is coming.

Lena: They might have a thunderstorm coming and Star Boy might go tell his family.

Lois: Thars going to be a thudr storm [sic].

Kate: What kind of question is question 2?" [i.e., Describe the storm in your own words.]

All: Author and You.

Kate: What about Question 3? [i.e., How did Star Boy know the situation was really serious?]

The girls hesitated on this one. Kate suggested that they revisit the issue later and develop a response.

Kate: Can you answer this one yet?

All: No, we need to read more.

Kate: What about question 4? [i.e., How did he feel?]

All: Right there.

Kate: Question 5? [i.e., Write about a strange Taino custom.]

All: Think & Search.

Barb: I could do it on my own if I went searching in an encyclopedia!!

Kate: Question 6 is focused on literary devices: Write about a literary device used in this chapter (Observation Field Notes, 10/7/98, p. 4-5).

Clearly, Kate's emphasis on the QAR strategy is a demonstrable example of several assertions, specifically numbers two, three and four. Kate's concern about providing models and structures for readers so that they "hang" their previous and new learning on those structures (Assertion Two) is clearly confirmed in the practice above with the QAR strategy. The QAR strategy is a resource for thinking about questions. In Assertions Three and Four I noted that Kate believes it is necessary for teachers to be fully informed about the pupils in their classrooms so that teachers can adapt instruction to meet their individuals needs and along the way promote independence, choice, flexibility and personal responsibility and higher order thinking. Thus, in this demonstration, Kate clearly shows these readers that they have learned to use QAR as a tool for determining what study questions are asking them to do and how they need to think about answering those questions.

The reading continued.

Kate: On page 38, the stars drown one by one. What does that mean?

Barb: They go away and disappear (Observation Field Notes, 10/7/98, p. 4)

Lena tried to read the words *leaned* and *groaned*; she struggled.

Kate: Lena, the E in *leaned* was *long*, and the O in *groaned* was *long*

Lena pronounced them correctly immediately.

Kate: (reads from page 38) Our house *leaned* and *groaned*. What literary device is this?

ALL Personification.

Kate Are you ready to answer worksheet question #2: Describe the storm in your own words.

All: No.

Kate stressed the recognition and the use of these literary devices as tools for comprehending text. Once again, the reader must note that Kate did not stress the appreciation of the author's craft, of the beauty of language and the use of such text selections as a model for good writing. In our initial interviews and during the pre-observation conversation, Kate stressed these figures of speech because they are so pervasive in literature (Interview, 7/7/98; Pre-Observation Field Notes, 10/2/98).

Lena continued to read on and struggled with *there*, *their* and *three*. Kate conducted a minilesson on the pronunciation, the use and the meaning of each word, similar to the one she did above with *leaned* and *groaned*. Thus we have another example of a consistent pattern in Kate's practice. Not only did she probe Lena's prior knowledge about phonemes and vowels, but she did so in order to promote comprehension of the reading through a teachable moment. Kate understood what Lena needed in order to comprehend not only the minilesson on the three similarly spelled words, but also the text in *Morning Girl*. Thus, in a single "on-the-spot" situation Kate practiced using her extensive knowledge about Lena's needs (Assertion Three) and assisted her in successfully dealing with the task at hand (Assertion Four).

Returning to the text, Kate referred to the look on Star Boy's father's face—one he has seen only once before—in an attempt to encourage interpretation of context clues in the story

Kate: Can we use this section of the text to answer # 3 on the worksheet, "How did Star Boy know the situation was serious?"

All: Star Boy noticed the look on father's face (Observation Field Notes, 10/7/98, pp. 4-5).

Lena was still the reader.

Kate: What does *shielding* mean?

Lena: Protecting. (10/7/98, p. 5).

Kate read page 39 in Morning Girl orally to the girls. She pointed out three literary devices and suggested that the girls write down the page numbers on their worksheets, so they could remember where the devices were located. The girls did this and together discussed the possibilities:

Kate: Skipping like a flat stone.

Lois: A simile.

Kate: A thick crashing wave . . . screamed and hissed my named.

Barb: Personification.

Kate: I saw the roof of our house become a winged turtle.

There was no audible response to this example of figurative language. But as Lois read on to page 41, she read about a tree with fingers. Without prompting Lois readily pointed out this was a metaphor and even personification. Kate asked the girls to tell her about the tree in the story.

Lois: When a person dies, their [sic] face goes on the tree.

Lena: When you go to the tree you can talk to those people who have died

(10/7/98, p. 5).

What Kate was attempting to accomplish in this exchange was another example of the pattern in her practice embedded in Assertion Four--that learners need to be successful in order to learn. By helping learners find and use specific tools for being successful learners, in regards to figurative language in this case, she was clearly assisting readers in building structures for learning which transfer from one situation to another and which

promote a deeper understanding of text. The fact that she did this in a group setting demonstrates her commitment to using the social aspects of classroom instruction to promote understanding (Assertion Six). Again, Kate was guiding her pupils through these experiences so that they could then each practice and adapt these strategies in ways that worked best for them.

As the discussion and the reading continued, Kate tried to elicit the word *custom* from the girls as they discussed the oddity of the tree belief within the Taino culture. She got no response. Lois started reading again at the bottom of page 41 and Barb took over reading at page 42.

Kate: Okay, let's go back to the CH word in that paragraph. The tree is chanting, not chatting, p. 42. With my ears against the bark, I could almost hear thechanting.

All: The girls nod agreement.

Kate: The wind slapped my cheeks, banged my head, pulled my elbows. What's the literary device there?

All: Personification.

In our initial interview, Kate stressed the identification of the literary devices as tools which can be transferred to new learning. She very clearly stated that appreciating the role of these devices could clarify and deepen a reader's understanding of texts (Interview, 7/7/98). As a novice teacher, Kate had taken that awareness away from her teacher education program. She is not yet, however, fully realizing how to go deeper with readers and the text to work more effectively with reader responses and their thinking about texts. In spite of her own statement that "I want them to enjoy literature. I want this to be something they are going to enjoy the rest of their" [lives] (Interview, 7/7/98.

p. 56), she has not yet made the conceptual leap from skill and drill to reader response.

While Lena continued the reading on page 43, Kate assisted her with two words which had silent first letters, “gnarled and knotty.” Kate provided the correct pronunciation, but encouraged all of the girls to read some more, to use the context in order to get the meaning.

Lena: It means twisted up (Observation Field Notes, 10/7/98, p. 6).

The planned reading for the day stopped here.

Kate asked the three girls to think about the main things that happened in the chapter and she began the process of talking and walking them through the worksheet questions again.

Kate: Read the first paragraph and make a prediction. What do you think is going to happen?

All: A huge storm.

Kate: Describe the storm in your own words. What kind of storm was it in the novel? A hurricane or a tornado?

Lena: Hurricanes can’t happen in Michigan, but they could on Star Boy’s island (i.e., the Bahamas).

Kate: When you read the next chapter you [will] get more information about the storm, the damage especially.

Kate: How did Star Boy know that the situation was really serious? How did he feel? Was he excited? Didn’t he realize the danger? Why wasn’t he scared? Did he think he was on an adventure?

Barb: Star Boy was feeling bigger and better than his sister. And he got to talk to his grandfather.

Lois: One time a bat flew in our house and it was a bat-room! (She giggled.)

Kate: (Ignoring the joke) Did Star Boy really talk to his grandfather? Could it really happen?

Barb: Maybe.

Kate: Why doesn't Star Boy want to keep it a secret?

Lena: He wanted to share with his sister. He thought he could be a man, now.

Kate: What about question three? How did Star Boy know the situation (i.e., the storm) was really serious?

Lena: The look on his father's face—he had seen it only once before.

Kate: So when you answer that question, start with Star Boy knew Avoid making it into a question. Write it as a statement. (Observation Field

Notes, 7/7/98, pp. 5-7)

Kate then instructed the girls to complete the rest of the questions in lesson five and reminded them to write their responses in complete sentences and to begin each sentence with a capital letter. She examined Barb's first attempts and reminded Barb that she had written fragments. Kate further suggested to the girls that they avoid starting sentences with *that*, *and*, *because*. When this work was finished, the girls were to work on the upcoming history monologues each student in class would present during the next week. Again Kate strived to get more for less in her attempt to be efficient with the curriculum. Kate did set the stage for a more open, free-flowing discussion of readers' responses to the text. However, she seemed hesitant to move it even further along the continuum from a teacher guided discussion to a truly reflective discussion where all participants' responses are considered openly and are valued. Kate appeared to be satisfied with what she got; she did not continue to explore and probe.

Throughout this experience Kate was systematically and carefully reminding readers about their previous encounters with literary devices, especially similes, metaphors and personification. This emphasis was a prominent component of Kate's clearly stated efforts to model effective structures and strategies for her students to use in their own reading, writing and thinking (Interview, 7/7/98, pp. 34-35). Additionally, these examples remind the reader of this study, as does Assertion Four, that Kate believes her students need to think metacognitively for themselves, to make decisions about their reading and to take personal responsibility in all areas of their learning. If they are to be successful, independent learners who readily accept personal responsibility for their own learning, they need to practice the skills and thinking required for that to happen on a regular, contextualized basis.

Preliminary Conclusions

What, then, can be concluded as a result of interviewing and observing Kate? What do the six assertions tell us about the ways in which she makes instructional decisions? Kate incorporates what she knows about students (Assertion #3) and what she learns about students as lessons progress (Assertions #5) to shape the decisions she makes about classroom materials, strategies and what goes on in her classroom. Kate's careful attention to the feedback she receives and notices from her pupils is used throughout the lessons to adjust instruction and interactions with and between these fifth graders. The apparently weak instructional frame (Bernstein, 1975) which Kate uses on a daily basis gives credence to my contention that Kate is a well-started novice teacher who is successfully adjusting her instructional decisions to the needs and personal histories of her pupils. She employs pedagogical content knowledge as a guide for making temporary

judgments about readers, not as a rigid template to shape her planning and delivery of reading instruction. Kate's personal and professional knowledge about reading skills and strategies is extensive.

As one who reads regularly for pleasure, Kate is aware of the aesthetic attributes of fine literature. It is as if there could be a cognitive dissonance between her personal experience with reading literature as art and her need to focus her instructional efforts on skills. Or her knowledge of reading skills could be greater than her depth of knowledge about literature as art, about the reading of literature as not only an efferent experiences, but also an aesthetic experience. Kate's stated goal in our interviews was to have what Tompkins and McGee (1993) called a literature-rich classroom. In such a literature-rich classroom "students read literature and make choices about books they will read and the activities they will engage in, and from these they become responsible, independent learners (Calkins, 1986; Hansen, 1987 in Tompkins & McGee, 1993, p. 29). Kate's desire to adopt this type of instructional model in reading, what Bernstein (1975) called a "weak frame," is still emerging in her classroom.

How does Kate use theoretical knowledge about the structures of reading in planning and carrying out reading instruction? Kate makes extensive use of reading strategies that provide broad structures or frameworks (Assertion #2) which help students learn. She also uses a variety of tools which nurture and support different learners at various stages of the reading process (Assertion #4). Kate's use of small and large group sessions where readers report out about their reading, her modeling of a variety of reading strategies like K-W-L, QAR, and prediction, and her willingness to demonstrate her own deliberations about text by thinking aloud are but three obvious examples of how she uses strategies such as these to adapt her instructional decisions to the immediate situation for

individuals and groups.

On the one hand, one could argue that Kate could use just about any sort of reading material to skillfully teach children about reading strategies. On the other hand, one must ask whether Kate's theoretical knowledge of literature and of responses to literature is deep enough and extensive enough to permit her to skillfully move her fifth grade readers from a relatively factual and superficial level of engagement with reading strategies and texts to a deepened appreciation of excellent literature as art which speaks to individual readers. One could also conjecture whether teaching reading in her particular school has pushed her into a relativistic view of what she can accomplish given the parameters of a diverse student body and state mandated tests. True, a more extensive knowledge of literature could help Kate to balance paying attention to strategies and skills and responses to literature. But the reader must also acknowledge the positive aspects of her current practice as well.

What about classroom feedback? Gathering and using feedback from students to make instructional decisions seems to be a central focus of Kate's teaching (Assertions #3 and #5). She is consciously and intentionally gathering data from learners in order to adjust instruction for those same learners. By nature, Kate is a kid watcher. She wants readers to be successful, so she is consistently on the lookout for situations which hinder or block understanding.

Finally, what can be said about the range of strategies used in Kate's classroom? Because Kate frequently designs instruction to serve multiples purposes (Assertion #1) and because she wants pupils in her classroom to experience learning in both social and independent settings (Assertion #6) she naturally employs a wide range of instructional and learning strategies which allow her to adapt her instructional frame to the needs and

choices of fifth grade readers..

Kate would attest to the fact that she is, like all beginning teachers, struggling with her practice. By her conscious efforts to ensure that her instructional plans help readers make sense of texts, Kate is constantly re-adjusting that instruction. She is actively listening to children, and she is trying to help them acquire the skills, attitudes, and prior knowledge used by all successful readers.

Kate considers flexibility as she plans for reading instruction. She is able to do that because she reflects on her practice and carefully attends to the feedback she receives from pupils. In spite of her reflections, however, she seems to lack knowledge in one powerful component of a literature-based reading program: literature as art. As a consequence she does not assist readers in acquiring strategies for working in that arena as she could. In order to fully appreciate literature, all readers need the basic skills in place (i.e., vocabulary, ways of bringing prior knowledge to bear on text, syntactic knowledge, etc.). But readers also need to understand how to make the most of the aesthetic opportunities before them as they read, ponder imagery and develop perspectives. Kate's lack of teaching experience and knowledge has not taken her to this level of pedagogical awareness. What then is to be made of her actions in light of the research about the knowledge novice teachers? Is Kate so focused on skill building with this diverse group of readers and on preparation for the tests mandated by the State of Michigan that she has simply not had the time to pay attention to aesthetic response? Or does Kate believe that she has been forced to make difficult choice between two equally useful things when she perceives it is not possible to do both during reading instruction in her particular situation? Once I have described the two remaining teachers, Mary and Adam, I will resubmit these and other cross-cutting questions in order to assist the reader in understanding what these

novice teachers know and do in their classrooms.

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THREE CASES OF
TEACHER KNOWLEDGE IN ELEMENTARY LITERATURE-BASED
READING INSTRUCTION

By

Richard J. Mezeske

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Chapter Five

Mary Reardon

Mary Reardon is a beginning fourth grade teacher who consistently wonders about whether she is doing the right things in her classroom. She has a vision for teaching, formed partially from her own experiences in school, and from the experiences she had in teacher education. In this chapter, I will show that Mary is a thoughtful, reflective, beginning teacher who is trying to implement the pedagogical content knowledge acquired during her teacher preparation course work. Perhaps the most important aspect of her efforts in designing meaningful reading instruction in her school is the variety of materials, experiences, strategies and approaches she uses with her fourth graders. While she has a clearly structured overarching plan for reading instruction, she also readily alters her daily plans based on the feedback she receives from her fourth grade readers. She provides for student choice with materials and strategies used with those materials. She has laid the foundation for plentiful daily oral and silent reading opportunities and for the ways in which children are grouped for those experiences. However, there are pronounced discrepancies between Mary's conceptualization of reading instruction in her classroom and the way it is actually realized. While her overall curriculum has lots of flexibility, the specific tasks she has designed are more rigid, more teacher-centered and inflexible, than her stated intentions seem to be. I will examine the relationship between Mary's vision for flexibility and her apparent need to control readers at all stages of the reading process.

Mary believes that she is a strong and reflective beginning teacher. She claims to have adopted what I have described in the previous chapter as Bernstein's (1975) weak instructional frame to guide and to shape interaction between teacher and learners—a frame which allows for change and choice and one in which her fourth graders exercise a degree

of control over their learning environment (p. 89). Like Kate and Adam, Mary is struggling with what it means to have a child-centered, looser instructional frame in the classroom. She is also contending with what it means to teach children to read and what it means to teach them to appreciate literature. In the process of ensuring that reading skills and strategies for reading effectively are in place, Mary seems to have little time or energy left for eliciting and honoring fourth grader's responses to literature. I will point out the extensive, detailed lessons Mary plans and the specific guidance and support she provides to readers during all phases of instruction. I will also examine those events and instructional decisions which seem to minimize the impact of that planning and support.

In this chapter I will show that while Mary is indeed vying with the usual torrent of responsibilities given to all beginning teachers, she is also thinking about her practice in ways that are learner centered and that permit her to be the flexible reading teacher she claimed she wanted to be during our initial interviews. The instructional tension between skills and response to literature as art will be evident in Mary's classroom, just as they are with the remaining two teacher cases in this study.

Mary's Classroom

In many ways, the physical structure and arrangement of Mary's fourth grade classroom is similar to Kate's. Her large square classroom is impeccably neat and organized. All bookshelves are well-ordered and they appeared to be arranged by subject matter (i.e., science, math, social studies) and then by title. In the northwest corner of the classroom there is a smaller study room whose two inner walls are partially constructed of large windows. Mary uses this room for small groups and for those students who receive help from a variety of volunteers who assist her. This smaller room is lined with a wide

array of reading materials, word games, paper, art supplies and computer oriented materials. Like the main classroom, it, too, is well ordered and neat.

Student-sized tables for the twenty-seven students are arranged throughout the classroom. All student activities take place at these tables. While Mary's personal desk is in the southeast corner of the room, she rarely uses it during instruction. Instead, Mary uses a table at the front of the room, alongside which she has positioned an overhead projector. The lengthy chalkboard behind this table also holds a screen for the overhead projector. At the end of this chalkboard is a "whiteboard". It is here that Mary regularly lists the activities and events that she plans for each school day.

Mary places what amounts to a "placemat" at each child's seat. This mat is divided into quarters and uses cartoons and words to stress the characteristics of what she calls "An Active Learner." The four panels which characterize the four qualities of an active learner are:

- Panel One: An active learner asks good questions (a cartoon of one girl thinking--i.e., Who? What happened? When? Where? Why? How?).
- Panel Two: An active learner summarizes ideas (a cartoon of two girls talking--i.e., What did I miss?)
- Panel Three: An active learner knows what he doesn't know (a cartoon of a boy scratching his head--i.e., What does that mean? Do I need to know? Context Clues? Look it up?).
- Panel Four: An active learner thinks ahead (a cartoon of a boy thinking--i.e., What will happen next? Why do I think so?)

Extra "placemats" are readily accessible on a cart in the front of the classroom. Children can pick these up as reminders and often use them under projects to protect the tables.

The district's exit outcomes claim a prominent position in Mary's classroom. They are printed in large, colorful fonts on attractive posterboard and line the back wall of the classroom. All students who complete programs of study in this district are expected to be: complex thinkers, flexible adapters, problem solvers, effective communicators, cooperative and collaborative workers, self-directed achievers, responsible and involved citizens, skilled and active learners, caring individuals and innovative quality producers. Mary frequently refers to these outcomes in the midst of daily instruction. These outcomes were instituted by the district school board in response to concerns of area businesses about the life skills of area workers.

Other posters in Mary's classroom focus on attitudinal issues: "Attitude is the mind's paint brush. It can color any situation." "Knowledge is power." "Have the courage to be yourself."

On any given morning when children file into Mary's classroom, they notice her usual set of sponge activities (Hunter, 1973) on the front whiteboard. On the second day of my observations, the sponge activity was called ADD for Arithmetic Developed Daily. On that day, once they took notice of the ADD message, the children seemed to race one another in starting on the arithmetic problems Mary had placed there. While the fourth graders did this, Mary quickly took attendance and made a few additional short announcements which were not included on the scrolling announcements on the room's television monitor earlier in the morning. It was clear that Mary's students were well-conditioned to use this time for learning and working on the skills embedded in the daily sponge activities. They went to work cheerfully and promptly on the ADD game, while Mary dispensed with housekeeping matters.

Mary Reardon--The Pre-Observation Visit and Mary's Plans

This section is based on the data collected about Mary's teaching and her classroom and instructional organization during my pre-observation visit. It is also based on my overall knowledge of Mary's notions of curriculum, instruction, and her thinking about learners which emerged over the weeks of our conversations together. As I have already done with Kate, I provide this material in an effort to craft for the reader a context for making sense of the descriptions of the actual lessons which follow.

Like Kate, Mary reported that she assigns her fourth graders to a variety of changing reading groups throughout the school year. She adjusts membership in these groups based on feedback from her pupils. The reader should take note of such an adjustment during the reader's theater exercise later in this chapter. Unlike Kate, who primarily uses novels in reading instruction, Mary stated that her reading instruction is what she called a mix of the integrated language arts, the Houghton-Mifflin *Invitation to Literacy* (1996) literature-based reading series, and a variety of novels. For example, in addition to the material in the basal readers, the class had read Ann McGovern's *Secret Soldier* (1977) together in September.

Typically, Mary's language arts block begins at 8:45a.m.daily; it is the first instruction her children encounter each day. While Mary has three pupils who are pulled out of the classroom each day for reading help with the reading paraprofessional, Mary does coordinate this instruction with the reading specialist. Additionally, there are five special education students who leave her classroom for instructional assistance with the special education staff.

Each day of the week, Mary orally reads a novel to the class during a mid-morning time called Snack n' Story. The story read during the days of my observation was Hatchet

by Gary Paulsen (1995 edition).

According to Mary, this fourth grade class is not as academically and emotionally prepared for challenging reading as was last year's class. She stated that, in general, these children are more immature. For example, Mary reported that many children cry "at the drop of a hat" (Pre-Observation Meeting, 10/7/98, p. 1).

Mary's plans for reading and language arts instruction during my observations were quite varied. First she planned to conduct a lesson on compound words. After a brief definition and description of compound words, Mary planned to model a strategy for determining the meaning of compound words. Subsequently, her pupils would then spend time locating examples of compound words in the local newspaper. Around mid-morning, the schedule called for Mary to lead the class in a session on learning about and using the reciprocal teaching, QAR, or KWL strategies. She wanted her pupils to be knowledgeable about strategies as learning tools so that they could be self-disciplined and self-regulated, but readily admitted that these drills are MEAP driven and are district mandates. In our initial interview (7/9/98, p. 40), Mary reported that she was appalled to learn that during the previous school year the district had predicted, before the administration of the MEAP, that her fourth graders would perform the lowest in the district. Mary described how strategies like these three were taught to the children in her school in an effort to improve student's readiness for the MEAP. But then she went on to describe in detail her professional turmoil over such methods. In the end she recognized the need for learning the strategies themselves, but took cues from her pupils for modifying the way they were expected to learn these tools. Mary wanted to be a flexible teacher in her approach to skills.

I had a reading specialist that came in and taught Reciprocal Teaching to the kids .

... What they were supposed to do is read a paragraph, summarize what was said in the paragraph ... and come up with a question in the paragraph and then predict what was coming next. And it was ... hard. I mean, it was ... boring. I think. Tedious ... and I think I wasn't very excited about it because it doesn't fit me to read a paragraph and then pick it totally apart. You don't even know what the paragraph said anymore, you don't care what the paragraph says That might be my fault, that somehow I portrayed a negative atmosphere about Reciprocal Teaching
... So we changed. She [the reading teacher] left and we did it [her way] for a couple of times, and then we started to modify how it went. (Interview, 7/9/98, pp. 37-38)

Mary recognized that if she were not enthusiastic in her modeling of such strategies and flexible in her approach to the students, then they would simply be turned off to learning new metacognitive⁵ strategies for building independence in reading. She went on to describe her alterations to the reading specialist's rote routine for Reciprocal Teaching. Mary and her fourth graders avoided practicing Reciprocal Teaching with isolated paragraphs because they were, for the most part, decontextualized. The practice sessions were switched over to their afternoon novel reading sessions. When these children were able to experience Reciprocal Teaching with extended pages of text, the results were dramatic. Mary reported that "they discussed the big ideas, what just happened over the last two pages" (Interview, 7/9/98, p. 39). If the students had an interest in the material and were actively engaged with it, then Mary realized they could actualize the important

⁵Metacognitive strategies are those which raise awareness and knowledge of one's mental processes such as that one can monitor, regulate, and direct them to a desired end; self-mediation (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 153).

thinking which Reciprocal Teaching was designed for and could manage the thinking required on the MEAP tests (7/9/98, p. 39). So choice, variety and balance of materials and approach constitute a major focus of Mary's planning for instruction. It is interesting to note here that Mary was able to revise an expert's advice and apply it more flexibly. That action contrasts with the later examples of her teaching prediction simply as a strategy rather than a tool for thinking about text.

So during the description of Mary's teaching, it will be important for the reader to take note of her emphasis on the variety of experiences she plans in reading and the language arts, her pronounced efforts to balance skill instruction with choice, and also her readiness to take cues from her pupils when making instructional and curricular decisions. Ultimately, her stated emphasis is on flexible use and application of these strategies and in building a positive atmosphere for learning in her classroom where high expectations are held for all children. Mary has also realized that strategies which she does not personally like or use may have usefulness for some of her students. She went on to describe how much she hated the SQ3R study strategy (survey, question, read, recite, review) which she was required to teach when she was in a teacher education field placement in an area middle school; however, "...there were kids for whom that strategy made a difference and it gave them an avenue for tackling harder material" (Interview, 7/9/98, p. 42). When she began her first year of teaching in her own fourth grade classroom, Mary used the SQ3R along with the aforementioned reciprocal teaching strategy during preparation for the MEAP tests. While she described that practice as boring and structured, she also reported that "there were some kids [who] really improved [and who] I was really surprised to see improve. It may be because of the QAR and the SQ3R, that type of thing . . . You [i.e., the teacher] don't necessarily have to like it, but if I see students improving, then I am going

to do that next year, too” (Interview, 7/9/98, pp. 42-43). When I later asked Mary whether she thought specific reading strategies should be taught as ends in themselves, or as a means for children to continually learn, her response was interesting. In conceptual terms, Mary knows the real value of using such tools to enhance understanding and reader response during reading. In practical terms, her daily practice leads her in other directions.

. . . If it were up to me I would teach them only as a means to learn. Our objective here is not to have a fourth grader know how to survey, question, review everything. Our objective is to have them [sic] be able to read and enjoy reading, and feel comfortable. However, [then] you throw in things like these standardized tests which the district is forcing [on] the teachers, [who then in turn] force them on students. Our job here is right now on February 12, 13, 14, no matter what is happening, you need to do well. And in that situation, I think it is good for the kids to understand the QAR . . . So, I taught the strategy to them. We’re going to learn what QAR is, and what it’s good for, and they understood why they need to be able to break apart reading . . . There was one kid who improved dramatically after we got through all that MEAP training . . . I think it did help some kids. (Interview, 7/9/98. p. 52)

Mary also stated her firm belief in the power of peer influence and teacher attitude in the reading classroom. Motivation and interest are affected by others. While she always has students who complain about a particular class activity or drill, she also notices those students who, even though they do not verbalize their feelings and attitudes, have a great impact on the rest of the class.

. . . . When we did the KWL about fires in Yellowstone . . . they would say, OK, let’s get the KWL out and just jot that down, and there’s the look [i.e., the look of boredom] . . . The group I had was just totally into informational reading about fires

in Yellowstone. It was totally exciting to them. So, all of a sudden they were getting into it. So, yeah, there's some of that [negative] attitude, but you just keep going and you get past that . . . [and] I show them that I am excited about it [fires] and then I pick up on someone who I know likes fires, so they all get in touch with the pyromaniac in class [she chuckles] and that hooks them I don't know if it's an underhanded way to do it, but it's way to pull them in, then. And, after a while when you have the majority, all of a sudden they all want [that]. What else do we want to know about fires? And so you find these little hooks and you pull them all in. (Interview, 7/9/98, pp. 46-47)

These "little hooks" which Mary uses to "pull in" readers are evidence of her willingness to use the feedback from students to probe, to extend knowledge and to help children connect the text with their prior knowledge. Mary pays attention to the body language and silent messages of her pupils. She notices things which influence the behavior and learning of students in her class. In attending to these nuances Mary is able to formulate a more comprehensive assessment of the strengths and needs of her fourth grade readers. At any point in her curriculum, when Mary attends to what Bernstein (1975) called a loose or weak instructional frame, she is able to readily adapt her lessons as dictated by circumstances and nuances of the classroom interactions.

For the second day of my observations, Mary continued using a variety of materials and instructional strategies during instruction. At mid-morning, a group of students presented a reader's theater version of Alice and Alex, a play by Deborah Sussman based on Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (Carroll) (1996). This title is from the district's Houghton-Mifflin, Invitation to Literacy (1996) literature-based reading series. Mary's attitude toward oral reading in general, and reader's theater in particular as

effective instructional tools can be demonstrated by the following statement from the initial interview.

[I use lots of oral reading situations] “ . . . so that I can listen to how they’re coming along. I think also [it is important] for the other kids to hear and to follow along and to focus on another student reading. They can realize, Wow! This person . . . figures out big words this way. You can watch how they decode. And, if they’re a slower reader . . . they can gain some confidence. (Interview, 7/9/98, p. 5)

Mary’s decision to emphasize the oral aspects of reading grew out of her own experiences in reading in school. While she described much of the reading as “droning in the background” (7/9/98, p. 13) she became alert and involved when she was allowed to choose her own texts, and to play and practice with language. Consequently, she has taught her own students two tongue twisters in an attempt to encourage their attention to oral language. The first goes like this:

I come before you, to stand behind you, to tell you something I know nothing about.
Next Thursday, the day after Friday, there will be a women’s meeting for men only.
If you can come, please stay home. Wear your best clothes, if you haven’t any.
Admission is free, you can pay at the door, have a seat, you can sit on the floor.
(7/9/98, p. 14)

Mary also recalled a second classic tongue twister called “Betty Botter” by Alvin Schwartz (Date Unknown):

Betty Botter bought some butter. But, she said, the butter’s bitter. If I put it in my batter, it will make my batter bitter. But a bit of better butter—that would make my batter better. So she bought a bit of butter better than her bitter butter. And she puts it in her batter, and the batter was not bitter. So ‘twas better Betty Botter bought a bit

of better butter. (p.13)

Mary's attention to both the serious and playful aspects of learning to use language signifies her careful observation of the needs and interests of her students. Her overall flexibility and her willingness to be playful during instruction demonstrates her intentions about modifying tasks and strategies according to the interests and responses of these fourth graders.

If time permitted Mary planned to conduct a session of what she calls "GO-VO." GO-VO is a vocabulary game she developed which focuses on reviewing and repeating vocabulary from the stories in the Houghton Mifflin basal series. She uses such techniques in an effort to build sight word vocabulary and help children contextualize new vocabulary within the stories they read. Mary sees vocabulary as a major component of comprehension; she sees comprehension as the major issue in her instruction. In our initial interview, she laid out her views on vocabulary and comprehension and the importance of good teacher modeling in these areas.

. . . If you read words and you don't understand what you read, of course, you're not going to enjoy it, and it's intimidating to you if everyone else is answering questions that you don't know. And vocabulary . . . is in there also. Because . . . if you're not speaking at a fourth grade level, you're not going to be able to read at a fourth grade level either. So what I did throughout the year is, I used bigger words I could hear them [i.e., her students] trying to use those big words . . . They got used to hearing me say words that you don't normally think of [when] speaking to a nine year-old

. . . (Interview, 7/9/98, p. 58)

Mary modeled her behavior after a student teaching mentor. Maybe this practice indicates

Mary's receptivity to new ideas and her willingness to change her own attitudes and approaches during reading and language arts instruction. She stated further:

. . . I think this is something I got from where I student taught. She [i.e., the mentor teacher] did the same thing. She used huge words, and I remember thinking at first, my goodness, you're talking way above their heads. But then when I heard them talking, they were playing with those same [words] . . . (Interview, 7/9/98, p. 59)

Mary knows that using such vocabulary challenges some students and she deals directly with what might be their frustrations. On the other hand, she is deliberate and intentional that all children need to expand their general vocabularies. Mary recognizes that sometimes that growth in vocabulary, in particular, and growth in reading, in general, often takes place in the zone of proximal development (Dixon-Kraus. 1996, pp. 14-16), when instruction occurs with challenging materials which readers can comprehend with teacher support. So she pushes learners to not only read materials independently where they can experience very high levels of word recognition and comprehension, but also at their instructional levels, where they require significant teacher support to be successful. Mary reported that

. . . . there were times when I would stop and some kids were brave enough to say, I don't get what that means . . . Look back, what sentence did I say it in? Now how can we figure out what that means? First of all, what am I talking about? What are the words around it? I'm going to write it on the board. I'm going to underline it. What do you think it means now?" (Interview, 7/9/98, pp. 59-60)

She viewed her own thinking and talking aloud as an important aspect of scaffolding the learning of reading and thinking strategies. Later, Mary extended these experiences by having pupils practice putting these new, big words into new and meaningful sentences as

part of her emphasis on writing.

Mary reported that she uses the Houghton-Mifflin anthology and its workbook two or three days a week. On the remaining days she focuses on skills and clarifying those skills (i.e., grammar, punctuation, spelling, syllabication, homonyms, etc.) and on writing (Interview, 7/9/98, pp. 31-32). Mary uses the basal because she believes it has useful stories, but she uses an accompanying workbook out of guilt because the district has spent money on it. "I think when I have tenure, I'm going to scrap that thing" (Interview, 7/9/98, p. 70). Mary is uncomfortable with the rigidity of this material and perceives it as limiting her flexibility in teaching the variety of children in her classroom, and it may in reality make her overall teaching frame (Bernstein, 1975) appear tighter than it truly is. Mary strives to have her children write everyday for a variety of purposes: journals, short paragraphs, responses to stories, explanations of what they have learned and so on. But clearly, Mary is wrestling quite openly with her desire for a generally loose instructional frame in her reading classroom and her perceptions of the demands the district reading curriculum is making on her pedagogical decisions.

During the second phase of my observations, after the reciprocal teaching piece, Mary planned to direct Group One in reading The Enormous Egg by Oliver Butterworth (1995); Group Two would read The Indian in the Cupboard by Lynne Reid Banks (1995). Additional children read at the first grade level; they will go for special help and select another title. Mary stated that the Houghton Mifflin series seems to work well for those children reading at grade level. However, in spite of requests from Mary, teachers in earlier and later grades still are not willing to share copies of their grade-level anthologies for the Houghton-Mifflin series. They are fearful because kids will have already read these stories, or that reading ahead in the series will spoil instruction for later grades.

Mary views this as an issue of territoriality which does not contribute to collaboration between teachers (Pre-Observation Meeting, 10/7/98, p. 2). Mary's concern was very real. During the previous school year, she had readers in her fourth grade class whose ability ranged from first through ninth grade. " . . . There was one girl who was reading at the ninth grade level, and there was one boy who still didn't recognize letters . . . You would tell him to write an N and he couldn't write an N . . . It's very difficult . . . just to keep them all at a good instructional⁶ level" (Interview, 7/9/98, p. 27). Readers at the instructional level would be said to be in Vygotsky's zone of proximal development.

So what Mary planned was an integrated language arts lesson which included the sharing of a novel through a read aloud, a reader's theater performance, focused vocabulary practice, practicing a specific reading strategy, and a direct instruction lesson with practice on compound words.

At this juncture it is fitting to pose several assertions about Mary's practice in the reading classroom. Again, as with the previous teacher case, readers of this study should note the evidence which supports these assertions within the milieu which is Mary's classroom as they read further and consider them a synopsis of the descriptions provided up to this point. Furthermore, the assertions serve as an organizer for thinking about the descriptions of Mary's beliefs and actual classroom practice which follow. Assertions one and two relate primarily to Mary's intentions or beliefs about curriculum and instruction in reading. Assertions three through five relate more to Mary's understanding about learning and learners. These five assertions about Mary's thinking and practice were extrapolated

⁶The reading ability or grade level of material that is challenging, but not frustrating for the student to read successfully with normal classroom instruction and support (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 118).

from our conversations and from the data collected during interviews, pre-observation visits and the observations of the reading instruction. On the one hand, in examining the evidence which follows, we will have a portrait of a novice teacher who is actively and systematically attempting to put into practice the pedagogical content knowledge she acquired during teacher education. On the other hand, we will witness the struggles of a novice teacher who is contending with the very real difficulty of making that pedagogical content knowledge (Grossman, 1990) come alive in her daily practice in light of the mixed messages she believes she receives from the district and the actuality of the students she must teach. Like Kate and Adam in this study, and like other novice teachers, Mary is attempting to bridge the gap between her vision and goals and the reality of teaching many different subjects to many different children. In the end what we have then is a profile of Mary's intentions and her actions in the reading classroom.

ASSERTION #1--Because Mary believes reading instruction should be balanced for all children, she emphasizes real literature and basal readers, she teaches phonics or grammar lessons when needed, she adopts a whole language stance when appropriate and she stresses social and independent reading and writing.

ASSERTION #2--Because Mary believes it is essential for teachers of reading, and teachers in general, to be reflective practitioners, she carefully plans for instruction based on wide ranging professional development and reading and she strives to be a collaborative teacher colleague.

ASSERTION #3--Because Mary carefully designs lessons based on her understanding of students' evolving sophistication, their disparate interests, their need for skills, and their preferred learning styles, she values classroom feedback from students when she plans for instruction.

ASSERTION #4--Because Mary understands the value of flexibility and choice in designing reading instruction for a range of learners, she builds those components into most lessons.

ASSERTION #5--Because Mary understands the impact of teacher modeling, she recognizes that she must enthusiastically present these as useful tools for ensuring independence for a range of readers. She must frequently sublimate her own negative attitudes towards particular reading strategies, techniques and materials.

ASSERTION #6--Across her various efforts to provide an integrated, holistic curriculum that is balanced, Mary struggles with instructional decisions about structure and flexibility and with decisions about teaching skills as isolated events and skills as part of the aesthetic appreciation of literature.

The Observations--Session One

Mary and I were able to visit for a brief time before her students arrived on the morning of the first observation. Mary reminded me that she would, if time permitted, have all of her fourth graders participate in an independent reading time later in the morning which she calls KBAR which stands for Kick Back and Read. Essentially, KBAR is a variation of the independent reading time which is also called USSR (Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading), SSR (Sustained Silent Reading), or DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) by a variety of teachers.

Rick, a boy in her class, arrived early and announced that he had not eaten breakfast. Since this boy was not on the district's free breakfast plan, Mary searched around until she found a few pretzels for him to eat.

At 8:35a.m., the fourth graders entered Mary's room. They greeted Mary, handed-

in papers, and selected from among the stacked chairs for seating at the tables; the tenor in the classroom was quiet, calm and pleasant. All of this was accomplished quite efficiently. Mary proceeded to call for lunch money envelopes.

A tape by Enya, a contemporary recoding artist, was playing softly in the background. The fourth graders attended to something called ADD (Arithmetic Developed Daily), a math sponge activity, which Mary used to focus their energies on something meaningful and worthwhile while she completed daily housekeeping tasks. The ADD exercise included the following components:

Multiply each: 9X7, 8X6, 7X8, 5X8, 6X4, 3X8

Complete the following with these numbers: 14, 17, 13, 12, 12, 18, 13, 11, 16, 13

Maximum? Minimum? Mode? Median? Range?

Story Problem: The drama club needs 9 students per play. How many plays can be performed if 32 students sign up?

Mary explained to the group that class would begin the morning with a lesson on compound words; that lesson would have a direct instruction focus. She emphasized: “This is how you become a better reader” (Observation Field Notes, 10/8/98, p. 1). The local newspaper for October 7, 1998, was to be used for the compound words review and practice session later in the morning. Mary suggested that pupils who finished this work early should summarize the story the class completed yesterday-- Koya Delaney and the Good Girl Blues by Eloise Greenfield in the Houghton-Mifflin Invitations to Literacy, 1996, pp. 93-105. This summarization was to be completed on a large sheet of paper folded into eighths. The fourth graders were to draw pictures which visually demonstrated their understanding of the Greenfield story.

Again Mary made suggestions to the children for using free time: work on

summarizing skills and think about the need to put things in sequence in your visual summaries (mentioned above), think about what is most important and to think about why summarizing is important. Mary spent considerable time commenting on attitudinal issues and pointed out the posters about attitude mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Mary, like Kate, typically used a variety of small and large group configurations to arrange and manage instruction in reading and other subjects. She frequently used randomly selected groups during instruction. However, on the days scheduled for my observations, during which she had planned a Reader's Theater performance, Mary told me that she intentionally eliminated some flexibility and chose the participants for particular parts. She gave the so-called big parts to good readers so they could carry the momentum. Two special education students were awarded what Mary called medium parts so that they could practice fluency and also hear good readers. So-called middle or average readers also received many parts so they could practice and refine their expression during oral reading (Observation Field Notes, 7/9/98, p. 3).

First, Mary introduced the lesson on compound words and talked about how reading strategies can make readers better. The following exchange demonstrated Mary's commitment to model the thinking and actions she expected of her pupils (Assertion #5). On the other hand, I want the reader to also notice that Mary's approach conflicts with the best practices for teaching reading strategies which she was taught in teacher education. Researchers and authors of literacy instruction methodology texts, such as J. David Cooper (2000), emphasize the need for teaching these techniques in a contextualized setting. Cooper, among other, stresses avoiding isolated drill and the need for effective strategy instruction before, during and after reading authentic texts. Additionally, Cooper reminds us that such practice should be determined on the basis of student performance and that

strategies should be modeled at the point where they will be most useful (pp. 402-403).

Mary never seemed to get beyond the drills and the worksheets on compound words (and later with prediction) to more authentic texts in order to determine whether children could transfer what they were learning in these instances. In the following lesson segment, notice that Mary provides extensive guidance about words and word parts to her pupils.

Mary: When you encounter huge words in context, you can chunk the words and look at the parts. Today we are going to study compound words
(Observation Field Notes, 10/8/98, p. 2).

Mary wrote *grandparent* on the board. She then asked her students to think about the meaning of the parts *grand* (old, old age. the best, terrific, overall the best, on top of, were offered as possibilities) and *father* (parent was offered).

Mary: When we put the two words together we have a new meaning: your mom and dad's dad. Can the words *grand* and *father* stand alone? Yes? Then we have compound word.

Mary: What about the word *children*? [Mary covered up *ren* with her hand]. Is this a word? [Several pupils responded with Yes]. *Child* is a word and makes sense by itself. *Ren* is not a word and makes no sense by itself.

[Mary writes the word *wren* on the board and reminded the class that this was an example of why we readers have to be very careful. *Ren* and *wren* sound alike, but only *wren* is a word)]. So *children* is NOT a compound word.

Mary: Let's try a couple more: *basketball*.

Beth: Yes, *basket* and *ball* are both words. One is a woven container, the other a bouncy toy.

Mary: Together *basket* and *ball* are the orange ball we throw into a hoop.

Mary: Now let's try firefighter. Give me a "thumbs up" (i.e., for yes), thumbs down" (i.e., for no) signal on whether firefighter is a compound word. [She quickly surveyed. All thumbs were up.]

Kyle: Fire and fighter are the two words.

S1: Fire is hot, burning, heat, and that fighter is someone who gets into a fight, a Ninja. Someone who puts fires out.

Mary: One more, the word is *connection*? (Observation Field Notes, 10/8/98, pp. 2-3).

Mary asked for thumbs up or down to check for understanding. This time most of the thumbs are pointed down. Spontaneously, several children announced that *connect* was a base word by itself, but that *tion* was not a word in this example.

Mary: Good, *connection* is not a compound word. (Field Notes, 10/8/98, pp. 2-3).

At this point, Mary displayed the compound word worksheet she had prepared on the overhead projector (See Appendix E, page 349). On part one of the worksheet the class was to read the clues and decide what the compound words were. On part two the compound word was supplied, the students were to write the clues for two words and then write clues for three examples to practice providing the clues and the compound words.

Part three was a group scavenger hunt for compound words. Mary went on to ask,

Mary: Who can recap what we need to do? [Mary checked with James to see if he remembered the assignment correctly. He did].

Mary was spot-checking to ascertain pupil understanding of the process she had laid out.

In this case, the directions made for a smooth transition from the large group activity on compound words as everyone moved to work in dyads or triads on the worksheets. It was

apparent that these children knew Mary's teaching routine well; they were clear about what she expected of them and followed through on these expectations. The reader should note that as the lesson continued, Mary demonstrated a means for keeping these children on task, but seemed unaware of the possibilities advanced for thinking about compound words by using informational and narrative literature. Her previously stated concerns about balance (Assertion #1, Assertion #6) are outweighed in favor of classroom management and an emphasis on skills

When Mary realized that Viola was struggling with the worksheet, specifically with the clue for basket (i.e., a woven container), she retrieved a small basket of silk flowers from her closet. By using the actual basket and providing minimal commentary, Mary gave Viola a visual clue, a meaningful assist to solve that worksheet item. During my observations it was not unusual for Mary to attempt to make a concept or idea clearer and more understandable with these children by using a concrete, tangible artifact, such as the basket. Shortly after, for Aaron, Mary hopped on both feet to give the clue for *jump*. Mary talked to one pair about the clue "heavy cord" for *rope*.

Mary: When you put them together you have a new word, *jump rope*.

(Observations, 10/8/98, p. 12)

They eventually got it. These instances are additional examples of Mary modeling for her pupils the sorts of problem solving situations they will need to consider as they grow and develop their skills in these areas (Assertion #5). She took clues from readers about their understanding and provided meaningful feedback to help them clarify and acquire new understandings.

When Mary announced this was to be a ten minute practice time for the compound exercise, all students seemed to use it efficiently and in a focused manner. Her modeling

of thinking about this skill-based exercise continued (excerpted from Observations, 7/9/98, pp. 13-17).

Mary: I see everyone at Table two working right now. I see many of you helping your partners out. That is wonderful to see! [Mary continued to move around the room and monitored the teams]..

Mary: Now let's move to part two of the worksheet. Does everyone have clues written for *toothpick*? The word is *toothpick*, you must develop clues. [Some pupils do experience some trouble here, but they eventually arrive at reasonable clues with Mary's prompting and encouragement.]

Mary: If you're stuck on *pick*, think of the pointed tool used in rock climbing or a tool to dig with.

S1: I said something in your mouth.

S2: Things you grab onto a mountain with or use in a mine?

Mary: Yes, a tool used in rock climbing.

Mary: I want all of you to think of three new compounds and write the clues for those on part B of section 2 of the worksheet.

After a short time:

Mary: Let's take a look at the answers here. We're all in different places, but I think we've got compounds figured out.

Mary: [At the overhead projector with a transparency of the worksheet]. Let's review compounds again (starts at part 1):

What's a woven container? [Mary verbally restated each of the samples and reinforced the thinking she wanted from the kids. This review and discussion of the answers was done in both large and small groups. She did the same with the section in

which students had to supply the clues, i.e., part 2-A, see Appendix E].

Mary: Did you come up with two clues for the two smaller words that we can try and guess?

Beth: Something you drink, *pop*, and something you eat, *corn* [for popcorn].

It is important to note Beth's misunderstanding here. She has chosen a drink, "pop," as a clue for popcorn. In reality her choice should have been "pop," the exploding sound. Even though Beth was able to offer two clues for this compound word, Mary did not comment on Beth's confusion between the meanings of "pop." Mary missed an opportunity to help Beth clarify her thinking about the nuances of different meanings often imbedded in English words.

Mary: What is the season after Spring?

S1: Summer.

Mary: That's correct. And . . . 12 o'clock noon . . . is an example of what? You can put these two words together.

S2: Summertime.

Mary: Summertime, yes. And when we have sudden brightness . . . what comes from a bulb?

S3: Flash and light for flashlight?

Mary: Sudden brightness is [from] a flash . . . ?

S4: [Bulb]. This is frustrating.

Mary: That's okay to feel frustrated; that happens You can start to get some frustrated feelings when you're trying to think of the definition of words.

That's OK . . .

Later, Mary offered students clues for a difficult compound word which many people

often mispronounce.

Mary: If you're not doing good, then you're doing . . . ?

S5: Bad

Mary: Something you put on in the winter . . . on your . . . hands?

S6: Gloves?

Mary: Bad gloves? Is that a compound word? Close We're close.

S7: Bad, badmitten [sic]!

Later, Mary again modeled her style of thinking about compound words, in general, and how she decides whether that thinking is correct, in particular (see Assertion #5). "You have a very right idea That's good He heard the word badmitten [sic]. He pulled them apart and came up with clues for smaller words." Mary wrote the word on the board and explained that this was a good example for discussion because words often sound differently than they are spelled or should be pronounced. She praised the child for bringing a common error about compound words to the attention of the entire class] Observation, 10/8/98, pp. 16-17). Written examples from the children's worksheets include:

S1: Your shoe fits on it (FOOT). We do this after we type on a computer (PRINT).

S2: Something you eat (HOT). A pet (DOG).

S3: You open or close this to go in or out (DOOR). You turn this to open (KNOB).

(Student Work Samples, 10/8/98).

Mary reminded table partners to be patient with one another and then announced a scavenger hunt in the room to find compounds in the newspaper (i.e., part three of the

worksheet). Importantly, Mary did not take these children beyond the act of finding compound words in the newspaper; nor did switch to other texts so that the fourth graders could practice in another context.

Mary: What you're going to do is go on a hunt, like a scavenger hunt We're going to be hunting for compound words with your partner. Now, you know what's going to happen, I'm afraid, some people are going to think a word like connection is a compound word, and your partner might think, no, it's not a compound word. You might think firefly is a compound word, and your partner might say, no, it's not, What is going to happen? (Here Mary is emphasizing flexibility, Assertion #4).

Beth: Put two heads together?

Mary: Two wrongs cannot make a right How could you solve this? What are you going to do if you're working with your partner and [she thinks] something is a compound word, and you think it's not a compound word?

Beth: Go ask the teacher?

Rick: Get the professor! [Rick points to me]

Mary: Remember, he's just watching you. He's invisible.

Mary: If you really get stuck on a word, and you feel your emotions start to get kind of heated, and you feel angry with your partner, take a breath, take a step back Say, we'll talk about it [later]. But for now, let's just skip it (Observations, 10/8/98, pp. 17-18).

Interestingly, in this example Mary spent a good deal of time guiding students how to settle disagreements about words and ideas by focusing on the interpersonal aspects of working in these areas in groups or pairs. For some reason she helped them think about

ways of avoiding conflict, but failed to guide them in using the text to solve disagreements over word meanings. Mary then modeled how to fill out the blanks on the back of the worksheet and asked kids to find as many examples as they could. She held up the newspaper's front page where she had highlighted twelve compound words she found the evening before. Mary verbally guided these children through her own thinking about compound words which she discovered on her own scavenger hunt. She reminded readers what to put on the blanks to the left and right of the equal signs (Observations, 10/8/99, p. 20). In using the think aloud strategy, Mary employed a metacognitive technique during which she orally verbalized her own thinking about the search process (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 256). There were spaces for at least sixteen compounds words found during the scavenger hunt. (See Appendix E, p. 349).

Newspapers were distributed. Again, these children went to work quickly and efficiently; approximately twenty minutes elapsed for this exercise. Mary moved about the room and stopped periodically at each of the tables. She asked about the compound words which were being found and asked children to relate their thinking about the choices they made. However, I want the reader to again note Mary's attention to highly detailed instructions for these children. As the exercise on compound words continued, Mary appeared to be contending with the balance issue once again: detailed structure versus opportunities for choice and discovery, and about how to contextualize the exercises within authentic literature (Assertion #6). Even though newspapers were used, Mary did not move the group beyond the simple act of locating compounds. No attempts were made to consider the nuances of meaning within the context of the informational or periodical literature.

Mary: So what I will be looking for?

Jack: Teamwork and a quiet noise level.

Mary: Good

S1: Do I need to write down the clues?

Mary: You just need to write down the full words, not the clues, then break it a part. *Firefly* becomes *fire* and *fly*. Any other compounds?

Mark: Expected.

Mary explains the “ed” suffix to Mark and asked if “ed” makes sense as a separate word here.

Mary: Is it a name here? (i.e., “Ed”?)

Mark: No, it’s not compound. (Observation Field Notes, 10/8/98, p. 5 and Observations, 10/8/99, p. 21)

The reader should note how carefully Mary clarified her directions for these children. Since there was little room for interpretations with these worksheets, her attention to such details made sense. At another table with Aaron and James, Mary reminded readers that a good strategy was to talk it over before asking her to confirm their choice (i.e., with the example, Nationwide). This was a use of the “ask three, then me strategy”. Mary announced that two minutes were left. Again, however, Mary’s emphasis seemed to be on procedure and “doing the right thing” instead of showing these children how to use the context and their own prior knowledge to solve debates or questions about compound words.

As the newspapers were re-folded and collected, Mary asked her pupils to examine their lists and pick one really terrific compound word which had been found in the newspaper. The whole class then listened to each offering and decided whether the words were, in actuality, compound words.

Allison: Nation+wide

Beth: Peace+keepers

Sam: Champion+ship

Mary: Is ship really a separate word or a suffix?

A discussion ensued about the role of “ship” at the end of words like this one, friendship and companionship. The group decided that “ship” was a suffix.

Sam: It’s not a compound. (Observation Field Notes, 10/8/98, p. 5)

Before she moved on, Mary announced the group grades for this session. She regularly did this after any sort of collaborative work in her classroom. For teamwork, she awarded most everyone an A; a few she said would get A- (but did not say why). The grade for the noise level in the classroom was A-. Mary reminded them that she knew they had to talk in order to complete this exercise; they had all done very well. She continued to focus on behavior and cooperation rather than the very real need for using critical thinking and prior knowledge to complete the worksheet on compound words.

During our interview Mary made it clear that she read as much as she could on, among other things, classroom management, grouping, being a supportive teacher and building a positive classroom atmosphere. Not only did she claim this assisted her in planning for instruction for diverse students, but also allowed her to be very deliberate and intentional in the classroom in building an environment conducive to learning for her range of readers. This approach and the following exchange are examples of Mary’s commitment to reflective practice (Assertion #3). Mary was also modeling a positive and upbeat attitude about the efforts of her students (Assertion #5). This praise was sincere. “We have had an active morning; now is the time just to rest your mind and listen to the story. We’ll not do talking” (10/8/98, p. 21). Mary assigned James and Paul to pick up

the newspaper and the compound work sheet.

Mary also believed she had a clear conception of the role of flexibility, choice and variety in her fourth grade classroom. She intentionally planned for a range of activities and exercises which were aimed to engage all readers, as described in Assertion Four. Up to this point the fourth graders have been engaged in a variety of participation structures: large group, small groups or teams and pairs.

Mary included what she called “Snack and Story Time” as a regular component of the morning schedule, a time when she orally read a novel to the whole group while the children ate a variety of snacks brought from home. As previously mentioned, Mary had been reading *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen. That day, Mary read the next chapter of *Hatchet* which was about a skunk attack.

At the end of “Snack n’ Story” Mary and the children moved on to the next of the day’s reading instruction: learning about Reciprocal Teaching and prediction. The following exchange (10/8/99, pp. 26-28) once again demonstrated Mary’s deliberate thinking about the professional reading she does and the professional development made available by the district (i.e., Assertion #2). This prediction exercise was an outgrowth of her participation in the Literacy Learning Network (Richard Owens Publishing, Inc.) summer workshops and the work of the district’s literacy committee. Working with the reading specialist in her building, Mary has adapted instruction in prediction skills for the students in her fourth grade.

The exchanges which follow are also examples of Mary directly teaching a specific reading strategy. Mary provided lots of guiding and telling, but she offers little opportunity for the readers to actually use the strategy with extended chunks of texts. It is possible that Mary does not demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of how to use this

strategy, or perhaps she is “boxed in” by the way this exercise treats the strategy and the worksheet (see Appendix E, p .349) as an isolated skills or event. Mary’s action in this instance was quite different from her earlier adaptations of ideas she has culled from others. When she uses extended text, she is more flexible and willing to alter her plans. When she uses worksheet or drill exercises, she seems to do something quite different than her stated intentions and stays focused on those skills instead of the very real need to operationalize them in authentic literacy events.

Mary: We are looking at the end here, our last step of reciprocal teaching . . . making predictions.

Mary: What does the word prediction mean? Where have we heard it before?

SG1: Guessing and finding out what the answer is later.

Mary: Is it just a wild guess? It may be an educated guess Everyday there are predictions that go on . . . TV. There’s a job. Someone’s job. Their whole job is to make predictions. Do you know what I am thinking about? Put your news on. If your Mom and Dad put the news on, there’s someone there [who’s] always making predictions Who am I thinking about?

Alex:: The weatherman helps us guess the weather. They [sic] estimate about hurricanes.

Mary: Exactly.

Alex: He is good at estimating, and they [sic] check on their [sic] computers when they [sic] think they’re [sic] going to get it.

Mary: Yes, meteorologists make good guesses, or educated guesses They let us know when they are able to predict something, probably better than we

can. So, as you're reading along, what good readers do is, they make predictions as to what is going to happen. You read one paragraph, and you predict. Okay, this is what I think the next paragraph is going to be about. Let's think about predictions . . . You think of a book and the title is The Return of the Jack O'Lantern, Part II. Now what would you predict that the book is going to be about? Good readers will do things like this. What's that book going to be about? . . .

Jack: Maybe it's a Goosebumps book.

Mary: Yes, maybe the Jack o'Lantern comes back to life. Very good. That's a pretty good guess. Let me ask you this. Make this prediction. Let's say you are staying at your aunt's house, and she says, "Well, I am going grocery shopping." She's going to be gone for an hour. What would you predict she would come back with? . . . Do you expect her to come back home with a new horse and buggy? Or a new 747 jet?

The section is an example of the Mary modeling her own thinking about the meaning and uses of predictions as a reading strategy (Assertion #5). She carefully walked students through her own thinking about a variety of situations where predictions might be used in order to demonstrate one way to think about uses of prediction. Even though her clues were quite obvious, Mary did seem to emphasize the necessity of paying attention to the actual words in a title or passage before readers make predictions.

Mary distributed a packet of prediction worksheets. These were prepared by the building's reading specialist initially for the MEAP, but they were used then because the district literacy committee believes the strategy teaches good metacognitive skills. The guides were based on materials from the Teaching Reading Comprehension Workshop

developed by Yvonne Davis and Anne Marie Palinscar (undated). Mary announced that some of the worksheet would be completed in large groups, some by small groups and some by pairs. (The text of the worksheet is located in Appendix E, page 349). All exchanges below are based on this prediction exercise (Field Notes, 10/8/98, p. 7).

Mary: Let's make predictions based on the categories listed in Part 1--Predicting from prior knowledge.

Mary: What would expect to see when you visit a pet store?

S1: Hamsters

S2: How do you spell it?

Mary: Some of these we're going to just have to spell the best we can. Sound it out, chunk it apart, and spell the best you can, unless you already know.

Hamsters is one idea. What else might you see in pet stores?

S3: Dogs.

Mary: You might see dogs. Would you take time right now, if you've got other ideas . . . you write those down under numbers 2, 3, 4, 5. Put five animals down there Could you see anything besides animals at a pet store?

S4: People.

S5: Pet food.

Mary: You might see pet food. Sure. What else?

S6: Toys and leashes for pets.

Mary: Toys and leashes and other tools that you need for pets. Exactly.

S7: Fish (Observations, 11/8/98, pp. 30-31).

Such a detailed and step-by-step guided practice through this section of the prediction worksheet can ensure that the children fully understand Mary's expectations. It can also

be indicative of what Mary labeled as “that droning in the background” in her own learning to read experience (Interview, 7/9/98, p. 13) and her attempt to overcompensate for the immaturity she sees in this group of fourth graders. Whatever the case, Mary shifted her attention to predictions about television shows and vacations in the next series of exchanges. It would have been interesting and informative to witness these children practicing with extended pieces of text. Whether they are able to predict accurately based on the information culled from the text can provide the teacher with useful information about whether they have extended and refined prediction skills.

S8: What kind of shows do you get on Saturday morning TV?

Mary: You might know better than I do. You are in fourth grade. You are expert at what’s on TV on Saturday mornings.

S9: One Saturday Morning.

Mary: You know this better than I do. One Saturday Morning. Is that a TV show? . . . Would you now take time to write down three other things that you would predict this Saturday morning, if you would sit down and turn the TV on, you pretty much know for sure. This is a pretty educated guess what’s going to be on.

Several readers blurted out a variety of responses all at once:

SGrp: One Saturday Morning, Recess, Power Rangers, Spider Man, Mortal Combat.

S10: (reading from the worksheet) What kinds of activities do you predict you will do on vacation?

Mary: . . . On vacation we’re probably all going to do different things. If it’s summer vacation, [students] what might you do?

S11: I can only think of one.

S12 Chicago. Go on a trip.

Mary: Okay, have you gone on a trip before?

S13: Yeah.

Mary: What kinds of things did you do? Where did you go? . . . How about Christmas vacation? What types of things did you do on Christmas vacation? There are fun things you do on Christmas vacation?

S14: [mumbled response]

Mary: If you went to the Zoo, what types of animals would you see? This time we are not going to do one or two, you need to write all five (i.e., on your practice sheet).

S15: Bear, bald eagle, horses, tarantulas, octopus (Observations, 11/8/98, pp. 32-36).

While Mary methodically guided her students through the prediction packet, she did not seek expanded responses or move children to extended passages of text. Many children participated in this effort, but most responded in single words or short phrases. Curiously, Mary did not pursue opportunities where she might have discovered the thinking behind the responses the children provided. For example, she could have asked, “How is it that you know what a tarantula is? When did you see one? What did you think about it? Were you frightened? Explain why you were or were not frightened.” When she asked readers about vacations she may have confused their thinking about the concept of vacation: a trip in a car or plane away from home versus the gaps between sessions in school where one might not leave home. These were missed opportunities for helping children clarify their own thinking about the predictions they made. In spite of her stated

belief that children need choices and room for exploration, Mary seemed to be teaching the strategy while forgetting about the reader and the text and the role strategies play in the grand scheme of reading. Had she lost sight of this larger purpose and is just teaching what the strategy is? Or was she perseverating on the structure and content of the prediction worksheet? If she had asked more interesting questions would the children's responses have been more varied, richer and more extended? The following exchange can help us consider this further.

After a few minutes, Mary moved the class to part two of the prediction worksheet, Predicting from Titles. Students read the sentences for all to hear. This section occurred over a period of about five minutes and demonstrated Mary's propensity for using highly detailed directed instruction and for maintaining the integrity of the worksheet the reading specialist had designed.

Mary: Okay. Now, I'm still sensing that we've got a lot of talkative mouths. We're going to have to try hard to stay on task. I'm going to assign your table the questions to work on. You'll have to make prediction, and then share with the rest of us what predictions you made Now, we shouldn't hear people talking off task. I shouldn't hear table 2 trying to talk with table 3. Talk with people on your group and stay on task. Okay. Are we ready to do that? You don't look like it. Everyone seated? Okay. I'm going to give you your sentences right now. Table 1, you'll work on number 5. Table 2, you work on number 6. Table 3, work on number 7. Table 4, work on number 8. Table 5, on number 9 and table 6, on number 10Go ahead and give it a try right now. You may go on. If your group is done while you're waiting for the other groups, you may

work ahead.

In this section and the section to follow, note Mary's continued consideration of procedural moves and on individual behaviors.

Let's give one more minute to finish up Let's stop working together right now. And the voices be quiet Let's listen to what you came up with. I still hear voices at Table 5. We're going to have to listen closely to what the groups came up with. That's our job right now. [After a minute or two] Let's see. Would you turn back--everybody turn back to the first page to sentence number 5. It was the one group that I did. Let's see what kind of predictions they came up with (Observations, 10/8/98, pp. 36-37).

Mary was exposed to the ideas and classroom management theories of Jacob Kounin and Carolyn Evertson, along with a number of different, less traditional approaches to classroom management during teacher education, such as peer mediation, and the ideas of Alfie Kohn in Punish by Rewards: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise, and Other Bribes (1993). It is possible that Mary was attempting to use Kounin's concept of *withitness* here in order to ensure that readers will stay on task during this part of the lesson. "Withitness is the degree to which the teacher corrects misbehavior before it intensifies or spreads to more students and also targets the correct student when doing so It is apparent that underlying aspects of withitness include good monitoring and prompt handling of inappropriate behavior . . ." (Evertson, et al, 1997, p. 103).

Writers for the American Federation of Teachers Educational Issues Department, Biles, Billups and Veitch, make this concept even plainer.

With-it-ness is defined as a teacher's ability to communicate to her students that she knows what they are doing in the classroom at all times. In effect, with-it-ness is what

a teacher does to give her students the impression that she must have eyes in the back of her head because she knows all and sees all. Teachers who exhibit this ability are more successful in preventing student behavior disruptions in their classes and in keeping students working on their academic tasks than teachers who do not exhibit this ability. If students perceive that the teacher really knows what's going on in the classroom at all times they are less inclined toward misbehavior because there's a fear of getting caught. (p. 6)

Why Mary should choose to be so focused on the behavior of her readers is a mystery. It is possible that Mary realized this exercise could be boring and that these children might lose interest and misbehave, so she decided to use detailed instructions for behavior as a sort of "preemptive strike." But at no time during my observations did even one student become unruly, throw a tantrum, show disrespect, or disrupt a lesson in any way. To be sure, it could be that Mary had used this approach to managing behavior in the classroom since the beginning of the year and that even though the students knew her expectations, Mary believed she could not "let down her guard" with these same children she had already described as immature. Mary chose a strong teacher role in these lessons. However, through her systematic, careful planning for instruction and her upbeat personal demeanor these children knew without a doubt that Mary genuinely cared for them and that she wanted them to succeed.

The reader should note that in the following exchanges, Mary was accepting of student responses to more questions on the prediction worksheet. However, there was little opportunity for these readers to expand their thinking about the prompts; even when Mary indicated she would like to hear more, the children simply reworded the same responses again. Mary accepted the response and moved on to the next prompt.

Mary: Okay. "Monster of the Sea." If you were to make a prediction of what the movie would be about, what would you think? Everyone else should be thinking about that right now. Monsters of the Sea. What would you expect.

Mike: Monster of the sea.

Mary: Well, like what?

Mike: Sea monsters.

Mary: Sea monsters, you bet. It might be about sea monsters.

Chris: An eel?

Mary: Wow! Yeah, let's put down an eel Marty what did you put?

Marty: Slimy monsters.

Mary: Slimy monster. Oooooohhh. Slimy monster, yes What else might it be about?

S16: Werewolves.

Mary: Werewolves? Oceans of the deep? Are you thinking deep in the forest?

S16: Maybe there might be other characters.

Mary: Okay. Good thinking. Maybe it would be about werewolves. A werewolf in the deep forest. It doesn't have to be the deep ocean (Observations, 10/8/98, pp. 39-40).

Clearly, Mary has maintained her strong emphasis on plenty of teacher guidance through direct instruction at this point. She also did not provide extended passages on which these children could practice their developing skills in prediction. She remained positive, upbeat and supportive throughout.

When Mary offered up a movie title about ghosts, a discussion about the spelling

of *eerie* ensued. Mary suggested one strategy to deal with the spelling of unfamiliar words was to write them down and look at them to determine whether they “looked correct” or whether they made sense spelled that way. She stated, “Write it and see if it looks right. You can kind of play with it” (Observations, 10/8/99, p. 41). From here the exercise entered into a long string of books titles read aloud to Mary and the class by selected children. Mary participated in the predictions by adding questions; children provided specific responses. Interestingly, while this exchange provided lots of modeling and direct instruction about the prediction strategy, the children were, in fact, doing so with titles of books, rather than the actual books they chose to read. Using prediction with extended passages of authentic text would take the reader further into the process of predicting to acquire and integrate, and to extend and refine, understanding about a variety of texts. Practicing with actual titles and books would encourage children to consider the accuracy of their predictions, to adjust those predictions based on evidence, and to incorporate a flexible attitude into their everyday reading.

Greta: “Animal Homes” is the title of this story. What do you think you will learn about?

Mary: What kind of homes do birds have? What kinds of animal homes are there?

Random: Birdhouse. Nests. Caves. Habitats.

Mary: You are doing a good job. This is what good readers do--they make predictions about what is coming next.

Steve: “Cowboy Chores”?

Mary: What kinds of chores do cowboys do?

Random: Rounding up cows. Branding. Fixing gates.

Mary: What about a book titled “Flyers of the World”?

Random: Eagles. Toucans. Crows. Planes. Helicopters (Observation, 10/8/98, pp 42-45).

Again, this rapid-fire routine was repeated for the final section of the worksheet which focused on using context and information from the story to make predictions. Mary read three sample paragraphs aloud (see Appendix E, p. XX). Respondents were to state what they thought they would hear about next, if the text were to be continued. An example: “This is a very special animal that has fins and scales. It can move in the water. But it likes to stay still. The animal is called a leaf fish. Do you know why? What do you predict you will hear about next?”

Mary: What about the Leaf fish? It’s shape? How does it get its food? How does it move? What is its habitat?

Greta and Mike explained that readers would most likely learn how the leaf fish has that name (Field Notes, 10/8/98, p. 7).

Taken alone these individual instructional events can be misleading. It is not simply the case that Mary is attempting to maintain a strong instructional frame. Overall, Mary moved back and forth between allowing for plenty of choice for readers and plenty of teacher controlled direct instruction. She seemed to be contending with how to reach a balance between the very real need to ensure for these fourth graders to possess the skills they need for passing state-mandated testing and the need for these children to use such reading strategies to solve “reading problems” with genuine texts as lifelong learners. Of course, these exchanges are direct illustrations of the balance issue, described in Assertion #6, which Mary has found so perplexing in her teaching. Mary is aware of the implications of the theories and research she learned in teacher education. Although she

was never introduced to Bernstein's ideas in teacher education, she has stated repeatedly her awareness of the need for a balance between teacher control of the reading curriculum and the influence children should have on that same curriculum. She is struggling with how to implement her constructivist and developmental ideals with the realities of the fourth grade classroom.

Observation Session Two

At 10:47 a.m. on the second day, Mary's fourth grade class returned from instruction in the building's computer lab. Mary directed them to take out the Invitations to Literacy (1996, Houghton Mifflin) reading anthology titled "Imagine." The focus today was on expressive reading in a play format (i.e., drama). In planning instruction around a variety of activities, by designing interactions which involved small groups, the whole class, and individuals, and by focusing on both skills and plenty of reading and writing, Mary was exemplifying the professional behaviors described in Assertion One (i.e., balance of activities, materials and roles) and Assertion Four (i.e., flexibility, variety and choice). Mary read:

Turn to page 109. This will be our first time reading a play out loud. The play is called "Alice and Alex" and it is a play adapted from the story "Alice in Wonderland" by Lewis Carroll. We will read this play reader's theater style. Unlike a play you've attended, there will be no costumes and no stage. Remember that as we read this we want to read with as much expressions as possible. Pretend you ARE on the stage (Observation Field Notes, 10/9/98, p. 1).

Mary reminded these children to think about how a character should be interpreted. She placed a transparency on which she had assigned each child a part in the play on the

overhead screen in front of the room. She had divided the class into groups: Mary would guide and monitor one group, a paraprofessional would work with another group, and a parent volunteer would help a third. All children had parts to read in one group or another. And they all appeared to be very excited about reading this play out loud. Mary again provided a detailed introduction to the children.

... We're going to do something today called Reader's Theater⁷. Now, have you ever been to a theater before, or seen a play? Would you just quietly raise your hand if you've been to a play, or to a theater and seen a play before? [Many students raised hands.] What we're going to kind of do is something like what you've seen, only we're going to do it without costumes. And we won't be up acting around, and we don't have our lines memorized. But what you will be doing is taking on a character. You're going to be assigned a character in this play, and you can become that person You will not be you anymore, for a little while. You're going to be your character. And, then what you do is, as we are reading this play, every time you see your new name appear, you read that part your character says. And you read it with expression that you think the character would have . . . (Observation, 10/9/98, pp. 1-2)

Mary talked directly about the practical realities of reader's theater and plays (i.e., paying attention to cues and moods, for example) and how a reader's attention to details and how decisions about expressions can make the character "come alive" for listeners. She continued to assist these children in operationalizing the taking on of a role in a play:

⁷Harris and Hodges (1995) define reader's theater as performance of literature, a story, play, poetry . . . aloud expressively by one or more persons, rather than acted (p. 206).

Okay? So when you get your character, you think . . . okay, how would this person talk? For example, I see an Alice in here. Alice is one of the characters. Well, if I'm assigned to be Alice, I'm thinking about how would Alice sound? . . . What ways does she talk? How does she act toward other people? You know, we could have twenty-seven people in here being Alice, and we could have twenty-seven different interpretations. That means we could hear it twenty-seven times, and it would sound different every time. It's up to you how you want to interpret your character (Observations, 10/9/99, pp. 1-2)

Mary maintained her usual detailed presentation of assignments and directions here, but she also told students directly that this was an instance where each of them could be original, creative and unique. It would have been helpful for Mary to also model her own use of clues from the "Alice" text which could guide the reader's choice of interpretations for Reader's Theater. Such action would have allowed her students to "step into" text and experience as art. She did not do this at this time. Her focus on individual interpretations, however, was one example of her desire to allow children more choice within the roles she assigned to them.

Mary reminded those pupils who were to leave the room for assistance with the reading paraprofessional to take along their GO-VO cards. If they were able to finish work early, then they could practice their vocabulary. Interestingly, as it happened, those groups which remained in the room finished early and read the play two and three times. Very few children eventually practiced the vocabulary game. The individuals and the groups really seemed to enjoy this opportunity. In laying out these parameters for students, Mary was demonstrating her awareness of the role played by flexibility, choice and variety in helping readers remain engaged with an assignment (Assertion #4).

Additionally, she was addressing the need for balance in reading instruction as well (Assertion #1). In this instance, Mary was using a different sort of instruction materials than she uses with drill exercises; she used full texts here. These children have numerous encounters with book reading and talk about those books. Mary laid the groundwork here for continued thinking about text by permitting children to continue practicing the Reader's Theater and talking within "cast" groups about how these repeat performances were going.

Mary reminded her readers to move to their spots for this reader's theater activity. Unlike her previous reading sessions during which she appeared to maintain a strong control over reader responses and actions, here Mary appeared to adhere to the spirit and the letter of what reader's theater is intended to be: expressive, individualistic, and repetitive to provide opportunities for practicing what good readers do. Note that Mary began with strong teacher control over the lesson and released some of that control as the reader's theater activity progressed during the morning.

Given her stated concerns about the social maturity of these fourth graders, Mary was very intentional in laying out parameters for the lesson. She reminded readers how to listen and participate and provided visual reminders (in the form of a transparency listing assigned parts) for them if they forgot their assigned parts.

Okay, [Mike] your chair is already facing your table group. I see that you did a nice job getting into your circle; have your books with you. Pete, I can't be interrupted. Otherwise, we're going to miss the instructions. Okay? What you are going to do is, we're going to begin, and this is going to be our first time through, and our first time through can be kind of rough. You might lose your place. You might have trouble pronouncing a word. We're going to have to take our time. We're going to have to

be very patient for each other. You can't get frustrated and you have a very important job. You have to follow along with every person [who] reads. Why is it so important to follow along, Marcus? [Marcus replied that this was how readers would know when it was time for them to read]. Yes, you wouldn't know where you were exactly. If every person did that this would be a four hour play. And it normally doesn't take that long. And it loses its excitement. So our job is to follow along . . .

(Observations, 10/9/99, pp. 5-6)

Even though it is likely that Mary was laying out detailed instructions for these kids in light of Kounin's "withitness," she could also have been overcompensating for their known immaturity. She had been clearly modeling her own behaviors, thinking, and talking in order to provide a template for students to follow as they read and thought about the texts (Assertion #5, teacher modeling of expectations).

Mary moved between/among the groups as they read and provided positive comments on expressive reading when appropriate. When Greta pronounced "Cheshire" as in "Cheshire cat" correctly, Mary affirmed her with the comment, "Right on!" One student in this group, Ken, struggled continuously, as he had the previous day, while reading his assigned role. Remarkably, all of his group members were supportive and helpful. They were all very positive; not one individual made disparaging remarks. It would be intriguing, however, to ascertain whether Ken's discomfort and the group's support stemmed from the fact that Ken was reading a girl's part, that of Marge.

Ken read *answer* for the word *always*. Mary gently corrected him and told him she was doing so because substituting *answer* would change meaning in the play. Mark read slowly and haltingly, but accurately, and with little expression. Mary told Mark that *quarreled* meant *argued*. Ken took over the reading again and his cast members helped

him with almost every word. Mark lost his place again. Mary helped him find it, then Mark began finger pointing at the text and reading. Mark read *hands* for *heads*.

Ken and Mark seemed to pay attention to the initial letters or sounds in words as they read. When they saw an “A,” they apparently said the first word which came to mind with the same letter. This would have been an ideal situation for Mary to address the need for paying attention also to the medial and final letters and sounds in words. Perhaps she believed that time was not available for such a minilesson.

As the reading continued, Mary provided more correct pronunciations. Greta read the part of Alice with terrific expression. Mary set the stage for the second reading of the play:

Mary: [Speaking to the class] . . . You already have become familiar with your character. You are kind of familiar with the words of your part. This was our dress rehearsal. Now it’s time for the performance. (Observation, 10/9/98, p. 7)

Interestingly Mary, attempted to excite these readers by appealing to the knowledge of plays they had acquired in assemblies at school. She talked about dress rehearsals as preparation and practice but made no attempt to make sure all children knew what she meant. While in the end, Mary lost another opportunity to evoke personal responses to literature in these children, this was her way of allowing the children to read the play a second time through and was indicative of her desire to affirm an active role for children during reading instruction.

The second time through the script, these fourth graders were really excited about the reader’s theater experience, although some read with less expression than the first time through. As stated in Assertion #3, Mary regularly adjusted her instruction and her daily

lesson plans based on reactions of children to a lesson in progress. In the dialogue and description which follow Mary took the wishes of her students into account as the group considered the first reading of the *Alice* play. Rather than simply moving on to the next lesson she had planned for the day, Mary agreed with her students' wishes to reread the play script when several shouted, "We want to read it again" (Observation, 10/9/98, pp. 7-8). Later Mary asked the groups to report out on the differences in the Reader's Theater the second time through. In general, children responded that it was easier to read because they were more familiar with the character's words and actions. Immediately, Mary offered two options to those children who wished to read the play through a third time: reassign the parts and reread the play in the same groups, or divide the play among fewer readers with each having more parts to manage and read and send different groups to different parts of the room (Field Notes, 10/9/98, pp. 3-4).

So, in spite of her concern about the maturity of these fourth graders, and her focus on lengthy, detailed instructions for all reading lessons, Mary was able to flexibly use the reader's theater format in order to allow the children to have meaningful input into the curriculum. Based on the feedback she extrapolated from these students' comments and actions, Mary made instructional decisions which shaped how these children would be able to complete an assigned lesson with the dramatic adaptation of *Alice In Wonderland* (Assertion Three).

On the third reading, two girls decided to do GO-VO, the vocabulary game, three boys gathered in the doorway area, re-divided the parts and read the play again. Mary gave each student a three by five inch card to write down the new division of parts, so they could remember what they decided. She pointedly did this as a reminder about being independent and self-regulating as readers. She had also built-in choices. Mary moved to

group A at Table Six. She sat by Matt and guided him through the script. He was struggling and she provided the fingerpointing to focus his attention on individual words. Matt was a very quiet reader. Kids reading the other parts, however, remained very patient and supportive of Matt. Mary moved about the room frequently during this third reading. She left Matt and went back to Ken to assist and support him in the same way. Very quickly, Mary went back to Matt. Other students joined in and gently reminded Ken what to do. Again Ken's reading was very choppy and he was seemingly uncomfortable; nonetheless, readers in this group were supportive. Rick read his lines, added extra commentary of his own, and he giggled relentlessly [it's accepted]. Just as Mary moved back to support Matt again, the teacher aide entered the room to take Matt away for special instruction and the administration of the integrated theme test for the Houghton Mifflin basal series. The readers in group A became confused and all read Alice's lines all at once. They giggled delightedly and realized their mistake. Order was quickly self-imposed and the reading began anew. These children knew what to do to regulate the session. Expression had really improved on this third round—as did the comfort level of the students (Field Notes, 10/9/98, p. 4).

Mary went over to group six, where she made three suggestions: either play GO-VO, reread the play as the same group, or divide into smaller groups and each read multiple parts, then exchange parts and reread again. Once again Mary's decision to offer options to these children came into play. They, in turn, had to consider these options when they decided to focus on the assigned work, or to select another activity. Mary said, "Listen up everyone. These changes will take some cooperation. Work together to decide what will happen next." These kids were really excited about doing this play again. It was their first reader's theater of this school year (Field Notes, 10/9/98, p 5). Mary assisted a

variety of children in taking on new parts in addition to the old ones. All kids were now back in the room—the paraprofessional returned with her group.

Mary questioned the class about whether they should plan on doing reader's theater again. She announced that she has a thick book of possible stories and plays which could be done this way. They immediately shouted, "Yes." Mary agreed that this would be an excellent idea. Again, she demonstrated her willingness to seek and take cues from students in making instructional decisions (Assertion Three).

Greta asked if she and others could reassemble in Reader's Theater groups during KBAR (kick back and read or DEAR time] later in the day. Mary agreed, even though this option would interfere with daily reading at the independent level which Mary saw as an essential part of the reading curriculum. Mary also announced that she eventually would like to do the play with costumes and have it performed for other grades through the school's closed circuit TV system. This idea received shouts of approval from the class.

Mary: The K-BAR option is a good idea because repetition makes you familiar with vocabulary—thus your vocabulary expands. The more you read and practice, the more your expression improves. The more you read, the more your comprehension improves (paraphrase, Field Notes, 10/9/98, p. 6).

Mary reminded the fourth graders that they would all be reading a new version of Little Red Riding Hood and putting the wolf on trial in a courtroom play in front of the whole school in the very near future. She had planned this as part of the reader's theater practices—small groups, switching groups, repetition, and then a performance for a larger group.

RJ blurted out that everyone had good expression (Field Notes, 10/9/98, p. 6).

Class was dismissed for lunch at Noon.

Preliminary Conclusions

In general, Mary is a positive, supportive, encouraging teacher who allows for reader comments and input into the curriculum, but she also maintains a strong control over the design of the reading curriculum and the shape and form of the interactions in her reading classroom. While she does teach strategies and procedures with the aim that children will learn to use them during their independent and instructional reading, she seems not to be aware that she is not pushing these children deeper into the use of these tools for learning within extensive and meaningful contexts. Isolated practice, rather than a balanced (Assertion #1, Assertion #6) approach to literacy, appears to be the norm.

What then, can be concluded as a result of interviewing and observing Mary? How do the assertions about her practice answer our initial questions? What do these six assertions tell us about the ways in which she makes instructional decisions?

Mary incorporates what she knows about students from her professional reading and study (Assertion #2) and by way of her careful observation of readers and consideration of the feedback which she encourages readers to give to her (Assertion #3). Even when she provides opportunities for children to select from an array of choices, Mary continues to maintain a strong hold on the reading curriculum in her classroom. She is able to adjust this hold. However, it appears that when Mary is involved in an exercise or instruction directly related to the MEAP or to district directives about reading, she maintains a strong hold on events and actions. When the focus shifts to less of a “skill and drill,” or less of a procedural orientation, then Mary is quite willing to tolerate more

variety and a range of student feedback in shaping the lesson, as when she taught Reader's Theater. In either case, she gives extraordinary attention to the behavior of these children whom she has described as immature. Mary is struggling with her desire to provide a more open-ended reading curriculum and her need to maintain order and control in the classroom. The constructivist in her, and the developmental orientation of her teacher education program, are wrestling for her sympathies. It is not clear whether Mary believes such a dichotomy leaves her with an either/or set of options, or whether during my observations she was still trying to "find her way" with these children.

Mary stated quite clearly during our interviews that she believed reading and language study was hard work, but that it should also be fun and playful if children were to be active and willing participants. So it could be that Mary perceives herself as caught between an instructional "rock and a hard place"-- skills, facts, details and procedures as knowledge to be tested on one side and a nurturing love for reading imbued with the playful aspects of responding to real literature on the other. We know that Mary has considered strategies and pedagogy taught to her by mentors and that she has modeled and used those flexibly (Assertion #4, Assertion #5). Apparently, she believes that her current situation and students limit her instructional options in powerful ways. This may have limited her awareness of the attention she should have been giving to the responses of children to literature as art; there was no indication during my observations that Mary was attempting to address the aesthetic aspects of reading with these children. If the playful and delightful aspects of language study are important, as she believed they were, those could have served as a means for Mary to begin the process of prodding these children toward a more sophisticated and personal appreciation of literature. For reasons that are not clear, this did not occur.

How does Mary use theoretical knowledge about the structures of reading in planning and carrying out reading instruction? Like, Kate, Mary makes extensive use of reading strategies that provide broad structures or frameworks (Assertion #5) which help students learn. She provides multiple opportunities for the guided and independent practice of these strategies and she consistently models her own thinking about how these strategies might be used by maturing readers. Mary also emphasizes a variety of tools which nurture and support different learners at various stages of the reading process (Assertion #1, Assertion #3). Early in her teacher education program she recognized that some readers would benefit from reading strategies (i.e., SQ3R which stands for survey, question, read, recite, review) that she would not have selected for teaching or that she would not personally use for her own learning. So, as she learned during student teaching, she went outside of her own comfort zone and learned to enthusiastically present those strategies and techniques to children who needed them in order to be successful readers and thinkers. Surprisingly, Mary failed to take these exercises to the next logical step: practice with extended chunks of text. In doing so, she likely left some children with the impression that all there was to reading was to follow the steps in a reading strategy. In falling into such a routine, Mary may not have periodically questioned her own planning and practice in order to make the necessary and appropriate adjustment during instruction.

What about classroom feedback? Gathering and using feedback from students to make instructional decisions seemed to be a central focus of Mary's plans for teaching (Assertion #3, Assertion #4). Mary intentionally talked with her pupils about what was working or not working for them as they moved through the lessons she had designed for them. She made it clear that what they think and believe about these lessons is important and essential to her success as a teacher. Even as she failed to make plans for digging

deeper into processes and strategies, Mary's own modeling or thinking aloud about what worked and did not work in the reading process provided opportunities to assist these young readers in becoming more reflective about their own practice. Opportunities for more independent and substantive practice with a variety of texts could likely have moved these children further along the continuum from emerging readers to mature readers.

Finally, what can be said about the range of strategies used in Mary's classroom? Because Mary is cognizant of the wide range of readers in her fourth grade classroom, she purposefully selects and incorporates a range of strategies for them to practice and use even while being guided by district mandates. She strives for a balance between their needs and their desires in reading (Assertion #1, Assertion #6), albeit ones emphasized by her district and the MEAP tests. One primary means Mary employs for keeping abreast of these needs is her continuing focus on professional reading and development (Assertion #2); through this professional activity she endeavors to remain informed and current in her thinking and her practice. She is aware of the demands of her district and of state mandated assessments such as the MEAP test. But she also wrestles with how to best provide the range of reading experiences and strategies children need in order to mature as readers without overwhelming them. Mary's pronounced emphasis on skills and processes embedded in the morning's reading strategy instruction may have limited my access to the planning and decisions which she puts into other parts of the curriculum, such as the afternoon "Kick Back and Read" [KBAR] sessions. While she described these sessions as replete with student choice, multiple options for reading, this structure is not completely clear.

Suffice it to say that Mary, like Kate and Adam, is striving to become a thinking, collaborative elementary reading teacher. The duties and demands of teaching, some of

which have little to do directly with reading instruction, are possibly diverting her attention and energies to places where she would rather not be. In spite of her avowed wish to be flexible, to be alert to the nuances of individuals needs, and a to be fine mentor to her fourth graders, Mary appears to be focusing on the skills, the steps of processes, and the details of reading at the expense of guiding these young children into a wider world of literature as a model for aesthetic appreciation, for critical thinking and for lifelong learning.

Chapter 6

Adam Thomas

In this case I will argue that there are serious discrepancies between Adam's vision for reading instruction and his practice in reading instruction as played out in his fourth grade classroom. Adam Thomas claims to be aware of the core issues regarding literacy which are embedded in his teacher education program, and the role his experience in that program should be playing in his classroom. However, he appears to be in a very real sense "stuck" in his own elementary school experience as a reader. In his view, a book is to be read for understanding; but Adam seems to operate within a limited definition of "understanding" (i.e., understanding means learning the factual information about a story. In this chapter I will examine Adam's assertion that he is teaching his fourth graders to read for understanding.

I have laid this chapter out in the following sections: a physical description of his classroom; a tally of the questions Adam typically asks during reading instruction; the three days of observations intermixed with commentary followed by preliminary conclusions about Adam's practice.

Adam's Classroom and Vision for Reading

Adam's fourth grade classroom is in the newest elementary building in the district. Opened only a few years ago, the building has the latest technology and some allowances for flexibility in its physical layout. While classrooms line both sides of four long hallways which radiate like spokes from the central library, they are not the seemingly monotonous squares which Kate and Mary occupy in their older buildings. Many of the irregularly shaped classrooms in Adam's school have shared faculty offices between two

classrooms. The offices serve as teachers' planning spaces, as areas where small groups can and do congregate, and of course, as storage for all sorts of educational materials.

Adam's room is large and irregular in shape. Near the doorway, there is a large sink and counter area with groups of tables for conducting all kinds of lessons, from reading to art. The two windows on the opposite wall form a sort of nook which is replete with bean bag chairs, a recliner and a floor lamp. Various configurations of tables occupy the central area of the room with plenty of space for moving these around, and for sitting on the floor. A television, a computer, a large whiteboard and a screen for an overhead projector line the front of the room.

Like his district colleague, Mary, Adam has accumulated a colorful and eclectic collection of student work, posters, maps, and art work on the walls of his classroom. A large distinctive poster displays the major elements of stories (i.e., setting, characters, story plot and events, problems/solutions, conclusion and resolution). Bookshelves in the back of the room hold an array of titles for a range of readers. This collection of novels is shared among the fourth grade teachers who coordinate and rotate use of the books in each fourth grade room.

It is significant to take note of Adam's presence in his classroom. He is by nature a soft-spoken individual. Whether intentionally or by happenstance, most of Adam's interaction with his students is marked by this articulate, yet quiet style of speech. Adam also goes to great lengths to assure that all students in a reading group clearly understand the directions for reading, for completing a lesson packet or for interacting with one another.

There are plentiful visual reminders around the room which encourage Adam's pupils in every aspect of learning--the schedules are posted, positive thinking is urged,

math facts are displayed, and so on. One prominent poster states, “You never know what you can do until you try.” A previously mentioned poster lays out the components of stories (i.e., setting, characters, themes, plot elements, conclusion/resolution, etc.) and is adapted from the Michigan Educational Assessment Program Test Study Guide for fourth grade. These posters are not mere decorations, but serve as positive reinforcements for Adam’s pupils. Adam made it very clear that he strives for readers to understand story structure in all reading, whether in the Houghton Mifflin Invitations to Literacy (1996) basal series or when his pupils read novels individually or in small groups. “I think it’s real important for [readers] to know the structure of a story to know . . . there’s a beginning, middle, and an end. To know that there’s a theme, to know there’s a plot, characters. I think when you get into the kids who have the lower comprehension, they don’t have concrete ideas on how a story comes together” (Interview, 7/8/98, p. 41). Adam referred pupils to various aspects of these posters during the observations.

Adam clearly articulated his vision for literature-based reading instruction during our interviews. However, I want the reader to note his propensity toward teacher-centered, literal and factual level literary inquiry which unfolds in the evidence I present here. Table 6.1 below quantifies the major classroom interactions during which Adam asked questions of readers. The reader will later note during discussions of books, that without fail, Adam elicited single word or factual responses (e.g., Q1: What do you think? A1: Bad; Q2: What are both feet doing? A2: Running) from his pupils even though some questions clearly had the potential for drawing out more complex responses (i.e., What do you think? What would you predict?). Adam did not pursue these initial responses with, “Why do you think so? Tell me more?”

Table 6.1 Questions in Adam’s Reading Class

Session Focus	Number of Teacher Questions	Number of Single Word/Factual Replies	Approximate Time Frame
Day One 1A–Lion, Witch	3	3	15 minutes
1B–Writing Sample	8	8	50 minutes
1C–Maniac Magee	23	23	
1D–Copycat	19	19	
Day Two 2A–Grammar	7	7	50 minutes
2B–Maniac Magee	37	37	
2C–Next Spring	38	38	
Day Three 3A–Lion, Witch	6	6	15 minutes
3B–Frindle	12	12	45 minutes
3C–Copycats	10	10	

In the exchanges which follow, it will be apparent that Adam intentionally uses a specific strategy with his pupils, for example prediction. He begins the process using that strategy, elicits responses from readers in a particular group, and when a response is given, he accepts the response and moves on to the next question. In his zeal to interpret the demands of his district for reading instruction in general, and for performance on the state-mandated MEAP tests in particular, Adam may have limited what it means to read stories and understand them.

In summary, what I hope to illustrate through the evidence presented in Adam’s case is what it is that Adam is disposed to do in reading instruction, and how he is disposed to implement a reading program. Adam’s decisions could be driven by the very real emphasis on the MEAP tests and the Literacy Learning Network in his district. In

other words, he is so concerned about the strategies used with stories and factual details of stories that he uses them in his drive to “get through the material.” Or something else may be at work here. In spite of his energy, his hard work in planning reading instruction, and his obvious care and concern for learners, Adam appears to be “stuck” in counterproductive practices. In short, I will show that there are powerful discrepancies between Adam’s stated vision for reading instruction and his classroom practice.

Adam Thomas--The Pre-Observation Visit and Adam’s Plans

This section is based on data collected about Adam’s teaching and his classroom instructional organization during my pre-observation visit. It also reflects my overall knowledge of Adam’s notions of curriculum and instruction, and his thinking about learners which emerged over the weeks of our conversations together. This contextual information describes his general practice in teaching reading and his specific plans for the days of observation.

Adam and his pupils had just completed the first unit of the literature-based reading series from Houghton Mifflin (1996), Invitations to Literacy. Although he believes that anthologies or basals can be too restrictive (Interview, 7/7/98, p. 48), Adam also recognizes their value in the first years of teaching and he uses them extensively. During a second component, he was reading aloud a novel to the class, C. S. Lewis’ The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe. The third component of the fourth grade reading program is the reading of real novels in small groups and by individuals. He and his fourth grade teaching partners have been accumulating a classroom library of chapter books and novels which they share on a regular basis. There appeared to be considerable cooperation and planning between the three fourth grade teachers in regards to reading

instruction.

On a typical day, Adam conducted reading instruction in small groups; he believes that his pupils are less frustrated during reading instruction in ability groups (Interview, 7/7/98, pp.11, 51). On the initial day of observations I witnessed the early stages (i.e., the second day) of the first chapter book reading in groups held this school year. Adam had selected the books to be read, then he considered the students' personal tastes, the composition of the reading teams (i.e., who works well with whom) and general reading ability. Adam assigned the readers to particular books based on his assessment of their skill levels, interests and motivation. Unlike Kate, Adam did not strive to provide readers with one of their three choices of titles during these sessions; however, students were free to choose during DEAR (i.e., Drop Everything and Read) sessions later in the day.

The emphasis during the reading of chapter books was on story elements. Adam wanted his students to thoroughly understand the role(s) of setting, characters, plot, and theme in stories and had chosen this time to focus on novels, materials other than the Houghton Mifflin reading series. In the descriptions that follow, the reader will note that Adam seems to have a vision for promoting deeper comprehension in reading instruction that he is unable to implement. This emphasis on story elements would hold for all days of observation. Naturally, after these descriptions of the observations are completed, I will address whether these story elements are, in fact, the actual focus of the lesson packets he designed for each title.

During these sessions, Adam managed one reading group; the teacher assigned to at-risk children took one group; and her instructional aide took a third group. Additionally, this fourth grade had just begun a study of the elements of reciprocal teaching--especially predicting, although Adam had not introduced any of the formal language or structure of

that strategy yet. That would happen later during these observations and according to Adam's plan would focus primarily on predicting.

Whether intentional or not, Adam stressed factual recall and understanding of stories read in class. He believes that this is an emphasis in his district which has evolved from the growing importance of the MEAP tests in the state. "I think a lot of the time the administration . . . and the teachers are . . . focusing on . . . not on reading for enjoyment, but reading to get the questions that are going to be on the test" (Interview, 7/7/98, p. 35). Adam also believes that assessment is an important factor in reading instruction. He uses formal tests, especially those tied to the Houghton-Mifflin reading series used in his district. But he places equal importance on the value of personal assessment and careful observation of pupils while they read and work. He says it is essential in his scheme for teaching that he assess first and then plan reading instruction. He vows to avoid planning first and then attempting to force readers into that pre-cast mold (Interview, 7/1/98, pp. 52, 54, 57). According to Adam assessment also involves listening to feedback, reactions and comments from his pupils.

Throughout our earlier interview Adam stressed that readers need to be exposed to a wide range of strategies which can be used as tools in better understanding the stories and information literature they read. Examples of strategies he saw as important for his fourth graders included QAR (Question Answer Relationship), reciprocal teaching, summarizing, KWL and drawing on prior knowledge. Such strategies can be limiting if they are overused, according to Adam, but they can also help readers develop appropriate habits of mind (Interview, 7/7/98, pp. 32 & 36).

At this point it is appropriate to list several assertions about Adam's practice in the reading classroom. As with the previous two teacher cases, readers of this study should

note the evidence which supports these assertions within the milieu which is Adam's classroom as they read further and consider them a synopsis of the descriptions provided up to this point. These assertions serve as an organizer for thinking about the descriptions of Adam's beliefs and actual classroom practice which follow. Statements under Main Assertion 1 (including #1A, #1D) relate primarily to Adam's intentions or beliefs about curriculum and instruction in reading. All assertions labeled 2 (including #2A, #2B), on the other hand, relate more to Adam's understanding about learning and learners and relate to his vision for his own teaching practice. These eight assertions about Adam's thinking and practice were extrapolated primarily from our conversations and from the data collected during interviews, from the pre-observation visit, and to some extent from the observations of reading instruction. In the end what we have is a profile of his intentions and his actions.

MAIN ASSERTION 1--There are inconsistencies between Adam's stated knowledge and beliefs about what children need to know and be able to do in order to learn to read and the curriculum offered.

ASSERTION 1A--Adam believes that a deep understanding of the elements of stories assists children in becoming better readers. His lessons actually stress factual recall of story components which are not explored in depth.

ASSERTION 1B--Adam believes that all learners should become independent readers. However, he extensively coaches children through detailed directions whether they are in low or high ability reading groups.

ASSERTION 1C--Adam believes there is a hierarchy of skills and strategies which all readers acquire as they become more adept. Adam does not differentiate instruction in these skills/strategies for his pupils; rather he differentiates the titles they read.

ASSERTION 1D--Adam believes that learners are most productive when they have opportunities to work with the integrated language arts in authentic ways. His lessons actually emphasize more traditional types of language arts exercises than they do authentic tasks.

MAIN ASSERTION 2--There are inconsistencies between Adam's stated knowledge and beliefs about what support (e.g., pedagogy) children need in order to develop deep knowledge and skills, and his implementation (e.g., teaching) of the curriculum

ASSERTION 2A--Adam believes that active exchanges between children can enhance comprehension of stories. He actually controls most of the exchanges and arranges little time for children to engage in extended book talk.

ASSERTION 2B--Adam believes that teachers of reading need to be reflective practitioners as they design instruction for a range of learners. His lessons continue to follow the same structure and are not modified or adapted to his vision or to learners over time as he and his students experience the curriculum.

Observation Session 1

Adam relied almost entirely on the Houghton Mifflin *Invitations to Literacy* series for reading instruction. He planned to use chapter books for formal reading instruction lessons four times a year, up from two his first year of teaching. These observations occurred during the first of the literature-based reading sessions for the school year. Therefore, I want to make it clear that even though Adam's pupils had been reading stories in the literature-based Houghton-Mifflin basal series, this was their first encounter with novels. None of these readers had a built-in sense of what Adam had planned for them.

While Adam needed to provide sufficient modeling of the behaviors he expected, readers needed to be socialized into talking about books within this framework. These fourth graders had not yet been socialized into the norms Adam was still developing. Like all beginning teachers, Adam was searching for a balance between his expectations for readers and the skills, abilities and developmental sophistication of those same readers.

Adam stated that as he is able to develop lesson packets and sets of questions for new titles, he will increase the number of novels read in class. Nevertheless, he plans to do so slowly and in collaboration with his other fourth grade teacher colleagues. He pointed out that kids read real chapter books everyday during DEAR, and that he also reads aloud a chapter book to the class everyday for fifteen minutes. The Houghton-Mifflin reading series, he noted, is all literature--based. There are only a few titles in the series which are not authentic titles published first as trade books.

Adam decided which children read which titles during this four book cycle. While he tried to be sensitive to interests and choice, he claimed that he relies more on his understanding of the abilities and skills each child has when assigning a child to a book and a book group. While most are assigned to a title which pushes them at the instructional level, Adam does assign some to reading titles at the independent level in order to build confidence. In using the designation of instructional level, Adam is referring to that level where readers have skills in place but are challenged to go further, to use them in new ways, to practice "stretching" their thinking. The readers are being instructed within Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (Dixon-Kraus, 1996, p. 196). Readers at this level have some skills in place and successfully progress when guided by the more knowledgeable adult/teacher.

The daily schedule, which changes by the day, was posted on the back bulletin

board. On this day the schedule was as follows: 9 a.m. Prime Time; 9:30 a.m. Math and a Snack; 10:30 a.m. Recess; 10:45 a.m. Teacher Read Aloud; 11:0 a.m. Reading; 11:45 a.m. Lunch; 12:10 p.m. Swimming and DEAR; 1:30 p.m. Music; 2:00 p.m. Pen Pal Letters; 2:30 p.m. Spelling; 2:50 p.m. Skits; 3:30 p.m. Dismissal. Prime Time was Adam's label for the first focused, intensive activity of the morning. When his fourth graders arrived in the morning they knew to examine the white board at the front of the room for a sponge activity. The sponge activity could be a daily oral language exercise, thought questions about Adam's oral reading to the class the day before, or a set of math problems which review a previously taught skill. Adam reported that he started the Prime Time exercises to imbue in these fourth graders the message that learning was important, that it was hard work and that he would support each and every learner if they each took it as seriously as they do prime time television (Conversation, 6/15/99). In fairness, it should be noted that Adam's entire morning schedule had been disrupted and rearranged during these observations. All elementary students in his district are required to participate in two weeks of swimming lessons every year. This was the first time such lessons had been scheduled in the fall and during literacy time (Observation Field Notes, 10/14/98, p. 23). Moving the swimming lessons to the fall compensated for the movement of the MEAP testing to the spring semester.

When morning recess ended at 10:45 a.m., Adam's fourth graders moved into the room very quietly, and efficiently went to assigned seats. Adam started by asking one student to recap events from the previous day's reading of C.S. Lewis' The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. Nicole responded softly and Adam repeated her comments so that all could hear what was said. These children really are soft-spoken, much as Adam is. Interestingly, Adam began the oral reading of *Lion* in an uncharacteristically loud voice.

He also adapted his voice, expressions and inflection to the mood and the tone of the story. Adam reported later that he was intentionally modeling volume, expression and enunciation for his students.

After a short while, Adam asked a couple of what he called “what do you think” questions. While in reality these were literal response questions, it is essential to remember that these readers/listeners were relatively inexperienced with this sort of discussion. While Adam claimed he wanted listeners to elaborate on what they were getting out of the experience, he actually was moving relatively quickly through the activity and relinquished several opportunities for probing further into listener/reader thinking about The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.

In the following exchanges I want the reader to notice just how it is that Adam orchestrates discourse about books. The responses provided by his pupils demonstrate a rather narrow and superficial view of text, but they are in direct correlation to the questions which Adam asked. He has laid out a system for eliciting factual knowledge about books and he gets that. In her 1991 book, You Just Don't Understand, Deborah Tannen discussed the conversational styles of men and women. She pointed out that it is not unusual for men to accept first responses and to seek no additional information. “. . . The failure to ask probing questions could just as well be a way of respecting the other's need for independence” (p. 59). In other words, Adam may be practicing this conversational style during reading instruction. He asks questions; he receives responses. In his mind there may be little point in pressing the issue further.

Here is an example of an exchange where Adam demonstrated his inexperience at drawing out more elaborate responses from his pupils. (Note: text read from *Lion* is in italics.)

Adam What does the word treacherous mean?

Ann: (Stumbles over a response).

Adam: A hard word to say . . . treacherous Do you think treacherous means good or bad? *Mr. Beaver said, "as soon as I set eyes on him, I said to myself, treacherous."* What do you think?

Bill: Bad.

Adam: (Reading more of the text) *"You can always tell, if you've lived long in Narnia. Something about their eyes." "All the same," said Peter, in a rather choking sort of voice. "We'll still have to go and look for him. He is our brother after all. Even if he is rather a little beast. And, he's only a kid." "Go to the White Witch's house," said Mrs. Beaver. "Don't you see that the only chance of saving either him or yourself, is to keep away from her?" "What do you mean?" said Lucy. "Why, all she wants is to get all four of you. She's thinking all the time, those four thrones at Cair Paravel. Once you were all four inside her house, her job would be done—and there would be four new statues in her collection before you had time to speak. But, she'll keep him alive as long as he is the only one she's got, because she'll want to use him as a decoy."*
[Adam speaking to the class.] What's a decoy? You've heard that before They're going to use Edmund, or, she's going to use Edmund as a decoy.

S1: It's a trap.

Adam: Just kind of like a trap, keep him alive so they'll come searching for

Edmund, and maybe he even help trap the other three. Because she wants to use him as a decoy, as a bait to catch the rest of you.

[Adam's oral reading continues] *"Oh, can no one help us?" wailed Lucy. "Only Aslan," said Mr. Beaver, "we must go and meet him. That's our only chance now." "Its seems to me, my dears," said Mrs. Beaver, "that it is very important to know just when slipped away. How much he can tell depends on how much he heard. For instance, had we started talking about Aslan before he left? If not, we may do very well, for she won't know that Aslan has come to Narnia, or that we are meeting him and will be quite off guard as far as that is concerned. I don't remember his being there when we were talking about Aslan, he began Peter, but then Lucy interrupted." "Oh yes, he was," she said miserably. "Don't you remember, it was he who asked whether the Witch could turn Aslan into stone, too?" "So he did, by Joe," said Peter, "just the sort of thing he would say, too." "Worse and worse," said Mr. Beaver. "And, the next thing is this. Was he still here when I told you the place where we were meeting Aslan?"*

[Adam speaking to the class again.] Do you remember where the place was? The stone what? I only mentioned it once. Jack?

Jack: Table.

Adam: Stone Table. *"And, of course, no one knew the answer to this question, because if he was," continued Mr. Beaver, "then she'll simply slash down in that direction and get between us and the*

stone table and catch us on the way down. In fact, we shall be cut off from Aslan.” “But that isn’t what she’ll do first,” said Mrs. Beaver, “not if I know her. The moment that Edmund tells her what she’s been doing--or what we’ve been doing, she will slash out here in the next half hour. She’ll be here in less than twenty minutes.” “You’re right, Mrs. Beaver,” said her husband, “we must all get away from here. There’s not a moment to lose.” (Adam reminds pupils that he’ll continue reading tomorrow with “In the Witch’s House.”) (Observation, 10/12/98, pp. 1-3)

Adam’s probing about the story he was reading to the class primarily involved questions which elicited factual or one word responses rather than deep personal responses. He did ask readers why they believed what they did, or how they came to the conclusions they had reached, but listeners had little time at all for more thoughtful responses. Given Adam’s questions, which elicited single word or factual answers and his reading of lengthy passages which seemingly explained the answer he sought, listeners had few opportunities to offer extended or more thoughtful responses to the story. In fact, his pupils appeared to be acclimated to Adam’s instructional routines. I will illustrate this pattern with additional data from my observations of the small reading groups.

At this point Adam reviewed an array of tasks that his pupils had for the remainder of the morning. First, he repeated instructions for the students completing the Houghton-Mifflin reading series integrated theme tests and for those working in chapter books and question packets (see attached samples for Maniac Magee, Frindle, No Copycats Allowed, and Next Spring an Oriole in Appendix F). Adam’s attention to the integrated theme tests demonstrated commitment to clear, lengthy rehearsal of directions for assignments (i.e.,

Assertion #1B) in his classroom. This exchange explicated his attention to detailed instructions:

Adam: "Go to page fifteen with the correction marks. If you didn't finish your writing sample, then you have one of those choices. Maybe you want to do a plan, maybe you want to do a rough draft--probably not a bad idea. But, let's look at page fifteen . . . It says, read the principal notice below. Find and correct errors. How many errors are we going to find, Alex?

Alex: Nine

Adam: Nine. So keep looking until you find nine. Use what you know about proofreading to make your corrections and the notice. The example may help you. There are four spelling errors. How many spelling errors are there going to be, Jack?

Jack: Four

Adam: Four. And five errors in forming sentences. For instance, maybe they have put an exclamation point at the end, when really they need a question mark. Maybe they put a question mark when it was just a statement and they needed a period at the end. So, check those over. There's going to be nine errors. If you need to change a word, a spelling error, just put a cross through like we do on our Daily Oral Language paragraph book, write the correct spelling above it; periods, just add; if it needs to be capitalized, three lines underneath. Any questions on page fifteen? Any questions on how to do page fifteen? [There were no pupil responses]. You may turn to page sixteen. The last page, two problems. Number twenty says write a sentence using at least two of the words below. Tell me how many words

you have to use, Aaron.

Aaron: Two.

Adam: At least two. Can you use three, Roberto?

Roberto: Yes.

Adam: Can you use four?

Roberto: Uh-huh.

Adam: Sure. Maybe you want to use more than two, just make sure that you get the full allowed points. So, you need to use them in a sentence. Make sure you have a capital letter at the beginning, and an end mark, whether it's a question mark, period or an exclamation point. At least two of the words. [Page] Twenty-one. What is your favorite subject in school? Answer in a complete sentence. Make sure you have a question mark, or an exclamation point at the end. Did it ask for two sentences? Jorge?

Jorge: INAUDIBLE RESPONSE.

Adam: You may use two sentences. It doesn't say--it says, write your favorite--answer in a complete sentence. You can answer [in] more than one sentence, so you don't have a run-on sentence. So, I'll let you use more than one sentence, if you need to, but make sure you have capitals at the beginning of each sentence, and periods at the end. Here are the groups that are going to start out working in their theme test. Has everyone read it? . . . I think we have four. And I've got all four You're going to be starting out on the theme test. When you finish you can go ahead and begin reading on the

first chapter [of the novel you are reading]. (Observation, 10/12/98, pp.3-5)

Again, this section demonstrated Adam's decision to provide detailed instructions for his fourth graders as laid out in Assertion #1C. He clearly wanted to make sure that all students were successful on the integrated theme tests which accompany the Houghton Mifflin reading series (and the MEAP tests). Therefore he took the time to reiterate the instructions with those pupils. It is also an example of Adam's propensity toward dominating classroom discussion and for questioning which elicited single words and factual responses.

The novels used in the reading groups were the following: Next Spring an Oriole (1988) by Gloria Whelan, Frindle (1996) by Andrew Clements, Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs (1985) by Judi Barrett, Maniac Magee (1990) by Jerry Spinelli, A Wrinkle in Time (1988) by Madeline L'Engle, and No Copycats Allowed (1998) by Bonnie Graves. The size of the groups varied widely; one group had six readers while another had only three.

The special education teacher and her aide each took one novel reading group out of the room and down the hall; Adam met the Maniac Magee group at the front of the room. The remaining groups started on their own in the reading nook in the back the room. In the following exchange, Adam helped readers glean information about the story which may be located on the book's cover, a form of predicting from the visual evidence and reader prior knowledge. For example, when he introduced his lesson for Maniac Magee by Jerry Spinelli (1990), Adam systematically involved readers by means of a methodical progression from the pictures on the book's cover, to making predictions from information gleaned from the cover, to a corporate reading of chapter one for assessing an

initial sense of the book. Readers were also guided in their use of the reading packet Adam had produced for each title being read that day. All of this was done in his typical soft-spoken manner (see Observation Field Notes, 10/12/98, pp. 6-10 as an example). Again, note the level of questioning Adam used. Adam learned the uses and value of prediction in teacher education (and this was reinforced by workshops delivered by the Literacy Learning Network workshops). However, he implemented this strategy as a recipe and was not using it flexibly.

Adam pointed out that two editions of Spinelli's book, *Maniac Magee* were being used.

It is interesting to recognize that in the following exchange Adam asked ten questions. All of the questions elicited single word or factual responses.

Adam: [paraphrased] Since there are two editions of the book in this group, let's look at the two different covers and see if we can determine how they are alike or different. What do we notice in these pictures? How is Petra's cover different from yours, Randy?

Randy: Hard cover.

Adam: Hard cover. How else is it different? Eric?

Eric: From the library.

Adam: From the library. How else? Cheryl?

Cheryl: [inaudible] it's not [inaudible]

Adam then attempts to probe for detail.

Adam: Is it the same story?

Cheryl: Yes

Adam: How is it alike? How [are] the pictures alike? Bill?

Bill: Both have shoes.

Adam: Both have shoes. What are both feet doing? Jorge?

Jorge: Running.

Adam: Right.

Adam proceeded to provide hints for getting the “right answer”; thus he shaped the direction of the discussion and pupil responses as he facilitated it.

Adam: Do you think that is a pretty major part of the story, maybe?

Something to do with running? What do you think, Randy?

Randy: No, not really.

Adam: Not really? Who thinks it is probably a pretty major part of the story that he runs; that he’s a runner?

S1: Yes, we read the blurb on the back of the book [a paraphrase].

Adam: Okay, so you took a look at the back [cover] and it said he can run real fast?

Adam: Let’s look at our first question [from the reading packet]. It says, before you read, list five things you know about maniacs. Go ahead and take a couple of minutes and we’ll talk about the different things that you wrote down You can also put your name on the back (Observation Field Notes, 10/12/98, pp. 7-8).

Adam allowed a few minutes of silent time for students to complete this task. Adam noticed that one reader, Jack, did not have a full list of five, so he prompted another boy in the group to share his list with Jack so that Jack would have a full list of five items about maniacs. I asked Adam whether this decision to ask these two boys to share a list was an expediency issue, or whether he viewed it as a smart move in order to keep all readers in

the group together (Field Notes, 10/12/98, p. 4). His response seemed to imply that in this instance he felt it was more important to make sure that Jack had a list to think about than it was for him to create his own list. Adam saw to it that his instructions were followed when he encouraged the sharing and collaboration between students (i.e., Assertion #2A) although his understanding of true collaboration between learners could be considered superficial in this case: the pupils involved merely shared the answers they had in order to complete that section of the packet. In structuring these exchanges in this way, Adam was emphasizing what Douglas Barnes (1976) called *final draft* talk, that “speech which amounts to a formal completed presentation for a teacher’s approval” (i.e., the right answer) rather than talk which Barnes labeled *exploratory*. Exploratory language is open-ended and is the mode used by learners “to shape knowledge for themselves” (p. 108). The group’s interaction in Adam’s classroom in this instance was also shaped by what Barnes called “control by worksheet” (p. 134).

Adam continued to ask questions. While probing beyond the literal level would have provided Adam with a sense of the prior knowledge these readers were bringing to the story, or a clearer conception of how these particular fourth graders were making sense of the story, he again failed to do so. Consequently, he missed another opportunity to understand how these readers made sense of text.

The instance below describes another example when Adam did not probe further when he could have done so. The eight prompts he provided again elicited single word or factual responses. Consequently, it appeared that he was searching for literal or factual responses to his inquiries, when, in fact, his stated intentions during the interview were to help readers be deep, critical thinkers.

Adam: About two more minutes. Think of all you can about maniacs. What do

you think a maniac is? What would a maniac do? . . . In just a few seconds [you can report] what you know about maniacs You have about one minute to talk, go ahead, to your neighbor. We have an even number. Jack take to Cheryl, and as for Jorge you can talk to Rodney. Scoot over, and you two girls may talk to each other. Share your answers, or share what you think is being asked . . .

S1: Crazy.

Adam: How do you know that? [Adam does not wait for a reply before asking a second question. Consequently he ends up with a single word answer to the second questions instead of the open-ended first question.] Did you have crazy on yours?

S2: Yes.

Adam: What else do you have Jack? Something they're fun and sometimes they're [not]. Let's stop with what we've got. Do you have any similar ones?

Jack: Insane.

Adam: Insane. How many in the other groups [i.e., discussion dyads] had insane? No. Okay. What other ones did you have that were similar? Did you have any other ones that you both had?

S3: Weird.

Adam: Weird things. Who had the word weird down for maniac? Maniacs are a little bit weird. What else, did you have that was similar, Cheryl?

Cheryl: [inaudible response].

Interestingly, Adam could have asked readers to explain what they each meant by

the labels “weird” and “insane”. Instead, he merely accepted the responses and sought no further clarification from any of the readers.

Adam: Before we can begin reading our story, this main character Magee, what does the author want us to start thinking about? What do we think about this character, before you can even start reading, what do you think?

S4: What we think he might be like?

Adam: Yeah, What do you think he might be like? What do you think, Petra?

Petra: Weird.

Adam: Weird. He might be a little weird? He might be a little crazy? Cheryl? (Observation Field Notes, 10/12/98, pp. 8-10).

Again, instead of seeking explication of these terms and asking why the readers believed these had something to do with what the language and imagery of the story, or the author’s intended message about Maniac Magee, Adam passed up an opportunity to probe further. It could have been instructive for him and the other readers to hear the possible ways in which readers determined what they believed the author wanted of them. Adam missed an opportunity to show the thinking behind when and how readers use certain strategies.

This exchange continued for about fifteen minutes with the Maniac Magee group. Adam then moved to having the readers make predictions about the story and about the character, Maniac Magee. Adam left the group reading Maniac Magee and checked on a single boy taking the integrated theme tests in the back of the room. He then joined the group reading No Copycats Allowed. He conducted a similar introductory exercise with

this title and group that he did with Maniac Magee group. This consistency exemplified the teacher actions discussed in Assertion #2B wherein Adam designs reading lessons in the same format across all reading groups. The reader should also note that Adam differentiated titles for the reading groups; however, he had not differentiated the questions he used with the readers of these groups. See specific examples of the format for the reading guides for Maniac Magee (an upper ability group) and Frindle (a lower ability group) in the Appendix F, page 351. Readers should note that pupils of widely differing levels of sophistication responded to the same or similar prompts in their reading packets regardless of the title to which they had been assigned (Assertion #2B). This can be illustrated by examining the reading guides in Appendix F for the Maniac Magee group (higher ability) and for the Frindle group (lower ability). Sample entries from the worksheets which are charted below demonstrate that the reading guides are essentially duplicates of one another, and each contains only one “why” question.

Table 6.2 Sample Questions for Novels

<i>Frindle</i> by Andrew Clements	<i>Maniac Magee</i> by Jerry Spinelli
Introduction: :What do you think a “frindle” might be?	Introduction: Before you begin reading, list five things you know about maniacs.
Chapter 1: Describe Nick in three sentences.	Chapters 1-3: Describe Amanda in three sentences.
Chapter 2: describe Mrs. Granger in three sentences.	Chapters 4-10: Tell me about Mars Bars.
Chapters 11-14: What is Maniac allergic to?	Chapter 8: What did the fifth graders do in their class picture?
Chapters 15-18: Think about what the confrontation between Maniac and the old man at the fire hydrant. Why did the old man say what he said? We will meet tomorrow to discuss this issue.	Chapter 15: Did your opinion of Mrs. Granger change in the last chapter? How?
Chapters 43-45: Mars is black, Maniac is white. They have many things in common. List at least three of them.	

The following exchange is an excerpt from Adam’s thirteen questions to the No Copycats Allowed group. He received thirteen single word or literal responses in return. As with the previous groups, Adam followed the methodical process of examining the cover, prompting responses about the cover, making predictions, and the like. Even when he posed seemingly open-ended questions (e.g., What do you know . . . ?) Adam settled for the factual or single word response and did not probe further.

Adam: Take about one more minute to see if you can figure out [who’s] a copycat . . . [wait time] Okay, let’s stop reading where we’re at.

What do we know about copycats? Ashley?

Ashley: They copy people. [Paraphrase]

Adam: So they copy people. Do they always have to be copying their work? Or could you copy other things about people, too?

- Ashley: Can copy other people.
- Adam: What do you know about copycats?
- Alex: They copy people. [Paraphrase]
- Adam: So, sometimes people copy people, so they get mad. So maybe they copy—are you thinking about work, or are you thinking about . . . other things . . . ?
- Alex: [inaudible]
- Adam: Oh, so they'll get mad at them. What do you know, Mary, about copycats?
- Mary: [inaudible]
- Adam: So he could just copy what exactly he said? (Observation, 10/12/98, p. 15).

Observation Session Two

The second day of observing Adam's class was very much like the first day and, as the reader will discover, those two days were almost mirror images of the third day: Adam laid out specific directions for children to follow, asked questions about the titles they were reading, and he elicited literal level responses. Adam developed a very specific style for delivering instruction and he consistently maintained that style during these observations.

This morning began with an array of housekeeping activities and announcements. Two pupils, Jack and Patricia, announced that the school's Student Council will place a Suggestion Box in each classroom in order to poll the students about their ideas for the upcoming spirit week. Shortly afterwards, Adam directed the fourth graders to complete

the DOL. which was not completed the previous day because of swimming lessons. The DOL. focused on a business letter and emphasized using capital letters correctly in the address and printing the address clearly so that it could be easily read by the post office. No cursive was permitted. Adam verbally walked pupils through this exercise. This exchange is another example of Adam providing detailed and extensive directions to readers (i.e., Assertion #1B) and in it he directed readers to consider the entry which follows. Again, readers should note the care with which Adam guided his pupils through an exercise like this, but also the level of questions he asked and the typically literal or factual responses these questions elicited. Because this exercise required right answers, it was more appropriate for Adam to lead the discussion in this manner.

Adam: What should be capitalized? [paraphrase]

[Written on the board:] the sweet tooth chocolate factory
highway 83
omaha, ne 68132

Adam: Name of company. Anything else Melissa? Anything else we could change? . . . Anything else, Cheryl?

Cheryl: [inaudible]

Adam: The whole name of the company. Remember, when we got an address, all capitals. All capitals. What else? Ann.

Ann: [inaudible]

Adam: Omaha and Nebraska. We need to separate the city and the state with a comma. You're doing great. Jack . . . Capital NE for Nebraska. Let's see, somebody who doesn't have their hand up. Jenna, what else did we miss? You want to look up here?

Jenna: On Omaha, the O should be capitalized.

Adam: Omaha, capitalize the O. Cindy. Anything else? Anything else? It seems like there might be another thing up there. Katie.

Katie: Highway.

Adam: Highway. So, all our words are capitalized on our address. And, how come it's in printing and not in cursive? Aaron?

Aaron: It's an address and the post office man can see it better. Because sometimes people write cursive [and it's] not good cursive.

Adam: So, we print so they can read the address a little bit easier, probably faster, instead of trying to decipher your cursive. [I am] looking for the groups who are able to listen to directions before you begin (Observation, 10/14/98, pp. 1-2).

As he shifted to the reading groups, Adam reminded all pupils that pencils and packets of reading questions would be needed for the morning's work. He again allowed the groups some choice in selecting areas to gather. The Maniac Magee groups headed for the front of the room where Adam joined them. These comments to the entire class are again examples of his intentionality about providing his pupils with detailed careful directions (Assertion #1B):

Adam: As soon as we say go, you can go ahead and go there, and just begin reading. Take off where you left off yesterday. If you've been working on the questions, you may continue that. The [Copycat] group, you'll be reading at your desks and answering the questions. I'll be looking for people who are reading Frindle and are following directions, and then I'll ask you if you'd like to find a

quiet place around the room to read. You may also go in the back study, or in the hall. [I'll start with the Maniac Magee group and] then I'll get to meet with you again today, the first group I started with, and we'll start right back up here today, right away. The Wrinkle in Time group need[s] to find out what that book's about. That's the only one I haven't read yet. The Wrinkle in Time group will be meeting back in the reading corner. They get the cozy spot today. And No Copycats Allowed, your group may read at your desks, working on your questions. Like with the [Maniac Magee] group, I will be looking for those of you who are following directions, reading quietly, and independently, and if I see you doing that, I'll ask you to find a place around the room where you can quietly finish . . . (Observation Field Notes, 10/14/98, p. 3).

During the ensuing approximately twenty minutes, Adam again worked with the Maniac Magee group. He posed thirty-seven questions during this time. An excerpt from this exchange and the responses which resulted can be seen in the passage which follows:

- Adam: . . . How is she different from Maniac. What do you think, what's she like?
- S2: She's black.
- Adam: She is black. Is Maniac McGee white or black?
- S3: White.
- Adam: So, he's white, and she's black, so there are two different races. Anything [else] about Amanda?
- S3: She's smart.

Adam: She's smart. How do you know she's smart?

S4: [inaudible].

Adam: She had a big bag and it was full of books, full of books. What did you think of Amanda?

S5: [inaudible]

Adam: She likes to read. How did you know that?

S5: She had the big bag of books.

Adam: She had the big bag of books?

S6: [inaudible] _____ actually relate to them _____

Adam: So, she talked to strangers. What kind of person do you think she is?

S6: [Not shy?]

Adam: Not very shy. Probably nice, outgoing, a little bit. Cheryl?.

Cheryl: [inaudible]

Adam: Sure. McGee's _____. Is that where Maniac McGee's from?

Cheryl: [inaudible]

Adam: So, where's our setting of the story. It starts out—

Cheryl: Bridgeport.

Adam: Do you remember? Bridgeport. So it starts out in Bridgeport . . .

Are there more black people or white people . . . ? It did say this in the story. This becomes pretty important later in the story. Hillary.

Hillary: More blacks.

Adam: More blacks. From where Maniac was from?

Hillary: All white.

Adam: All white people at Bridgeport. [Here Adam attempts to bring in story elements, but at a fairly superficial level.] So, our setting kind of changes a little bit. That's pretty important later in our story. Any other characters that you might describe besides Maniac and Amanda?

Hillary: Aunt and uncle.

Adam: An aunt and uncle. It didn't describe too much about them yet. We still have quite a few more characters who are going to come in the story. You read three chapters.

Hillary: Four (Observation Field Notes, 10/14/98, pp. 5-7).

At this point, Adam asked students to write their predictions about the story. He then called for a few examples. The reporting out of predictions seemed little different from the exchanges listed earlier: Adam asked questions, pupils provided terse responses. The exchange below demonstrated this:

Adam: He might try to interfere with school?

Jack: Uh-huh.

Adam: What makes you think that?

Jack: Because [inaudible]

Adam: What did he borrow from Amanda?

Jack: A book.

Adam: Yep. He borrowed a book from her. Do you remember why he borrowed a book?

Jack: Because he likes to read.

Adam: Because he likes to read. He's not in school, and doesn't have a

home, and probably doesn't have any access to books. He probably doesn't have a library card. Did Amanda want to give him the book? Jeff.

Jeff: No.

Adam: No. But, why did she? Why did she finally give him the book? Cheryl?

Cheryl: [inaudible]

Adam: He just kept bugging her, and bugging her, and bugging her, until finally she said she didn't care because of her brother. What does her brother do to the book? Do you remember that part?

(Observation Field Notes, 10/14/98, pp. 7-8).

It the next section of the lengthy exchange Adam appeared poised to help students extend their thinking about the text and about Maniac Magee

Adam: Okay. Last question, I want you all to think about. You haven't read the whole book yet. You've read just a little bit, but if you were to describe it to someone else in our class, what are some things about, this is the book that you could read next. How would you describe this book so far? Would you say it's . . . a fairy tale, real life, what kind of story would you say it is? How would you try [convince a friend to read *Maniac*] instead of maybe another book that they're thinking about reading? I'll give you a second to think about that Go ahead and tell us. What kind of story would you tell them it is? (Observation Field Notes, 10/14/-98, p. 9)

In this next section, Adam has his readers make predictions about the characters, events and details of an unfolding story. He also invites readers to think about what they would tell someone else about the books they read and to decide whether they would recommend the book to a classmate or friend. This procedure is not atypical in Adam's school building. The teachers have attended numerous district sponsored literacy workshops. A huge percentage of the district's teacher have attended week long summer workshops delivered by Richard Owens Publishers and the Literacy Learning Network. District reading specialists periodically visit elementary classrooms to provide refresher instruction in literacy strategies (e.g., prediction, reciprocal teaching, etc.). Immediately before my observations, a reading specialist had visited Adam's classroom and stressed the value of prediction and making recommendations about books to Adam and his fourth graders. In a very real sense, what is happening is Adam's classroom is not atypical of beginning teachers in any school. He tries to adapt his instructional behaviors to the *modus operandi* within the school system where he teaches.

In the interactions which follow Adam did get some simple responses, but the readers did not seem to be able to carry it further. Whether they were inexperienced thinkers, or whether they were simply acclimated to the questioning style Adam had adapted is not clear. Suffice it say, that this exchange is one more example of a missed opportunity for guiding readers in probing further into a story, and for making their thinking about the stories apparent to the teacher and other readers. Note the responses which were offered to these prompts.

Brad: [It's a good book.]

Adam: Why? Why is it a good book? Describe a little bit about it.

Brad: [It's interesting].

Adam: Well, why is it interesting? Is he someone like you've met before?

Brad: Uh-uh.

Adam: Interesting because he's different?

Brad: [a giggle] Because he's weird.

Adam: Okay. What did you talk about? Hillary.

Hillary: I talked about [it being a good book.]

Adam: And, why? Why did you say it was a good book? Of course, it's a good book. I picked it out.

Pupils: [giggles]

Adam: Why?

Hillary: Interesting.

Adam: Interesting. We had said it was interesting, because none of us had probably ever met someone like Maniac McGee. All your friends, do they go to school?

Hillary: Yes. All except Christian. He goes to preschool.

Adam: . . . So, you can kind of look through Maniac's eyes and see what it would be like, maybe, if you weren't at school. If you were just running around, you didn't have parents, you didn't have a home, and you had to find a place to stay and try to find a few friends to hang out with. You may read chapters 4, 5, and 6. Then you can answer questions . . . If you do finish those, you can continue reading on in the story. Let's turn in our little sheets here to where there's some bold that says stop. About three pages, and you may draw a new cover for Maniac on a blank sheet of paper. Right

before read chapters 22, 23, and 24. That's the part where I don't want you to read ahead. That's the only part where you need to stop reading. There will be some things that we all want to talk about. We're all going to let each other catch up at that point. So, if you can just maybe make a stop sign there. So, you remember. Make a nice stop sign there so you know that's as far as you can go. And, after you've made that stop sign, you can go ahead and find a quiet place around the room Sit right next to anybody, there are spots at the tables (Observation Field Notes, 10/14/98, pp. 10-11)

The section is an illustration of Adam's attention to careful directions (Assertion #1B), and his commitment to provide extensive practice for reading strategies which he presents in class (Assertion #1C). Again, Adam had strongly indicated that he would guide readers in doing more with the text, but then he did not carry through with his intentions. No further mention was made of this opportunity. Adam moved on to the Next Spring An Oriole group where he again conducted a similar session. The excerpt below represents a small selection of the thirty-eight questions Adam asked during approximately fifteen minutes. Again, note the level of responses he has elicited

Adam: . . . So, they're moving from Virginia to Michigan. Did it say why they're moving? . . . And why did they choose Michigan?

Nicole: Trees.

Adam: A lot of trees. Why else? [Was] land very expensive?

Nicole: uh-uh. It costs \$1.49.

Adam: It costs \$1.49 for how much?

Nicole: [\$1.25]

Adam: Do you think if you were to buy land right now, it'd be a dollar twenty-five per acre? Probably not. Probably not. So, we can once again think it doesn't take place real recently. What do you think, maybe 10 years ago? 15 years ago? 100 years ago? . . . What do you think, Melissa, how many years ago do you think this took place?

Melissa: [No response]

Next, Adam attempted to model how “good readers” reason out making sense of story elements. He made suggestions about how many years ago the story may have taken place (e.g., twenty years, fifty years, what do you think?). He advanced the notion of making these judgments based on the style of the girls' clothing and the use of a wagon, instead of a car. He asked if that information would place the story in the 1800s. Then Adam suggested looking at the first pages of the chapter to determine whether a date was provided by the author.

Melissa: [inaudible]

Adam: When's her birthday . . . what do you have?

Melissa: [1847].

Adam: 1847. Is that over a hundred years ago? This is 1998.

Melissa: Yes.

Adam: That's over 150 years ago. This takes place way back.

Melissa: I wasn't even born yet.

Adam: Well, I wasn't even born yet. Close! Close! And, what happened, Jeff, besides, they moved to Michigan. What did they find when they got to Michigan? What did they find? Lots of trees?

Jeff: [Some kind of a monster.]

Adam: A monster? . . . What was chained up outside the cabin?

Jeff: A bear.

Adam: Yep. There was a bear chained up. [The bear was on a chain] like you would have a dog, around your house. The school master, it was a school that they went up to and there was a bear outside . . . There was a bunch of kids . . . Well, we won't talk about what happened in chapter 2. Let's make your predictions . . .

(Observation Field Notes, 10/14/98, pp. 13-15)

Here Adam guided readers in carefully attending to the details and specific facts in stories, and to aid them in understanding the structure of stories and their basic elements. But the reader is forced to ask, "To what end?"

In Assertion 1D, I stated that Adam strived to mesh the learning of reading, writing, and spelling. He has deliberately developed a process in which his pupils select words for their personal spelling lists from the text in the stories or novels assigned to them. He introduced the spelling segment of a lesson below. I will hypothesize here that Adam is adapting ideas about integrating the language arts which he learned in teacher education. His goal for this lesson is not just to read, write and spell for the reading packet he has provided, but to do so for authentic uses. Readers should be concerned with spelling words they actually encounter in the novels they read. However, he has stripped this lesson down into concrete tasks and consequently he is able to go only so far with it. Again it is important to note the detailed directions which Adam provided for these fourth graders. The reader may question the depth and value of the actual meshing of reading, writing and spelling which Adam designed. The lesson is another example of the disparity

between Adam's vision for his instruction and his actual practice.

Adam: Write each word five times. When you finish, return it to the front table and [we will check the] answers after lunch. When you come back from lunch, you may work on finishing your spelling, if you haven't finished it. As soon as you get your piece of paper you may begin.

[After a brief time]

Adam: If they're all correct, you may turn it in. Take your time, make sure you got all of them correct each time . . .

Adam: [Turning to address the class]. I'll call groups to wash your hands. After you wash your hands, you may finish working on that spelling . . . (Observation Field Notes, 10/14/98, pp. 22-23)

Observation Session Three⁸

This third morning began with the Read Aloud and a Snack. The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe was continued. During the reading, Adam stopped periodically to probe for understanding. Surprisingly, Adam missed an opportunity to probe further with these listeners about the imagery in the story. He did continue the exchange, but rather than substantive dialogue on the imagery in the book, he ended up with a list of single word and literal responses to his prompts. Here Adam was attempting to promote an appreciation of the role of imagery in understanding story elements (Assertion #1A).

During teacher education Adam was aware of the stress placed on the positive

⁸All dialogue in this section was paraphrased from handwritten field notes. The audiotape was completely garbled and unuseable.

effects of daily reading aloud to students and the value of having those listeners talk about what they heard. Here again we encounter the gap between what Adam learned in teacher education and how he enacts his vision for authentic reading instruction and learning in the classroom.

Adam: As you listen to the description of the witch's castle in the story, think about the image or the picture of the castle that is appearing in your head.

Describe the picture that is in your head about this castle.

S1: A dark, black place, haunted.

Erin: Lots of statues around.

Amy: It's like a normal castle.

Amanda: It has an up-and-down shape [she moves her fingers to show what she means--I think she is describing crenelated].

Adam read more from the novel and described the towers of the castle or the witch's house.

Adam: Edmund saw a sight which made his heart stop beating! What did he see?

S2: The witch.

S3: The statues.

Adam: Did he see the lion?

Several: Yes.

Adam: Why didn't the lion move?

Amy: It was made of stone.

Adam displayed the picture of the castle as it is portrayed in the book.

Adam: Was it like what you were thinking?

Adam: What are spectacles?

Several: Glasses (Observation Field Notes, 10/15/98, pp. 1-2).

Adam read the description of all the creatures who were turned to stone. Then he referred to the “character” section of the story elements poster which was displayed in the classroom. (Assertion #1A). After the oral reading, Adam directed his students to join the reading groups for the novels they started earlier. The Frindle group was positioned at the front of the room. The No Copycats, Maniac Magee, Wrinkle in Time groups headed for the hallway. His intention for this morning was for the learners to talk about the characters within their reading groups. This strategy may have led these children to begin considering not only the factual information about characters in stories, but also the nuances of meanings which emerge from their actions, the settings in which they dwell and the complex interactions between the characters and other story elements.

Adam directed twelve prompts toward the readers of Frindle. The excerpt below is indicative of the sorts of questions he asked and the responses he received during these sessions. It is important to note that Adam asked questions which could have been developed further with additionally probing. As in previous exchanges, Adam accepted simple responses and did not pursue the more complex possibilities.

Adam: . . . Max, will you describe Mrs. Granger?

Max: She’s mean, she makes kids use the dictionary a lot.

Adam: Have you ever had a teacher who insisted that you use the dictionary?

Max: Mrs. Dunne [a teacher at Adam’s school] did that all the time.
Then there’s you . . . Mr . . . !!

Adam: At the beginning of the story, was Nick looking forward to going to

fifth grade.

Amanda: No, he didn't like the idea of having Mrs. Granger.

[Chapter 3—first question]

Adam: How does it work when Nick tries to sidetrack Mrs. Granger during the lesson? Does he avoid getting the homework?

Austin: No, he was given more work!

Adam: What happened next? Did Nick get an extra assignment or did that happen to the whole class?

S1: Nick got an extra assignment—a report.

Adam: The next day, Nick tried to make sure that his report presentation was so long that Mrs. Granger would not have time to assign homework again. Did it work?

S2: No, Mrs. Granger made him split up his report.

Adam: Why does Nick call Mrs. Granger “the Lone Ranger”?

Augustine: Because she lives alone and does everything alone (Observation Filed Notes, 10/15/98, pp. 2-3).

Given Adam's statements during our initial interviews, I assumed that in this exchange he was trying to provide another venue for student expression about what each child understood and valued in the story up to this point. In his now typical fashion, he posed a question, listened to one or two possible responses and probed no further. By relying almost exclusively on the questions he posed in the reading guides for these titles, Adam has made a concrete template for all of his reading instruction. Adam believes that these reading guides *do* work and that reading skills and ability has improved in his classroom since he first began using them during my observations (Personal

Communication, 7/15/99). Adam believes that teachers of reading must be reflective about their practice (Assertion #2B), but I suspect that if he reflected more about what was actually happening during the activities outlined by the packets, he would discern their limitations and have to reconsider their impact and value. If Adam were to place this evidence alongside his vision for reading instruction, he would readily discover that they are not aligned.

As with the other reading groups, Adam assigned the design of a new cover for Frindle to the readers. The design of the cover was to be determined by each reader and was one instance during these observations when Adam acted on his desire to provide some choice to readers (Interview, 7/8/98, p. 13).

Adam and his pupils continued to discuss the possibilities for the new cover. Adam retrieved a dictionary. The group wanted to discover whether Frindle was an actual word. Adam looked up “pen” in the dictionary. The group selected one definition which they thought matched the pen pictured on the front of the book. Adam guided the readers in selecting the correct definition of pen so that they could use the illustration of the pen in their new covers--if they chose to do so.

Adam then asked, [paraphrased]: What must the illustrator of this book have been thinking about Mrs. Granger, her class, and the dictionary issue when he designed this cover? Think about that as you consider your own cover (Observation, 10/15/98, pp. 5). Adam asked readers for ideas they had and did not pursue any responses from them.

Adam suggested to Max that he go out in the hall at lunch time and ask someone for a Frindle and to remember what happened so that he could report back to the class. Adam moved about the room, quietly monitoring individuals..

The No Copycats Allowed group moved to the front of the room and exchanged

places with the Frindle group. Adam conducted a similar probe with this new group, starting from chapter two. Again we have an example of a similar routine with the reading of these novels—readers responding to teacher directed questions about story elements (Assertion #1A). Adam opened this dialogue with a focus on setting:

Adam: What's the setting in this story right now? Has it changed?

Augustine: No, it is still school.

Adam: Is the problem different or is it still the same in chapter two?

In the three exchanges which follow, the children talk with one another and/or build upon each other's ideas. Although this has been unusual in Adam's classroom, perhaps it shows that they are beginning to see other options than just answering the teacher. In the end, however, they revert back to the more usual concrete responses and statements.

S1: Gabiella dresses up like the other girls. She copies them.

Augustine: She's new in school and is trying to fit in.

Libby: She has changed her name from Gabriele, to Gabby, to Gabbi, then to Gabbie.

Adam: Right, she is new in school and she feels she doesn't fit in. She tries to do stuff so that she will fit in. She is seen as a copycat In chapter two, question 1 asks--Gabiella's brother has given her some advice--"Be yourself". . . . is that good advice? Why or why not?

Once again, Adam did not pursue extended responses to this inquiry.

Amanda: Yes, it is good. If you try to be just you, people will give you a chance.

Adam: How did Gabriella get her name?

Amanda: She was named after her aunt.

Adam: Is it important to spell your friend's names correctly?

S2: Yes

Adam: Now, do you like Gabrielle?

Augustine: Yes, I would like her if she doesn't copy me.

Adam could have probed further in order to ascertain what Augustine meant by this response. He did not do so.

Adam: Why did Gabrielle decide she wanted to be a writer, too?

Amanda: Because she was still trying to fit in at school.

Adam: If you had to rate this story on a scale of 1 to 10-10 being wonderful and terrific and 1 being lousy--how would you rate this story?

Think about that Go to the chapter nine section of your worksheet. I want you to stop reading when you get to this point and draw a new cover for the story. You should include the title and the author, and even the illustrator, if you want, but based on what you have read, what would be important to include on the new cover? (Observation Field Notes, 10/15/98, pp.5-6).

Adam took several minutes to move about the room to spot check the work of others. He worked with a Maniac Magee reader on the meaning of the word *pandemonium* in the story. He quietly talked her through it. Another reader in the group, a girl, overheard this conversation and responded that pandemonium was when, during the ball game, that everyone went wild and threw their hats up in the air.

Preliminary Conclusions

It seems to me that Adam, like Kate and Mary, is a novice teacher who has devoted considerable energy and thought to his teaching. In some ways, however, Adam has been less effective than either Kate or Mary in pushing his students to think deeply and to engage creatively with text. I will hypothesize at this point that Adam's instruction is answer-driven and that he has missed multiple opportunities to take his pupils to a higher, more analytical level of interpretation with literature. Adam, is of course, correct that readers need to know and understand the factual information available in a story in order to interpret that same story, but Adam seems to have been unable to give developing readers opportunities to go further into analysis, interpretation, personal response, and discussion about imagery in a story under the guidance of a more knowledgeable adult mentor. In chapter three and in this chapter the reader is made aware of Adam's exposure in teacher education to the strategies and planning required to carry out innovative and child-centered literacy instruction. In the initial interviews, Adam made it clear that he had a vision for reading instruction which matched those foci in teacher education, a vision which emphasized reading for deep and critical understanding of stories. For some reason, Adam has not been able to put theory and action together. He has not been able to match his vision with his actions in the classroom. It can be instructive to consider what has influenced Adam to conduct reading instruction as he does.

Adam's considerable energies have been used for designing materials, planning an instructional calendar and for implementing district mandates. He has a clear concern for the different constituencies to whom he is responsible. Adam works to design reading instruction which he believes will serve several purposes. First, under pressure from his district and the State of Michigan, Adam is concerned that his students are fully prepared

to be successful on the MEAP tests. He recognizes that he is the primary source of lessons, learning strategies and teacher modeling which his pupils will use on those mandatory tests. Adam reported during the interview that he valued choice for learners, and that he believed it was necessary to differentiate instruction for his pupils. He believed in those attributes of reading instruction, but he also recognized that he needed to get better at integrating choice and differentiation into his instruction (7/8/98, pp. 22, 33). The classroom interactions reported above reinforce the fact that Adam still needs to address these issues in his teaching.

Moreover, the interviews and pre-observation meetings also provide evidence that there is disparity between Adam's goals and vision for his teaching and the reality of managing instruction and students in a real classroom. Does he see the teacher as a deliverer of information, someone who transmits the truth? If he really is interested in gauging only factual recall of readers, then perhaps he missed the real point of all the strategies to which he was introduced during teacher education and sees them as what Feiman-Nemser called "a collection of strategies" (see Chapter 1). He may be relying on his own understanding (and experience) of learning to read and may be falling back on these patterns rather than getting at the "newer" way of teaching reading for meaning.

During a personal communication with Adam on July 15, 1999, I was able to go beyond the evidence gathered during observations in order to get at his reflections about how his curriculum and the students progressed over the school year and his intentions about future reading instruction. As our conversation unfolded, I had the sense that Adam did make some minor changes in his reading instruction over the course of the school year, but he also retained a very tight hold on the structure and content of that instruction. I asked Adam if he believed the ability of his students to talk about books had grown and to

provide me with evidence to support his belief. Adam replied that his fourth graders had become better at book talk and this was evident because they were able to compare the events and happenings in the stories to their personal lives, to things which had happened to them. When I inquired whether this had happened spontaneously as a result of more experience with books, he replied that was not the case: he had specifically begun asking readers to do that comparison on the reading packets. In general, however, Adam believed that these fourth graders had become more definite and clearer about their responses to questions about story elements (an early emphasis in the school year).

I then asked Adam to describe the sort of reader engagement with texts he had noticed after my observations. First, he had instituted reading conferences with the groups he assigned to novels; he also met regularly with individual pupils about the library books they had selected. In these sessions Adam noticed improvement in the ability of the students to summarize chapters and significant events in stories. The ability to summarize a chapter or an entire story was, he seemed to say, comprehension. This determination fits wells with the sorts of questions Adam asked in the reading guides: if the reader comprehended the facts of the story well, she could write a clear summary. After all, this connection makes sense in Adam's tightly controlled classroom universe. This summarizing was a regular part of the reading assignments he laid out in the packets. Completing the packets with the summary merely extended his view of what it meant to comprehend a story.

As a direct result of adapting what he called *The Multiple Intelligences Book Report*⁹ Adam believed that his fourth graders had improved in their ability to discuss

⁹Adam received this format from Mary, who had adapted it for her classroom as well. Simply put, the document makes suggestions to readers for responding to a book in light of each of the then recognized seven multiple intelligences.

books in their own words. They were able to comfortably sit with a group of other pupils and discuss stories extensively, using the story element framework as a guide. Adam emphasized that these student-on-student exchanges were unstructured; he had provided no list of questions to be used by the readers. In essence, however, the story elements poster in the classroom became that discussion guide.

Adam also reported that he believed he had enhanced his abilities in planning reading and language arts instruction in the following ways: 1) He liked the structure provided by the reading guides he produced for each title read in the small groups and believed he got better at writing the reading packets. He intends to continue collecting these for his instructional library. To Adam the reading packets constituted workable instructional scaffolding for learners; extensive discussion was then not as necessary. 2) Adam stated he is now better at meeting regularly with reading groups; while he strived for an everyday session, he always succeeded at meeting with the groups at least every other day. He made it clear that teacher contact of this sort is essential for keeping readers focused and for helping them avoid misunderstandings about his expectations. 3) Finally, he believed that he has become more proficient at modeling discussion questions (about which he said, “You know, about story structure and content—what happened? Who did it?”).

Finally, I asked Adam to talk about those areas in which he intended to continue working to improve his practice. He wanted to improve in three areas: 1) He wanted to get better at modeling specific reading strategies. 2) He wanted to improve his abilities in demonstrating how to discuss story structure. 3) He wanted his students to get even better at discussing story structure after he modeled that all year. Adam believed this is a continuing emphasis in his district and on the MEAP test.

However, it appears that Adam has decided to settle for a naive definition of what it means to understand or comprehend a story. He has consciously decided that if he presents an appropriate strategy to the appropriate readers, they will learn the strategy and strategically apply it whenever they read. He has delivered these reading strategies to his fourth graders in a rote way; he has seen concrete results from this kind of teaching. There is, therefore, no disequilibrium in his mind about instruction in reading and learning to comprehend stories.

In the end, it is safe to say that Adam, like other beginning teachers, is struggling in his practice. He came away from teacher education with general principles and guidelines for good practice which he could fuse with his emerging knowledge of the individual readers in his classroom in order to shape a flexible reading curriculum. Instead Adam has framed a tightly controlled reading curriculum which limits the options open to both him and his pupils.

Basil Bernstein (1975) defined such a frame as the “degree of control teacher and student possess over the selection, organization, pacing and timing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship” (p. 89). Through his reading guides, Adam exercises complete control over the form and content of the discussion about books which take place in his classroom. According to Bernstein, a weaker or looser framing of the reading curriculum could foster a greater range of choices and options for both teachers and readers (p. 89) which would be more in keeping with Adam’s stated goals.

I can only raise questions and hypothesize at this point, but it seems that something is clearly not happening--Adam is unable to act on the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) he was taught in teacher education. (As used in chapter one, pedagogical content

knowledge was defined as the “tool box” of pedagogical theories and strategies that all teachers learn in teacher education and which they can use to design instruction for engaging all learners in authentic reading experiences.) Subsequently, the results of Adam’s instructional choices are profound. While it should be evident that Adam’s design for reading instruction has promoted a fairly rote level of interaction between teacher, readers and texts, I am in a very real sense making inferences about his thinking on this matter. His style of talk and conversation gave me less access to his thinking than I would have preferred. Through his brief, clipped responses to inquiries, Adam made it clear that he believes he is effectively teaching children to read. He is very positive about the past school year and the upcoming one. It is possible that he truly does not know the extent and impact of his instructional choices. It is possible there is also more thinking going on “inside Adam’s head” about these matters than Adam was able to tell. What stands out for me are the following three issues.

First, Adam has knowledge of many reading strategies (including prediction, KWL, QAR, and reciprocal teaching) but he has limited knowledge of how to connect those strategies with the needs of individual fourth grade readers. Adam’s instructional decisions have compromised his good intentions and limited his ability to reflect on his practice. He is unable to begin and support rich literary discussions. Perhaps this is a direct result of his own learning to read experiences which may have shaped Adam’s view that reading is not a complex activity.

Suffice it to say that Adam seems bonded to the more literal view of what it means to understand.

Second, Adam does not recognize the full potential of a more fluid frame for his reading curriculum: pedagogical theories can produce instructional strategies which

produce observable effects and feedback during instruction which then can be plugged back into his pedagogical content knowledge about readers and reading. He should then be able to build a constructive relationship between what he has been taught about the teaching of reading and what he is learning in his own direct experience of teaching reading. Adam's current practice in reading makes few allowances for the learner beyond grouping student by ability, so he limits his own opportunities to use the pedagogical content knowledge about reading he learned in teacher education.

Third, it is almost as if Adam is unaware of the disjuncture between his classroom practice and his teacher education program. The reading curriculum is moving along nicely as he has planned, so he is comfortable with it and is not analytical about it. Rather than opening up the curriculum to better fashion reader thinking about books, Adam seems to have chosen to close that curriculum down in order to better control what happens. By focusing in this manner on skills emphasized in his district for the MEAP tests, Adam does not provide ample opportunities for his fourth graders to become critical and analytical readers. This contrasts with his stated goals.

Adam is similar to Mary and Kate in that he is faced with a plethora of duties and demands on his time, many of which have little to do directly with teaching children to read. However, Adam, unlike Mary and Kate, appears to be searching for those approaches to teaching fourth graders to read which help him build structures for managing time, materials, and readers at the expense of expanding the deeper level skills those readers also need. Adam appears to have accomplished the opposite of what he vowed not to do during our interview (see this chapter, page X) and that is to avoid planning instruction first and then to force readers into the mold he has created.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions

Recapping

Kate, Mary, and Adam are three individual teachers who were selected from among a larger group of one hundred and twenty-six beginning teachers surveyed about their perceptions of professional preparedness for teaching. In chapter three I described the data gathered from a survey sent to recent student teachers and graduates of the Hope College teacher education program. I asked respondents to rank their level of expertise on nine so-called Big Ideas about reading instruction including knowledge of the central concepts and tools of reading, program management, assessment, and reading as subject matter, among others.

The reports on these self-assessments were stunningly positive and upbeat. When asked to rank their overall accomplishment in learning about reading, fully fifty percent ranked themselves at level four, and thirty-seven percent ranked themselves at level three. Therefore, eighty-seven percent of respondents ranked their general level of learning about reading at the two highest levels of achievement. Similar levels of confidence were exhibited throughout the remaining Big Ideas (see Chapter Three). Kate, Mary, and Adam were part of this overall trend in high levels of confidence and perceptions of self-efficacy in the reading classroom. All three teachers expressed the belief that they were effectively teaching reading in the elementary setting.

In this chapter, I will explain the apparent disparity between these self-perceptions and the reality of the three teachers' curricular and instructional decisions and actions in elementary classrooms as described in Chapters Four, Five, and Six. Given their own estimates of their preparedness for teaching, I expected Kate, Mary, and Adam to display a

more sophisticated level of expertise in the teaching of reading. Given their comments about their own experiences in learning to read, I expected them to be more flexible during *on-the-spot* decision making, and to find the means to honor the personal responses of their own students to literature. In light of the realities of each classroom, I will attempt to explain what happened to mediate their best intentions and I will make suggestions for dealing with the substantial uncertainties of classroom life.

Applying theory to practice in any setting, a science laboratory, a business forum, or in medical ethics, is difficult at best. In the reading classroom, applying theory to practice is complex because of the multiple stakeholders *in the room* at any given time: the teacher, the learners and their prior experiences, the school building teaching staff, the administration, the community, and the state. During teacher education, novice teachers like Kate, Mary, and Adam are introduced to the vast arena of theory and research to use as a foundation for a reflective teaching life. For whatever reasons, theory does not seem to provide a framework that guides their daily teaching. So what accounts for this? How can this be interpreted?

In this chapter I will attempt to answer this question by describing a variety of lenses which can come into play in the study of teacher knowledge and teacher actions: the apprenticeship of observation, teacher education programs, learning theories and the development of expertise in novice teachers. I provide these lenses as mental maps to guide the reader as I weave in and out and through the many layers of complexity in this study of Kate, Mary, and Adam. I will clarify the need for an on-going and substantial role for teacher education during the induction years. I will propose ways of supporting novice teachers who are struggling to make the necessary connections between theory and practice. While I want to encourage novice teachers to take more seriously the ways in

which theory can and should influence classroom decision-making, I am also interested in laying out some possibilities for teacher education to support novice teachers who invariably find themselves grappling with the complexities of classroom teaching.

Novice teachers need to discover ways to use theory to solve everyday and complex instructional problems. Theory and research can provide some semblance of stability for the novice teachers who struggle to balance the “needs” of all of the stakeholders in schools who attempt to influence them. This is not to say that theory can and will solve every instructional problem. It will not and cannot, at least in the short run. But theory can alleviate the fear of the unknown in teaching and instill some confidence in the novice. It can also provide the means for teachers to scrutinize what they discern in their students’ progress. So, in this chapter, I will propose that these novices may be responding to their classroom environments rather than reflecting on those environments. I will demonstrate how a more focused attention to the theory-practice connection during teacher education and during the induction years can grant some peace of mind to beginning teachers.

Personal Histories and the Apprenticeship of Observation

The reasons why Kate, Mary, and Adam teach reading in the ways that they do may be connected in unique and interesting ways to their personal histories in learning to read as children. After all, they were socialized into reading through the lens of the child as reader; they may be emulating their own experiences as learners.

Each of these novices brings a personal and unique history about learning to read to the teaching profession. In chapter three (pages 60-68) I summarized these self-reported experiences in learning to read for Kate, Mary, and Adam. Strikingly, they all

described themselves as average readers or better even though they learned to read in teacher centered classrooms. All three expressed their intention to design their own child-centered classrooms in which readers at all levels of sophistication were supported and nurtured. In the final analysis, their aspirations fell short of that goal. I am suggesting here that by studying the role of personal histories we might better understand the findings of this study. While these histories do not constitute the complete body of what Lortie (1975) called *the apprenticeship of observation*, the personal experiences of Kate, Mary, and Adam in learning to read do play an active role in their classroom reading instruction. Each teacher is distinctly aware of learning to read as a child. At various times in their first two years in the classroom, each teacher fashioned reading instruction after the models from their youth, models which they had vowed to avoid.

Kate's own experience in learning to read was a pleasant one, but it was one that was teacher controlled. She described that experience during our interviews as oriented towards skills and learning factual information. After school and during the summer, Kate read for her own purposes. I reported in chapter three about Kate's early attitude toward freely choosing her own reading material; "I just love it" (Interview, 7/7/98, p. 10). Currently, Kate systematically and intentionally encourages feedback from the children in her fifth grade classroom, so that she can adjust the reading lessons she integrates with the social studies. In teaching vocabulary, reading strategies, and social studies content during reading, Kate gives scant attention to cultivating aesthetic responses to literature, and for appreciating literature as an art form. While Kate does offer children a guarantee that they will be able to read one of their top three or four choices of titles, she frequently has to narrow those choices based on the skills and reading level of the individual. Kate, like Mary and Adam, is concerned that her children learn the skills they need in order to pass

the MEAP tests. She is, in spite of her efforts at integrated reading instruction and providing some choices to readers, very much like the teachers she had as a child. Kate's reading instruction, in effect, emulates that reading she experienced as a child.

As a child learning to read, Mary was given limited choices regarding titles, subject matter and genre. While she frequently stated during interviews that she would provide choice to her fourth graders, she, too, is apparently overwhelmed by the demands of the state-mandated assessment program and has developed a teaching style which focuses on teacher-controlled reading behaviors similar to those she experienced as a child. Even when her pupils work on reading skills, Mary shapes the interactions between readers and texts and between readers. She does practice some flexibility and offers choice in limited areas of the reading curriculum, but this choice does little to contextualize reading skills or enhance the use or appreciation of literature as an art form. In chapter three I reported that Mary became a reader when her parents and teachers stopped telling her she had to read and left her to her own devices. "I found myself reading," she reported (Interview, 7/9/98, p. 7). Mary has not provided that same warrant to her fourth grade readers.

Adam was not a willing reader as a child. He had to be told when to read by his teachers and his parents also made sure that he read on a regular basis at home. In essence, others made decisions for him about reading. Presently, Adam truly believes that he has developed a reading program of broad appeal and usefulness which helps his fourth graders learn the skills needed for the MEAP, and one which also exposes them to quality literature. His curriculum does not, however, make allowances for the interests and motivation of these children, leaves almost no room for individual choice, and in the end demonstrates Adam's control of all aspects of the reading program: vocabulary, title

selection, assessment options, writing options, and even the ways in which individual children respond to literature they have chosen to read independently. Adam is, in essence, duplicating his own adult ordered experience in reading in his classroom.

Should all of this be surprising? Yes and no. On the one hand, attending a teacher education program where the emphasis is on a constructivist, developmental approach to teaching reading to all children should have strongly influenced how these novice teachers conduct the business of teaching children to read. On the other hand, the power of a teacher's personal experiences in all levels of school is written about in an array of journals and books (see K. Smith, 1999). Knowledge and experience may always be at odds at some level. We should not be surprised that preservice teachers might wonder whether what they are expected to learn in the college classroom has anything to do with the reality of teaching reading in the elementary classroom. Accordingly, a tension emerges which affects practice. Leinhardt states, "There exists a tension between general, subject-based, principled knowledge in a discipline and the specific, eclectic, particular knowledge acquired in the practice of a related craft Teachers as both [pre- and in-service] professionals and practitioners are caught up in this tension. Their professional training in institutions of higher learning emphasizes theory as an efficient, universal, cohesive truth filter for disorganized, practical experience" (1990, p. 18). Hope College teacher education graduates are no different. Even with its commitment to the long term involvement of preservice teachers in field placements the Hope College teacher education program does not seem to have alleviated these tensions for Kate, Mary, and Adam. The reality is that they still have to make decisions in the presence of these tensions and many competing values. In emphasizing the field setting, the Hope program has assisted preservice teachers in bringing teaching theory to bear *ON* practice, albeit in limited ways.

In spite of best efforts, what seems to be less pronounced, or even missing, is an accentuation on teaching theory *IN* practice.

It is unlikely that Kate, Mary, and Adam witnessed their own teachers in elementary and secondary school openly ruminating on the theory-practice conundrum. They did hear their professors in teacher education talk about theory and demonstrate applications of theory. They may even have observed field placement situations where theory played a role. Each may have attempted to put some theories into place when they student taught. In spite of the best efforts of their teacher education program, Kate, Mary, and Adam have, in significant ways, modeled their own teaching after experiences they had in elementary school. By their actions, they accentuate teacher control and they emphasize specific strategies and testing rather than stressing the aesthetic and artistic value of reading literature. In powerful ways, they are products of the apprenticeship of observation.

Multiple variables which affect classroom teaching performance become apparent when we examine the teaching exhibited by these three novice teachers. Although Kate, Mary, and Adam graduated from the same teacher education program, they seem to have taken away different perceptions of what is efficacious in the elementary classroom. At the same time they share some commonalities. From a similar toolbox of pedagogical strategies which they stress, they appear to nurture different results. Kate makes a powerful case for using reading strategies to improve skills and to expand understanding of literary imagery. She also works relentlessly to ensure that all children are able to apply their literacy and literary abilities in the content subjects. Kate is sensitive to the considerable disparities in reading abilities between children in her classroom and strives to provide appropriate reading materials at all levels. Mary seems to have escalated her

school district's emphasis on skills and the MEAP tests to the point where she denies the practice of those skills within genuine contexts and with authentic literature. Perhaps she believes that her pupils' success on the MEAP will reflect on her teaching--a very real concern. When Mary does provide for flexibility and student choice, she remains consistently in charge of events in the classroom. Adam, too, worries about assessment and skills, but seems convinced that his teaching has progressed to the next level of sophistication and that he provides students with ample opportunities to practice a growing appreciation of authentic literature. He accepts circumstantial evidence as proof that his students are becoming more sophisticated readers. In the end, what we have are novice teachers who are struggling to balance the competing claims on their enterprise, energies, and time. Because so much effort is spent on these rival claims, novices often lose sight of the big picture (children and their thinking about literature, their responses to literature). Consequently, they channel their efforts into control of behaviors and a focus on discrete skills and activities. In their efforts to control children and keep them busy, novices lose sight of the real value of reading literature.

In the end, the self-reported personal histories in learning to read for Kate, Mary, and Adam, and their witnessing of one dimension of their own teachers' practice in reading, have in a real sense predisposed them to follow that same path. Such is the power of the apprenticeship of observation. But there is more to consider within these cases. Context cannot be ignored.

Contextual Influences

It is likely that examining socialization into the teaching profession cannot answer all of our questions about the instructional choices made by Kate, Mary, and Adam. In

this section I will consider the possible influence of context on teacher actions in literature-based reading instruction.

Teaching and learning do not take place in isolation or in a vacuum. There is always a context, an impetus, or a situation which instigates the teaching and learning. That impetus could be necessity, but it could just as likely be interest and motivation. How that impetus is shaped by context and how the ensuing action is encouraged plays a vital role in learning to teach reading. While trying to realize their personal philosophies of teaching reading, Kate, Mary, and Adam are also trying to fit into the existing culture of their schools. This resulting tussle is shaped not only by these school cultures, but also by their differences as individuals, their differing personal dispositions regarding the use of teacher or student-centered approaches for designing and maintaining a classroom environment, and by the diverse student populations they teach. Each of these novice teachers has a different perspective and understanding of his or her own professional and personal metacognitive abilities as teachers. The competing demands on novices are epic in scope and include the cultures of schools, their differences as individuals, the personal comfort zones, the diverse student populations which they teach, and external influences in their respective workplaces.

Cultures of schools. Without exception, Kate, Mary, and Adam are faced with an almost schizophrenic culture in their respective school buildings and districts: they are expected to be expert teachers who work in the isolation of their individual classrooms; they are expected to participate in a variety of building level and district level initiatives for professional development and grade level subject matter collaborative teams. Accordingly they plan, prepare, and teach reading in their individual classroom settings where they are to be self-sufficient and *ready-to-go*, guided by district scope and sequence

maps for reading. They also expend considerable time and effort on a variety of district committees whose tasks it is to carry out the mandates of the district. In chapter four I described Kate's involvement with a district wide committee on fifth grade social studies. What teams like this promote is *getting a job done* not reflecting on practice or theories which extend and refine practice. In our initial interviews, Mary characterized her attendance at a variety of evening or half-day workshops which she readily described as focused on strategies or techniques for accomplishing a particular teacher task. The reader will recall that in chapter three, I reported that Mary was dismayed by the seeming isolation of teachers in her building. She expressed "surprise at how little they know about what's going on with the other teachers" (Interview, 7/9/98, p. 19). Mary, on the other hand, chose to attend workshops and in-services because she hoped they would prove valuable for her professionally. Adam attended many of these same events. However, little in their descriptions of these workshops appeared to promote reflection, hypothesizing, or theorizing by the teacher participants. For these novices, the message seems to have been: attend the workshop, learn the strategy, return to your classroom and fix your teaching. Until building and school district cultures are radically restructured, classroom teaching may continue to be done in isolation by teachers who rarely gather together for substantive reflection on practice-in-action.

Individual differences and dispositions. It should come as no surprise that the personalities, and the personal likes and dislikes of Kate, Mary, and Adam have a powerful influence on their teaching of reading. The reading classroom does not exist in a vacuum, but in a complex context comprised of a range of influences that surround and intrude upon it. Part of the context of the classrooms are the individual selves of the teachers who make decisions about what happens there. Teachers' dispositions, personal

preferences, teaching styles, and understanding of how children learn are expressed daily through instructional decisions. Kate, Mary, and Adam are not exempt from the effects of such dispositions and individual differences.

Kate, an older non-traditional teacher education graduate, has three grown children and a vast array of life experiences upon which she can rely when making instructional decisions. For better or worse, these life experiences serve as a frame of reference for her teaching. She is an ebullient, optimistic, strict and warm individual who genuinely cares for the children she teaches. The fact that Kate speaks Spanish fluently alleviates some of the pressures all three novices face in their classrooms because she is readily able to communicate with a larger number of her students who do not speak English fluently. Mary is upbeat, positive and highly energetic as a teacher. Without the same life experiences as Kate, however, she seems to rely on the direct control of student behavior instead of determining what choices and materials she can use to direct student responses and involvement with literature. Adam is calm, soft-spoken and apparently imperturbable. He almost never raises his voice, he moves constantly and slowly throughout the room at all times, and he is very much aware of what each child should be doing at any given moment. The personal styles adopted by these three novice teachers are very much factors in the classroom cultures in which they teach.

Whether a teacher selects a teacher-centered or a student-centered approach to classroom instruction is a function of one's personal comfort zone. Kate, as noted in chapter four, often conducts large group review sessions followed by multiple small focus groups with specially assigned novels. While Kate often visited a variety of groups during my observations, she just as often remained with one group during most of the morning sessions. She checked in with groups to answer questions and to re-focus attention to the

assignments she had developed for those groups. Perhaps surprisingly, Kate did not seem to hamper or control the level of dialogues within groups—students conducted discussions about books at normal conversational volume. Everyone in the room seemed comfortable with that noise level. I can only conjecture about whether these decisions were conscious ones by Kate, but they stand in stark contrast to the approaches adopted by Mary and Adam.

During my observations, both Mary and Adam expended tremendous energy and much learning time in controlling student behaviors and repeating instructions for accomplishing that (i.e., levels of student talking, who sits where, what children need to be doing with their hands, how answers are to be recorded, etc.). Clearly, they believed they had to do that in order for learning to take place in their classrooms.

Diverse student populations. Kate, Mary, and Adam all teach in classrooms comprised of widely diverse student populations: cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, socio-economic status, parental involvement with children as literacy learners, and interest and motivation levels of children. All three have many children whose primary language is Spanish; two have children whose parents have fled the Balkan wars, one has a child whose first language is Japanese. In chapter five, I described Mary's early morning encounter with a child who had no breakfast; his situation was not unusual. All three have parent volunteers who are able to assist these teachers with a variety of tasks; all three have parents they never see at parent teacher conferences. It should be no surprise, of course, that all three teachers have children who are willing and able to work independently on whatever reading instruction is planned for them. All three have children who require constant teacher guidance. While Kate, Mary, and Adam concentrated most of their instructional energies on the larger group or in organizing

activities for a series of groups, they did also attend to individuals when circumstances warranted. Such demands on a teacher's time and efforts naturally color the actions, culture, and the atmosphere in the classroom. For example, Adam frequently left the reading group where he was working with readers on a novel to re-focus one young boy on his Houghton-Mifflin Invitations to Literacy basal series level test. Even though she spent almost all instructional time focused on the entire group, Mary was not oblivious to individuals in her classroom. However, unlike the other two novices, Mary did seem to have a number of paraprofessionals upon she could rely to shepherd those students who required additional help or attention.

External Influences

Classroom and school culture is also colored and shaped by external influences. Outside pressures are certainly at work in the way these three novices go about their teaching. I would remind readers of this study of the frequency with which Mary, Kate, and Adam invoked the MEAP tests as reasons for their instructional choices. They did not shape their districts' emphases on the MEAP tests and on skills; they entered districts where these influences were already in place and at work. Of course, if they choose to, they could help determine the future direction each district takes on these matters. There are fruitful arenas for these three novices to make their own views explicit to other professionals and to grapple with the views of colleagues and to consider with them how to make progress in areas of mutual concern. Kate, Mary, and Adam could join teams of teachers in their respective districts which have the potential for guiding the district's decision making regarding curriculum and the MEAP tests. Kate, for example, already serves on her district's Social Studies Committee. She could, if she chose to, opt for

pushing that committee forward as a platform for strong teacher involvement in decisions regarding the social studies curriculum. Interestingly, such a group could investigate how the teachers could present a formidable and interesting social studies curriculum in the classroom which also addresses appropriate integrated literacy instruction and the more factual aspects of the social studies MEAP tests. The goal, of course, would be to avoid simply teaching to the test. Such teams of teachers and administrators within each district could be empowered to investigate how to address the very real issues surrounding the MEAP tests within a robust curriculum which also addresses the specific needs of learners, rather than the prescriptions of the state. Such natural communities for collaboration have the potential to meld the needs of novice teachers with the needs of more experienced teaching colleagues by engaging them both meaningfully in dialogue about theory and practical applications across the curricula, about state and local policies, and about learners. This would not be an easy task: the culture of most schools works against this happening—most novices are expected to “fit in” to the status quo.

Frank Smith, never at a loss for an opinion, may have indirectly given another perspective on these dilemmas faced by novice teachers. In his now famous discussion about the appeal of phonics and informal versus formal theories of learning (*Learning to Read: The Never-Ending Debate*), Smith stated that there

“is a fear that children won’t learn if their learning isn’t organized down to the smallest detail. Children can’t be left to choose what and when they will learn—though they can make these choices perfectly well when learning to talk and to make sense of their world. It is a theory of innate wickedness going back centuries, that, left to their own devices, children will *resist* learning; children must be *instructed* in a proper climate of authority and retribution. There has to be a methodology—especially

when children are put in the hands of an insensitive mechanical pedagogue. (1992, p. 437)

So, in short, the mindset of these three novice teachers may, in fact, be colored by something as powerful as a deeply ingrained cultural attitude (i.e., children cannot be trusted to do what is right) about the worth of children. If children are not to be trusted then, of course, we must control them. But even this viewpoint is too simplistic to work in these cases of teaching reading.

Kate, Mary, and Adam all control student behaviors, but they also believe they nurture learners. Kate tolerates considerable conversation and discussion in her classroom. Adam tends to require that children maintain a certain academic distance from each other when processing information that could be beneficial to all; he limits interactions to small groups and essentially shapes what happens in those. Mary spends an inordinate amount of time focused on behavior, rather than on what and how children are learning. I am not suggesting that Kate, Mary, and Adam are “insensitive pedagogues”. But I am suggesting that they may have ultimately taken the easy way out of the complexities of beginning teaching by opting for the seeming workable alternative, at least in part, of viewing children and instruction the way Frank Smith described.

The Teacher Education Program as Context: Structure and Content

How do the structure and content of the teacher education program at Hope College account for the findings in this study? Did the Hope College program provide novices, as Dewey (1904/1964) suggested, with substantial opportunities for theorizing, psychologizing and thinking about children and their learning before they focused on management and the practical neon? Were Kate, Mary, and Adam consistently held

accountable for such reflection and supported in that in the long term? The answers are not simple; perhaps they are both Yes and No.

The Hope College program is an undergraduate, four year teacher education program within a liberal arts college. The nature of the experience (i.e., relating theory to practice in field placements) which Kate, Mary, and Adam had during teacher education was fundamentally different than teaching their own classes without a mentor or supervisor. During these field experiences, and even now, during the early years of teaching, Kate, Mary, and Adam may be more concerned with themselves, their own actions and decisions, than with the learners in their charge. The Hope program apparently did not help these novices bridge the gap which exists between theory and practice, even though the program purports to be a mixture of the two. Left to their own devices to bridge this gap, Kate, Mary, and Adam relied on their personal histories with reading to solve instructional problems rather than use the theory they learned in teacher education. Kate, Mary, and Adam may have given in to what Dewey called “*primitive credulity*, a natural tendency to believe anything that is suggested unless there is overpowering evidence to the contrary . . . [and Dewey believed] there are no natural checks to the acceptance of wrong beliefs” (1904/1964, p. 218). Teacher education was not powerful enough to replace *primitive credulity*.

The Hope program, while addressing some of Dewey’s concerns about helping novices theorize and psychologize about children before learning how to manage them, apparently delivered a very different message to these three than was intended. The field experiences in classrooms for these three novices were intermittent, two hours a week, during their teacher education course work at Hope College. Because of several semesters of abbreviated, albeit authentic, experiences, the program may have provided a very

different context from what Dewey proposed in which these three novice could learn. Kate, Mary, and Adam may not have been in place in a field placement classroom long enough at any one time to begin psychologizing about how children learn, and think, and reason. They may have seen only the functional aspects teaching reading: selecting titles, assigning groups, setting deadlines. They may have never been privy to the planning and thinking which expert teachers put into daily instruction and which is based on the actual learners in the room at any given time. Hence novices like Kate, Mary, and Adam may believe, in a practical sense, that teachers are transmitters of knowledge or technicians rather than reflective practitioners. That is what they believe they witnessed in the field.

Dewey (1904/1964) suggested that preservice teachers should spend their teacher education years focused primarily on the inner lives of these learners, psychologizing as it were, ascertaining what children think in any given situation, how they view a problem, what prior experiences they bring to bear on interpretation, and what they believe they are learning at any given time. This emphasis should take precedence over learning about classroom management and specific teaching techniques. He believed that knowledge and experience with this “inner life” would better prepare novice teachers for making instructional decisions flexibly, and that it would expose teachers to differing views on what it means to mentor and teach children. In the end, while there could be no guarantee what novices would get out of such experiences, Dewey asserted that novices would have a greater potential for making connections between theory and practice. It is almost as if Dewey believed the first emphasis on understanding the inner life of children would be the most powerful and influential in the lives of teachers. Once teachers have had sufficient experiences at studying the inner life of children, they should then be free to practice actual teaching without much interference from others. Supposedly they would have now

internalized the idea of psychologizing and would be able to problem solve within that larger intellectual framework. We are still puzzling over Dewey's description of this enduring problem almost one hundred years later.

The Underlying Conceptions Held by Novices: Appreciating Multiple Perspectives

As I have already asserted, it is essential to consider the roles played by personal histories and the apprenticeship of observation, the cultures of schools, external influences on schools and teachers and the role of the teacher education program in the professional development of reading teachers. In the end, all of that input may not be enough to answer our questions about teacher actions in reading instruction. We may also have to consider their underlying conceptions about teaching reading to get any insights. How can looking at their conceptions about reading help us decide what to do next? I suggest these novices cannot "have . . . a full view of all that relates to the question" (Dewey, 1904/1964, p. 221) because they do not understand all of their options.

In this section I will describe four perspectives (i.e., options) on reading instruction that are one way to represent the "big picture" of how learners might approach literature based reading instruction. I will also propose that Kate, Mary, and Adam may have basically *fallen into* these modes of teaching since they may not even know they exist. I will propose that each may lack an overall explicit framework for teaching reading within the four of options I describe, and that each of them may be unaware of the instructional power that a relative balance among these four perspectives could sustain. In the end, I will propose that Kate, Mary, and Adam do not know what else is possible in reading instruction because they are not explicitly aware of their philosophical options.

The notion that learning to instruct in reading is shaped and molded by the

predominant perspective adapted by the teacher, novice or expert, is not a new one. Lea McGee and Gail Tompkins (1993/October, 1995) describe four perspectives which represent underlying conceptions about what it means to teach reading and to be a reader: reading as personal response; reading as knowledge of literary forms; reading as an interactive, strategic process; and reading as critical literacy (1995, pp. 406-411).

Kate, Mary and Adam were not systematically introduced to these four perspectives during teacher education and there is no evidence to suggest that they systematically encountered them on their own outside of teacher education. However, I will suggest that the teaching practice of these three novices reflects one of these perspectives. I am not suggesting they chose that perspective intentionally. Perhaps they adopted the perspective by default; perhaps they are unaware they are using a prominent perspective at all. But it is evident that they are mostly comfortable working within a single perspective or framework.

The first perspective described by McGee and Tompkins on teaching reading is one which recognizes the active role of the reader in developing a personal interpretation of the world which surrounds him. The focus within this perspective is on reading literature as personal negotiation for meaning. While Kate, Mary, and Adam were introduced to reader response theory during teacher education, I think it is safe to assert that they do not embrace this perspective in any practical manner. Their experience with a systematic and intentional plan guided by reader response theory is limited at best. Much of the reading which occurs in their classes could be called reading for information, rather than for personal response (i.e., "calling to mind past experiences, revising original expectations, constructing images" McGee & Tompkins, 1993, p. 131). This is interesting because all three teachers stressed the importance of choice in their reading classrooms;

choice must allow for personal response at some level.

Kate appears to have adopted the knowledge of literary forms perspective presented by Tompkins and McGee. Kate stresses the value of recognizing and understanding figurative language as an avenue to a deeper understanding of literary imagery. She consistently reminds readers to make note of examples of similes, metaphors, and personification they find as they read. She then encourages each reader to go back to the passage, determine the nature of the literary device and consider the literal and an expanded meaning for that passage. In cases described by McGee and Tompkins (1995), teachers “point out examples of descriptive language, including metaphors and similes. Students locate their own examples of effective descriptions and add these to a notable language chart” (a large chart with descriptive language gleaned from the book) (1995, p. 408). Among many other options the teacher has in this perspective, readers are also guided in comparing and contrasting heroes, noting changes in character dynamics, and capitalizing “on their intuitive abilities to recognize literary conventions” (1995, p. 408). While I did not witness Kate helping children consider the impact of other literary structures on stories, or even emphasizing the intertextuality of characters and events in the novels about Native Americans, settings, and motifs, or examples, she may have done so at a later time.

Mary and Adam seem to be focused exclusively on reading as an interactive, strategic process perspective which Tompkins and McGee describe as the teaching reading approach. While all three teachers see to it that children learn a range of reading strategies for improving vocabulary recognition and comprehension, Mary and Adam appear to have invested all of their instructional efforts in this area. Both, in their own ways, plan detailed lessons to insure that readers will follow myriad directions in order to acquire the

skills they need to better understand the texts they read and to monitor meaning.

Unfortunately, the emphasis for Mary and Adam appears to be on successful completion of mandated testing rather than a consistently more sophisticated involvement with literature of all kinds. In the end, merely comprehending literature is more important than learning from and with literature. Students hear and see teachers accentuate the correct process in a reading strategy, and in great detail, rather than the significance of aesthetic and personal response to literature in the life of the mind.

In a fourth perspective, reading as critical literacy, McGee and Tompkins refer to the shaping of theoretical views of readers. But there is more to this so-called *critical perspective*; it could also be labeled the social justice and action perspective. Here I want to suggest that Kate, Mary, and Adam could intentionally develop a plan within this perspective for reading instruction which is more sensitive to the diverse student populations they teach. A reading plan which incorporates the powerful personal and cultural influences all children bring to the reading act can be used for broadening and deepening readers' understanding of literature and the world which surrounds them. Even though Kate, Mary, and Adam all teach a high number of minority children, many at-risk children, and children who are from a range of socio-economic classes, none have adopted this perspective in any meaningful sense. They seem to be unaware of the reading of literature as a means for helping these young readers connect with the dominant social and cultural reality, or to interpret this reality in light of their own cultural norms. Rather than employing literature to build bridges between the cultures represented in their classrooms and for helping children ponder their places in the universe or to make the world a just place for all, Kate, Mary, and Adam all seem to not be aware of the potential in this area. Ironically, it is the diversity of cultures, races, and languages in their classroom which

contribute to the complexities of their teaching contexts. By not actively integrating this perspective into reading lessons, these novices lessen the chances that reading literature can make a difference in the lives of young readers. It should not be surprising that Kate, Mary, and Adam have not adopted this perspective, even though Kate speaks fluent Spanish. In fairness to them, the Hope College teacher education program has not stressed this perspective. The school districts in which these three novices teach have not traditionally emphasized this perspective. Rather, discrete reading skills aligned with mandated state tests have been the predominant foci.

Ideally, these four perspectives are balanced and used at appropriate times during reading instruction and may even generally overlap. Unfortunately, novice teachers often find themselves using only one mode or a single perspective (see Livingston & Borko), what Spiro, et al (1988), called the reductive bias, or a tendency to oversimplify as a way of coping with a complex world. As novice reading teachers, Kate, Mary, and Adam find it difficult to flexibly move between a variety of perspectives and so favor the one that fits their needs the best. They lack a diversified repertoire; so, they avoid complexity. I suggest that these three novices see these perspectives, or any set of perspectives on literature and reading as being more similar than they actually are. This is not a new problem; Dewey wrote about it at the turn of the last century when he described what happens when teachers do not reflect on their teaching and instructional decisions. If such reflection is not ingrained in our practice, then “ . . . that which is inconsistent with our *principles* is so far from passing for with us that it will not be allowed possible” (1904/1964B, p. 221). In other words, we dismiss it or ignore it. On the other hand, we must take care to understand a teacher’s particular reasons for privileging one perspective over another. Those reasons can be valid, just as can the reasons for using multiple

perspectives. The question remains whether the teacher is cognitively aware of her actions in this regard and whether the teacher education program explicitly attended to a range of perspectives on the teaching of reading.

As the day-to-day classroom data emerged from this study, it became evident that Kate, Mary, and Adam were wrestling with the integration of professional knowledge with their instructional practice and their earlier levels of confidence. In a very real sense, these three novices may not have moved easily from the *theory of practice* to the *practice of theory*. It could be they perceived they have no practical models for doing so.

Theories of Learning

Novices are expected to enter a complex domain that does not allow them to consider only one part at a time. Rather, they need to dive into the terrain and manage the complexity. They cannot compartmentalize their knowledge or apply it in a step-by-step, linear manner. Rand Spiro and his colleagues, Richard Coulson, Paul Feltovich and Daniel Anderson discuss the tendency in novices to oversimplify and indicate that professionals (in this case, reading teachers) must constantly develop expertise in a complex domain. Spiro, et al, writing in *Cognitive Flexibility Theory: Advanced Knowledge Acquisition in Ill-Structures Domains (1988)*, discuss the need for professionals working in such domains to “attain a deeper understanding of content material, reason with it, and apply it flexibly in diverse contexts” (p. 1). Frequently, what these individuals do, rather, is to avoid the interrelationships between components of knowledge (p. 3), and oversimplify a complex and irregular structure (i.e., the classroom setting) (p. 2).

Several theorists have contemplated these problems and made suggestions for

explaining how teachers should learn or how they do learn, John Dewey, Lee Shulman, and Jean Lave among them. I bring in the ideas of Dewey and Shulman below; Lave is discussed later in this chapter.

Dewey elaborated at length on his notion that prospective teachers need to learn to be “students of mind activity” and not just focus on the outer trappings of teaching action (classroom management and management of content and materials). True, teachers need to learn classroom management; Dewey believed that should not happen until they are well versed in an awareness and understanding of the inner life/mind of students (1904/1964). When Dewey wrote this he was thinking about how the other professions, law and medicine, prepared initiates and he was willing to defer “extensive practical work for the sake of deeper, more scientifically oriented theoretical understanding The professional school has a limited amount of time to invest in its students, and it ought to use this time for those kind of learning that it can do best” (i.e., the theoretical) (Shulman, 1998, p. 513). Shulman goes on to discuss Dewey’s points about a theoretical emphasis.

The recurrent challenge of all theoretical learning is negotiating the inescapable tension between theory and practice. That is, in nearly every form of professional education, students perceive the practicum as truly valuable while barely tolerating the academic experiences The role of theory is problematic at least for two reasons: Theory achieves its power through simplification and narrowing a field of study A second characteristic of theories is that they generally operate within discrete disciplines.

(p. 517)

The key for teacher educators and for novice teachers is to discover the means for appreciating the frequently remote theoretical understandings of the profession. Shulman

goes on to say that “we prepare professionals in universities because we make the strong claim that these are *learned* professions and that academic knowledge is absolutely essential to their performance” (p. 517). In further explication, however, Shulman also makes a strong case for the joint exploration of and reflection on theory and practice.

Ultimately, in his discussion of Dewey’s views on theory and practice, Shulman lays out several characteristics of the professions; practice is but one of these. A major component of his thinking centers around the belief that theory does not become professional knowledge until “it is enacted in the crucible of the field. Professions are ultimately about *practice*. The field of practice is the place where professionals do their work, and claims for knowledge must pass the ultimate test of value in practice. While the theoretical is the foundation for the entitlement to practice, professional practice is the end to which all knowledge is directed” (p. 518).

In the end, preservice and novice teachers cannot do theory and practice separately. Theory must be considered within the very real situatedness of the problems in the classroom. If teacher education programs want to prepare the Kates, Marys and Adams of the world to be truly flexible teachers of reading and help them to be reflective practitioners, theory and practice must be studied and pondered together at all times. There can be no “either-or” options. All teachers need to understand the connections of moving from theory to practice, and from practice to theory. Medical education, which Dewey cited as a rationale for his emphasis on theory, is now moving away from a strong initial emphasis on theory alone. In some programs, medical students are now expected to spend time solving problems in the field from the very beginnings of their professional education; they live the tension between theory and practice on a daily basis. No less is needed in teacher education. Of course, the means must be found for ensuring that field

placement teachers work in tandem with teacher educators and do not merely use the novices as technicians. Whatever means individual programs devise to meet this need to integrate theory and practice it would be wise to incorporate the fundamental principles and concepts articulated by a variety of researchers.

The theory-to-practice connection: developing expertise. Is it enough to discuss the roles played by the apprenticeship of observation, the cultures of classrooms and schools, the external pressures on teachers and schools, the natural constraints of teacher education, and the philosophical perspectives on reading in determining why novice teachers *do* or *do not* behave in particular ways? Probably not. In this section I also discuss the role of developing expertise in the actions and decisions of novice teachers and provide examples to demonstrate the degree to which these three novices exemplify that component of expertise.

So what about the novice-expert divide? How does our understanding of this problem inform what we are able to glean from this study? In the end, what we may have as a result of this study in naturalistic descriptive inquiry are portraits of novice teachers who organize their professional and instructional actions differently from those of expert teachers. We need to consider how novices and expert teachers organize classroom instruction, to what extent they are able to conduct that instruction flexibly, and to what extent they are able to build interconnections among a range of philosophical perspectives, methodologies and assessment options. At first glance, Kate, for example, seems to be further along this continuum than either Mary or Adam. Children in her classroom regularly work together in stable reading groups. She is fairly consistent about bringing children from a variety of groups together to share their findings with one another. Frequently, before a new unit is started, Kate will conduct a large group KWL to

determine what students already know about the subject at hand. The problem, in fact, may be that Kate may have become consistent to the point of monotony in her reading curriculum. By adhering to a routine format, she may not be challenging readers to vary their thinking and their approaches to different reading tasks. Experts, on the other hand, appear to be more proficient at shifting seamlessly between and among a wide variety of practices (see Schon, 1987).

Perhaps Dewey (1904/1964) was correct in his concerns about the emphasis in teacher education on management and instruction, rather than the “inner life” of the learners. Kate, Mary, and Adam may have perceived their teacher education course work as emphasizing the mastery of discrete approaches to the learning tasks of elementary readers (i.e., if strategy X does not work with learner A, then switch to strategy Y). These perceptions may not give them sufficient perspective to adapt curriculum and instruction to the particular learners they are teaching in the particular contexts in which they are teaching. The ability of teachers to adapt instruction and to be flexible is closely tied to the concepts of pedagogical reasoning and pedagogical content knowledge. A larger storehouse of experiences and options allows for a wider selection of instructional choices. It is almost as if novices fail to understand that arming themselves with a broad knowledge of workable techniques permits them greater flexibility during instruction, not less. Teacher educators are inherently constrained in their attempts to make clear the role of flexible application during demonstrations of practice: they, too, have limited time and cannot do everything. Ultimately, the theories about practice come to fruition during actual practice and experiences during which teachers demonstrate their knowledge about how children learn, think, and perceive. Novices cannot count on the *on-the-spot* recitation of theories or subject matter knowledge to automatically translate into informed

action in the classroom.

Novices need to practice reasoning. “Pedagogical reasoning [is] . . . the process of transforming subject-matter knowledge into forms that are pedagogically powerful yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background presented by the students” (Shulman in Livingston & Borko, 1989, p. 37). I am suggesting here that Kate, Mary, and Adam claim to have the subject-matter knowledge they need in place to teach literature-based reading, but that their pedagogical reasoning does not yet allow them to adapt their instruction as much as they believe. While they may believe they have an appropriate level of knowledge about instructional options, they lack the adaptability which should come with more experience with children and practice with a variety of methodologies. In the end this could be a function of self-concern and dread of failure. The novices may believe that every situation, instructional decision, and every classroom management issue can or must be handled by single-minded action, decisively and simply. Mary may illustrate this stance. She chooses to teach reading by a methodology that seems to maximize teacher control; she does this through teacher produced worksheets which regulate and shape student responses, rather than with authentic literature chosen by the readers which might elicit a broader range of student activity. Mary spends so much time regulating student behaviors that she appears to be unable to use a range of strategies flexibly. In the process of ensuring that children are engaged in lengthy practice of all of the discrete components of reciprocal reading, for example, she may be mistaking control for success with teaching.

Livingston and Borko (1989) take the notions about learning to teach a step further by describing teaching as a metaphor for improvisational performance. When improvising the teacher begins with an instructional outline. As the activity unfolds, the

“teacher draws from an extensive repertoire of routines or patterns of actions to respond to what the students say and do. Preparation for improvisation entails the creation of general guidelines for lessons that are designed to respond to the unpredictability of classroom events rather than to predict and control them” (p. 37). Adam has designed worksheets which he fits to a range of novels and which emulate the controlled responses of the basal reading series he also uses. Individual and personal responses are not the primary focus of these teacher prepared materials--factual recall and mastery of discrete skills seem to be. Essentially, there may be no need in Adam’s mind for him to adapt his instruction in the ways described above, because he has successfully shaped reader responses in very specific ways, and he does not seem to acknowledge that there are alternative kinds of responses that his worksheets do not address.

Livingston and Borko (1989) go on to state that the knowledge structures of novice and expert teachers differ. Novices often are inflexible and unable to adapt “on the run” as they instruct. Experts, on the other hand, are able to take in considerable data about learners from several different sources at once (e.g., what the child says, or the child’s body language) and adjust instruction as necessary (i.e., the possibilities). Some novices, although well-started, require considerable experience with instruction in order to make the transition to a flexible delivery.

While improvisation and flexible implementation of reading curricula can suggest the possible, Kate, Mary, and Adam are, in a very real sense, attempting to shape and control classroom events rather than respond to them.

Considering Grossman’s model. One way to explain the findings from this study is to superimpose these findings onto the template provided by another study, compare and contrast them, and attempt to ascertain what new insights materialize from the merged

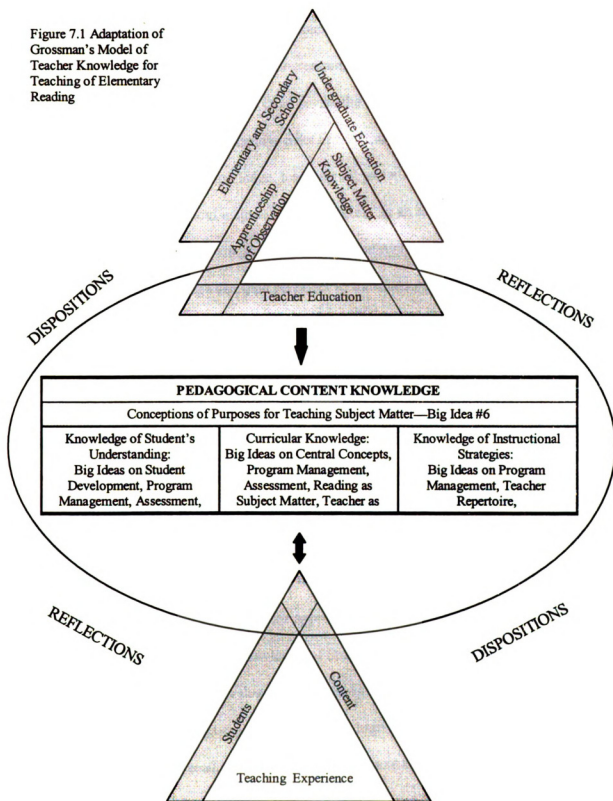
sets. In this section I will consider the data from this study of Kate, Mary, and Adam and the elementary reading classroom, within the framework laid out by Pamela Grossman in her study of secondary English teachers. As I go along, I will explain where the various components of this study seem to fit in relation to Grossman's findings.

In The Making of a Teacher (1990) Pamela Grossman provided a conceptual framework for considering the discussion about professional and pedagogical knowledge of teachers and the particular factors which influence their teaching (p.17), which grew out of research that Lee Shulman and his colleagues conducted at Stanford in the late 1980s. I have adapted the graphic outline of her assertions and added the various Big Ideas about reading which were developed for my survey of over one hundred student teachers to map the specific subject matter of elementary reading onto her general model of knowledge for teaching. Subsequently, I added representations of the roles of teacher dispositions and teacher reflection, factors which unfolded as important influences on teacher thinking and decision making. In the following section, I describe how these representations expand our understanding of forces which shape teacher knowledge.

In considering what factors contribute to teachers having "distinct opportunit[ies] for the development of knowledge" (p. 16) about teaching, Grossman notes the significant contributions of the teacher's personal apprenticeship of observation, elementary and secondary education, subject matter knowledge and classroom experience. I have altered Grossman's model in several ways. I connected conceptions of Purposes for Teaching Subject Matter to Big Idea #6--reading as a policy phenomenon--in order to acknowledge the importance placed by these three novice teachers on real and perceived pressures by the state and their districts on reading instruction. The remaining Big Ideas are paired with Grossman's three other categories to signify where the self-efficacy claimed by the

original survey group might best match areas important for her teacher cases. Finally, I have superimposed over the central portions of Grossman's figures an oval representing the filters novice teachers use to process the intersection of their classroom experiences and their pedagogical content knowledge. These filters include the novice teachers' dispositions to act in particular ways in teaching practice, their dispositions to take risks, and their ability or willingness to reflect upon their practices. This modified graphic represents what novice teachers are expected to know, be able to do, and be disposed to do in actual practice in relation to teaching elementary reading, whereas Grossman's model represented those areas for secondary English. (See the Hope College Education Department Conceptual Framework in Appendix B). I believe the reconfigured graphic is helpful in understanding the complexities which novice teacher face in their practice.

Figure 7.1 Adaptation of Grossman's Model of Teacher Knowledge for Teaching of Elementary Reading



For Kate, Mary and Adam the influences of the apprenticeship of observation and their own K-12 education in reading have remained powerful and distinct. Teacher education has apparently not helped them revise the strong influence of prior experiences in reading. Grossman's figure displays a set of relationships among pedagogical content knowledge, subject matter knowledge, teaching subject matter, students' understanding, and teacher knowledge about instructional strategies. In an adaptation of that figure (see above), I have expanded her visual to include the findings from the initial survey of novice teachers from Hope College and data pertinent to the cases of Kate, Mary, and Adam.

Big Idea number six, reading as a policy phenomenon, relates most closely to the Conceptions of Purposes for Teaching Subject Matter. Kate, Mary, and Adam privilege one perspective on reading instruction over another, or over using a variety of perspectives (see discussion of McGee & Tompkins above). They have given in to real and perceived pressures from outside stakeholders in reading (e.g., state mandated tests, district pressures) and appear to rely on isolated skill and strategy instruction rather than the pedagogical content knowledge and subject matter knowledge about reading which they learned in teacher education. The focus has shifted from learning to read and appreciate literature to successfully competing for approval from the political arena.

Grossman's category, Knowledge of Students' Understanding is interconnected with Big Ideas #2 (student development), #3 (program management), #5 (assessment and evaluation), and #8 (aesthetics). In spite of their high level of confidence about knowledge of children learning to read, these novices seem to have overlooked the diversity of personal responses to literature and favored a teacher-centered approach. This approach seems to reinforce the thinking that there are pat questions and answers about literature and that variations to those are not necessary or useful. Again, the impact of the state

mandated testing cannot be underestimated here because of the stress Kate, Mary, and Adam believe they are expected to place on them.

The category of Curricular Knowledge is closely aligned with Big Ideas #1 (central concepts), #3 (program management), #5 (assessment and evaluation), and #7 (reading as subject matter). It is also aligned with Big Idea number #9, teacher as learner, because teachers must remain up-to-date about changes in theory and research which can inform the ways reading is taught in an actual curriculum; and teachers must adjust and align the reading curriculum as they learn more about teaching reading. In our initial interviews and pre-observation meetings, Kate, Mary, and Adam claimed to be cognizant of the multiple components which comprise the reading curriculum. They all talked about multiple resources and approaches to reading instruction. To varying degrees all three acknowledged the roles choice and flexibility play in planning for a robust reading curriculum. They seem to have ceded their role in the reading curriculum to state mandated testing and to the exigencies of managing classrooms with a range of readers in order to cover a grade level reading curriculum. The result is a reading program in which the needs of the district and the teacher for success on tests and for managing behavior take precedence over the needs of children to experience the world authentically and vicariously through literature. In effect, they have limited their own opportunities to explore and deepen their knowledge of the reading curriculum.

The final category, Knowledge of Instructional Strategies is most closely related to Big Ideas #3(program management), #4 (teacher repertoire), and #8 (aesthetics). Big Idea #9 (teacher as learner), is also included because the more teachers learn about a variety of instructional strategies the more they are able to adapt instruction to a range of students and it allows special insights into the instructional decisions of these novices. In survey

responses and during the interviews, Kate, Mary, and Adam all claimed to understand that using an assortment of reading strategies was best for learners. Each of them discussed the ways a variety of specific strategies (KWL, reciprocal teaching, QAR, readers' theater, among others) which could and should enrich the teaching and learning they plan. Again the reality is that in their own classrooms they seem to privilege one narrow set of strategies over a variety which could enliven and stimulate student learning.

The matter does not end there. Like most novice teachers, Kate, Mary, and Adam are struggling to integrate these three categories addressed by Grossman: knowledge of students' understanding, curricular knowledge, and knowledge of instructional strategies. Too often if they strive to better understand the overall *reading curriculum*, they seem to push their need to understand specific *reading strategies* to the background, and may temporarily eliminate any attention to their *knowledge of students' understanding* of literature and reading. Later they may privilege *instructional/reading strategies* over the other two. In complex situations, they avoid the depth of understanding they need for flexible teaching and they flee toward what Spiro, et al, called a reductive bias; they seek the simple solution. I remind the reader that Livingston and Borko (1989) called teaching as a metaphor for improvisational performance. In their search for the single-minded solution these novices avoid improvisation, perhaps for fear of the risks involved. What Kate, Mary, and Adam should be doing is focusing on all three components of reading instruction at the same time in order to gain a complete picture of reading action in their classrooms in order to reflect on teaching and to improve it.

Finally, Grossman lays out three salient features which have an impact on classroom instruction: the students in the classroom, the context of the classroom and school, and teaching experience. As already noted, all three of these components have

played a major role in shaping how Kate, Mary, and Adam view the interactions around reading instruction in their classrooms. Interestingly, the impact of these three features varies with each novice. Adam privileges context. Because he is a novice, he relies on the perceived dictates of his school district and the State of Michigan in shaping the reading curriculum in his classroom. The strong emphasis on the MEAP tests and the district mandated MEAP preparation classes, often led by the reading specialists, seem to confirm in Adam's mind the correctness of his almost absolute control of learner responses to and interactions with literature. In Adam's view, the diverse student population in his fourth grade classroom need specific guidance in their encounters with literature.

While context also plays an important role in instructional decisions for Kate and Mary, Kate seems to have come closest to developing a reading curriculum which bestows some choices and options on children. Kate strives to provide students with reading material which they can successfully read and which they also want to read. She does this while carefully integrating reading and literacy instruction with content subjects. Limited personal reactions of readers, their understandings of literary forms, their comfort as individuals who talk about books, and their ultimate success on state mandated tests all influence Kate's curricular choices.

Mary, like Adam and Kate is also concerned with her teaching context and with the well-being and welfare of her students. Although she allows for some student choice and makes room for limited personal responses to literature, Mary has instead focused almost entirely on controlling student behaviors. She described her pupils as very immature. Within that context she may believe she has no other choice except direct control of behavior. Rather than considering the role active, personal involvement with literature might play in shaping classroom activity, Mary has fixed her professional gaze on

behavior.

What can account for this? Grossman's model only helps us understand how novices learn to teach elementary reading to a point. In order better understand what these three novices may be up against I have added to the graphic representations for teacher dispositions and teacher reflection which encircle large expanses in Grossman's original landscape. Understanding how these dispositions interplay with the other elements in reading instruction can sharpen our appreciation of the roles such personal choices, attitudes, and proclivities play in teachers' instructional decisions. Such inclinations permeate human action; it is best to be fully aware of them and to think about their origin, their impact, and ways to modify or enhance them. This is where reflection comes in. The results of this study and the data collected seem to suggest that novices' dispositions and their tendency to reflect be considered as part of any consideration about instructional choices.

Implications for Further Research

What does this study tell us about the teaching of reading? What insights emerge from the brief classroom observations with Kate, Mary, and Adam? There are at least four areas which materialize from this study which I believe merit further study: new longitudinal studies of Kate, Mary, and Adam; periodic revisits to the classrooms of Kate, Mary, and Adam, reconsidering their actions; studying the effects of on-going mentoring to these novices, and finding the means to consider the role of personal histories and to ameliorate their effects on novice teachers.

First, as a result of this study I now believe that long term partnerships between practicing reading teachers and teacher educators should be the norm that will allow for

longitudinal research into teacher knowledge about reading and literature. Short term studies of teacher knowledge and action in reading can be useful, but by definition they provide the field with more limited application. While caution is always necessary when extrapolating from a case study to a larger population (usually, it cannot be done) researchers in teacher education and teacher knowledge can still find this study useful.

The influences mentioned above (i.e., external influences in the workplace, degree of comfort with pedagogy and methodologies, amount of self-awareness, and so on) can be studied long term. In a sense, my short term study of these three novices has been a *hit-and-run* event. If I were to continue studying their practice I would be able to pursue additional issues which could shed light on the decisions the three novices make in the reading classroom. Among these could be the following: How does student behavior influence novices' practice? Does a philosophical or theoretical frame guide novices' practice in reading instruction? If so, what is that framework? Which theoretical perspectives guide novices' literature-based reading instruction?

A longer, more focused study in these areas could assist us in composing a clearer picture of what these three novices rely on to inform their reading instruction. In order to accomplish that, the teaching of Kate, Mary, and Adam would have to be studied very differently and preferably longitudinally over the period of an entire school year, on a daily basis, to obtain a more complete data set. To say the least, it is problematic at best to visit three teachers several times over a period of a few weeks and then pronounce with any veracity what it is they are doing well or doing poorly. At best, in this study we have detailed snapshots of their teaching, their instructional plans, and their interactions with young learners. In the worst case, we do not know enough to make credible pronouncements about novice teachers.

Alternatively, Kate, Mary, and Adam could be visited periodically, but regularly, to study their teaching actions in reading and to work closely with them to reflect on and improve practice in that arena. Such an intervention approach could be informative and enlightening because it would provide sustained data over a longer period of time so that more definitive patterns of practice might emerge.

It would also be valuable to simply re-evaluate Kate, Mary and Adam in five years to ascertain whether more experience in reading instruction will have (in what Shulman called the crucible of the field), in fact, altered their practice or merely made what we have seen in this study more entrenched. Clearly, we may not be able to ascertain all of the intervening experiences (or lack of experiences) which come into play, but we would have a *before* and *after* photograph with which to shape the discussions about practice in reading instruction. The danger, of course, is that we will not revisit these teachers and their reading classrooms again. So what we have left could be more an iteration of the “wisdom and perspectives” (Clark, 1991, p. 432) of this observer than about the wisdom, perspectives and the emerging knowledge of craft of Kate, Mary, and Adam.

Further study of the personal histories of these three novices may also yield useful data on teacher knowledge and actions in reading instruction. Kate, Mary, and Adam did not enter teacher education or their first years of teaching as blank slates upon which seasoned professionals would write all they needed to know and do. They, like all of us, are influenced by their personal histories. Earlier, I referred to Kari Smith’s essay (1999) on teaching reading which included a discussion of Handal and Lauvaas’ Practical Theory. I refer to that theory again and want the reader to notice how that the authors stress the often unspoken nature of a teacher’s personal history and the implications of powerful complexities which flow from that. I want the reader to note the implied

importance of bringing the knowledge of personal and practical histories to the forefront of daily practice. Being aware is being informed. Within this theory

a teacher's professional knowledge is . . . a complex concept, related to theoretical knowledge in the discipline taught, pedagogy, and the practical knowledge of didactics which again is wrapped up in the teacher's personality and social intelligence. Practical knowledge is drawn upon when the teacher makes spontaneous decisions during teaching, and it is the implementation of what Handal and Lauvaas (1983) call a person's Practical Theory, which they define as a person's private, integrated, but ever-changing system of knowledge, experience and values related to teaching practice at any particular time However, the implementation of the practical neon also depends on the setting and teaching situation. A teacher might use one form of teaching in one class, change this in a class of a different character, or even in the same class, but at a different time of day. A teacher's Practical Theory is expressed in a different way in different situations, and it is part of the teacher's tacit knowledge used in teaching. (pp. 22-23)

I suggest that the combination of the apprenticeship of observation and this practical theory should be studied together. Perhaps if we can ascertain the power and impact of the personal history, we can determine, to some extent, how to better channel its power into constructive reflection on teaching. Researchers, novices and experienced teachers could join forces for a longitudinal collaborative study focused on teacher reflection on teacher actions in the reading classroom. Later I will suggest a new social compact as means for developing a maturing dynamic in the study of teacher knowledge--the collaboration I suggest here fits this new dynamic and compact. I have no doubt that Kate, Mary, and Adam know that they are influenced in their professional decisions by the collective

experiences and histories which make them who they are. The question remains as to whether they know how to use that knowledge for designing reading instruction which empowers diverse learners.

Implications for Teacher Education--What's to be Done?

In this next section my suggestions become broader in scope and it is within them that I advance the idea of a new social compact in regards to teachers, especially novice teachers. In order for teacher educators and those charged with developing the mandated induction year programs to join forces with the policy makers, sweeping changes must occur. State legislatures must fully fund what they want districts to do and accomplish during the induction year. Teacher educators must be freed from some teaching in order to participate in long term collaborative relationships focused on the continuing development of reflective practitioners in classrooms. No five year plan or short term commitment to such ideas will solve any problems mentioned herein. On the contrary, what I propose here is a long term commitment, in effect a social compact, by all stakeholders--policy makers, teachers, teacher educators, parents, and community members. This compact would nurture and support what I am calling a developing dynamic about teacher thinking, teacher reflection and teacher knowledge. I pose some of the suggestions which follow for this purpose.

Volumes have been written about reforming teacher education in order to prepare more effective teachers. This study, too, has implications for teacher education. In reforming its own program in the 1990s, the Hope College Education Department formulated a pronounced and focused constructivist orientation. Pre-service teachers are routinely exposed to robust and lively study and discussion about the need for flexibility in

teaching reading, a strong teacher knowledge base, a deep awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of various methodologies, an active involvement in an array of field experiences which can inform the theoretical and research components of becoming a reflective practitioner, and a focus on developing the habits of mind as a lifelong learner. It is still the case, however, that novices completing the program seem to think that determining what young learners know and understand is straightforward and not a function of a multitude of factors (Lampert & Ball, 1999, pp. 37-38). What teachers do must be shaped by the contexts in which they teach, not simply through the accumulation of subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge through teacher education.

The implications of this study for teacher education can be taken at two levels—the preservice tier and the induction years tier. In this section I will make recommendations for these two areas and support those with commentary from James Calderhead and Jean Lave.

The Pre-Service Years. Calderhead reports that “changing teachers’ knowledge and understanding does not necessarily result in changes in their practice” (1991, pp. 533). As a result of this study, I believe that desire to study and change practice must be paired with ample time and opportunities for reflection on practice, and all of the components of classroom practice. Further, I believe that a strong working pedagogical content knowledge is essential for reflection. Calderhead asserts that in order to change practice, teachers need a repertoire of pedagogical content knowledge. He puts it this way:

Planning, teaching, and evaluating practice involve knowledge growth in several areas, however—knowledge about the curriculum, knowledge about teaching strategies, knowledge about the nature of the subject being studied, knowledge about children,

their abilities, interests, the difficulties they experience, and the time they take to complete different tasks. The development of much pedagogical content knowledge, for example, requires the . . . teacher to draw heavily upon their [sic] knowledge of the subject, the children, teaching strategies, and their past teaching and life experiences that might relate to their classroom work.(Calderhead, 1991, p. 533)

Again, such knowledge comes primarily from extensive experiences in these domains within authentic teaching situations, not controlled or contrived ones, which is something novices generally do not have. In further discussions about the knowledge of student teachers, Calderhead makes a series of suggestions which teacher education programs should enact in order to better prepare the novice teacher for the exigencies of daily classroom life. These exhortations range from ensuring a tighter connection between theory in the college classroom and experiences in the K-12 classroom to an emphasis on teachers' analytical skills. Most importantly, however, Calderhead states that student teachers, and thus novice teachers, need "assistance to reflect" and attention must be given to the "numerous routes of student growth by which student teachers might become reflective" (p. 534). Clearly, there is no single formula for accomplishing this, but I propose that Kate, Mary, and Adam would have benefitted from a more directed "assistance to reflect" during teacher education and during the induction years. These opportunities do not currently exist within the typical teacher education program. Rather than being simply helped to develop a system for quick decision making, and for on-the-spot analysis, Kate, Mary, and Adam could have also profited from examining videotapes from their own practice teaching and the teaching of others (currently optional in the Hope College program).

In a more clinical sense, novices need assistance in considering the true nature of

the reactions, the perceptions, the assertions, and the understandings of their elementary readers. They also need to appreciate the source and nature of their own understandings in regard to the actions, comments and perceptions of the readers in their charge. They need opportunities to discuss instruction with colleagues who teach similar grades and material. The focus should be on what and how children learn and what instructional approaches are truly effective given the teacher's own knowledge base and biases and ability to reflect on those. This process must be started during teacher education and not delayed until the first year of teaching when the complexities of the year make reflection difficult at best.

As a result of this study I make the following suggestions for improving the ability of pre-service and novice teachers to reflect on their practice and the practice of others. Pre-service teachers need more authentic field placements. The current field placements at Hope College, for example, are valuable, but they are in a very real sense, contrived experiences. Until the theory-practice divide is bridged by a substantive collaboration between teacher educators and teachers in the field who are truly able to mentor, pre-service teachers will continue to struggle with determining the rightful place of theory in their lives. Field placement teachers, who often want to have the extra "eyes, ears, and hands" which pre-service teachers can provide in the field, do not always appreciate the powerful need for addressing the theory-practice connection. Worse, they may not always agree with the predominant philosophy of the teacher education program from which the pre-service teachers come. As many who advocate reform in teacher education have espoused (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 1991), teacher educators must face this problem head-on and build ample opportunities into the program for pre-service teachers (and even field placement teachers) to wrestle with how these philosophies and perspectives (and teacher dispositions) evolved and what they mean for instruction. This should be done

intentionally and periodically over the long term. In short, substantive reflection is in order here.

Teacher education programs also need to help pre-service teachers temper their self-reported high levels of confidence in light of the realities of widespread isolated classroom practice. This might mean that teacher educators participate on a regular basis in the field experiences of their students so that they might better understand what they “see” in those settings. Clearly, one approach would be to have teacher educators, pre-service teachers and field teachers working in tandem to view videotapes of cooperating teachers as a tool for considering teacher actions. I am not suggesting here that a picture of “doom and gloom” be painted for the teacher education student. But these new teachers need to know that a positive outlook alone cannot overcome the certainties of elementary classroom--classrooms very similar to those in which Kate, Mary, and Adam teach. Only when these novices are fully prepared with a repertoire of instructional tools and a broad awareness of the vagaries of classroom practice will they be able, through reflection, to flexibly and appropriately make decisions which honor and challenge and support learners. In the end, they need the repertoire; they need to move beyond that repertoire and into critical analysis and synthesis--these areas of concern should be prime foci for teacher education programs.

The induction years. With the so-called basics in place, new teachers often believe they are ready to teach. Often they are. Often, sadly, they are not. All teaching is situated in real contexts which color the thinking and actions of teachers and learners alike. Jean Lave discusses the situated nature of teaching and the theory-practice dilemma which has been a central focus of this study.

Lave describes the theory into practice dilemma in this way: teachers cannot

simply copy what other schools and teachers or nations do, because teaching practice is historically and socially situated (1996, p. 154). The idea that teacher education programs could arm the novice with options for all contingencies is absurd because such programs alone cannot emulate the reality of the elementary classroom. Schools, like the tailor shops Lave studied in Africa, are socially situated and different from one another in substantive ways; the learning that occurs in them is socially situated; and the learner is part of the “situatedness” of teaching (p. 158). Theory must be juxtaposed against the reality of these situations in order to be flexibly applied. Lave goes on to say that theory is learned through practice and in practice. Lave’s ideas would likely run counter to Dewey’s assertion that a focus on theory and consideration of the “inner life” should take place before attention to the technical or management issues in teaching.

Lave’s conjecture would transfer to teacher education in this way: unless you are IN a classroom, and unless you “step back” frequently to assess and evaluate what has happened in that classroom, then important stepping stones from theory to practice and from practice to theory are missed. Such decisions and thinking are situated in the context of the actual teaching. Novice teachers, and all teachers in fact, have longstanding encounters with situated learning—they have been in the situation of the learner, but not the teacher. Through the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), novice teachers often think “that is all there is to teaching.” However, novices often have no prior knowledge about the situation of teaching. Much goes on behind the scenes, before and after teaching, to bring a lesson to fruition. It is almost as if we expect novice teachers in general, and Kate, Mary, and Adam, in particular, to safely and properly ride a unicycle after reading about unicycle riding, completing a test about the details of unicycle riding, and then by watching someone else do it. Much is missed in that approach. In order to

ride the unicycle, most individuals need many attempts at trying to ride the unicycle; they need to learn as they “go along.” Pedagogical content knowledge has to be tried and tested in authentic situations, and then reflected upon in the context of the authentic settings, in order for it to be a useful tool.

James Gee (1989) goes so far as to say that we are often better at what we acquire (i.e., learning in acquisition as in immersion guided by competent models) as opposed to what we learn through formal instruction. “We are better at what we acquire, but we consciously know more about what we have learned . . . acquisition is good for performance, learning is good for meta-level knowledge” (p. 4). We learn to teach when we learn to talk like a teacher, act like a teacher, feel like a teacher, believe like a teacher-- it becomes a secondary discourse to the novice as he grows as a teacher. Learning to teach is not simply an immersion process. The person learning to teach must step back from the daily work and decision making and contemplate what has occurred—on the surface, to be sure but also what has occurred “inside the heads” of learners. There must be what Gee calls a metacommentary about teaching and learning, not just a recitation of the apparent facts. Lave would add that teachers need to consider the “effects of teaching on teachers as learners as well” (1996, p. 158). The point is to expect teachers to reflect-on-practice and reflect-in-practice. In fact, ideally, teachers would be reflecting all of the time—instantaneously in the classroom and over time.

In Composing a Teaching Life (1996) Ruth Vinz demonstrated how such an approach could work over many months. She used long term relationships with several teachers to study what they reflected on, how they reflected, to what extent those reflections shaped lessons and interaction with learners, and how those reflections evolved in timbre and focus (i.e., from the needs of the teacher to the needs of learners) over time.

Vinz provided a regular venue for these teachers to think about their actions as teachers alongside the researcher-theorist. Using teacher selected artifacts (e.g., videotaped lessons, journals) and verbal and written commentary over time, Vinz and her teacher colleagues considered the complex and evanescent nature of the instantaneous and contemplative reflection teachers must do everyday if they are to be empowered to teach reading and literature to children. Vinz, of course, talked *with* these teachers, not *at* them and the goal was to move teaching away from the popular image of teacher as technician. The potential for this sort of collaboration within induction year programs is limitless, if not completely controllable.

Teacher educators need to consider the importance of the situatedness of teaching and invest in powerful ways during the induction years which help novice teachers on this aspect of their teaching. As part of the social compact I proposed earlier, I make the following suggestions for the induction years. Only a strong commitment, some would say a revolution, by the stakeholders in schools will provide for progress. This commitment is not simply a matter of throwing public money at a problem. Rather, it is, in a very real sense, making the best use of precious public resources and avoiding the propensity for demanding quick fixes in complex situations.

To get at what Calderhead called the assistance to reflect, I propose that teacher education programs and school districts adopt joint induction year programs modeled after Vinz' approach above. While pre-service teachers also need to start this reflection in their first education course, the induction year is primary fertile ground for examining practice, albeit at a time when new teachers are typically overwhelmed. I can only wonder what would have happened had Kate, Mary, and Adam had the opportunity to sit with a seasoned classroom teacher and/or an experienced teacher educator to think about, talk

about, and reflect on their actions in these literature-based reading classrooms. While all problems would not have been solved, Adam may have acknowledged his tight control of student responses and interactions with literature which limited reader responses. Perhaps Mary would have realized that behavior, not reading, was her focus and she might have altered her course. Kate may have realized that while she started the process of helping children enjoy the literary imagery in the books they read, she needed to go further in helping them personalize their understanding and subsequent use of such literary forms.

In order to assist teachers in becoming more reflective practitioners, schools need to inventory the committee work of teachers. Whether doing committee work which responds to demands for program data (unavoidable) or considering less corporeal issues of teaching and learning (e.g., knowledge about student's understanding, on-the-spot assessment) teachers should be called upon to regularly reflect on the instructional impact of any district mandate or professional actions. Specifically, novice reading teachers should be supported (in terms of release time, money for competent substitutes, and energy) to collaborate with and learn from teacher educators and more experienced teachers as they all wrestle with the tough issues of teaching and learning reading. There cannot be just a single-minded focus on discrete skills to guarantee success on the MEAP here. The emphasis must be on what is worth knowing about literature and how children may do that in ways which recognize their individuality and worth in light of state mandated testing.

Another prime area of concern for novice teachers in the induction years is the issue of classroom control. When teaching becomes tough, complex, or unpredictable, novices flee to the comfort of control. Novices need help in this area. I am suggesting that a type of apprenticeship teaching be structured, studied and evaluated by teams of

teacher educators, school districts and expert teachers. Novices would be paired with an expert teacher who has extensive training and experience in providing support for an extended period, say one full school year after student teaching, before being permitted to venture off independently. At this point, required time for reflection about actual practice with the mentor would begin to taper off. Perhaps then what Lave described in African tailor shops and what Gee called acquisition can then be studied in settings directly related to classroom teaching. We could learn whether such mentoring is able to make the transition from first year teacher to a more knowledgeable, confident, and reflective novice teacher more likely.

In order for any of these issues to be resolved, theory and practiced will have to be examined and critiqued, challenged and questioned, weighed and measured alongside one another in the crucible of the field and in authentic teaching. Like current medical education, teacher education and society no longer have the luxury of positioning one before the other, or for privileging one over the other.

Some Final Thoughts

One irony of these debates about teaching reading, about theory and practice, about reflective teaching, and about the novice-expert divide, centers around what Clark (1991) calls a teacher's self-consciousness. "If you ask about my plans before I teach, I am more explicit (and perhaps more planful) than usual. I try to be more analytical and insightful than I would be with only myself as audience" (p. 432). In essence, then, Kate, Mary and Adam were likely more attentive to laying out detailed instructional plans during my observations, than they might ordinarily be. Under ordinary classroom circumstances these plans would perhaps be less formal and extensive. In the end, however, what should

be the most disturbing is the lack of a consistent and supportive structure for these three teachers, and all novice teachers, in which to reflect and to analyze instructional actions. Such support should emanate from the Michigan law already in place, which requires districts to provide induction year support to novice teachers. To date, however, schools struggle to enact these requirements in worthwhile and cost effective ways. Decisions regarding induction year programs are fraught with details: Have districts and teacher education programs thought carefully about what such programs would “look like”? How should districts recast their task-oriented committee systems into study groups which foster community and promote true contemplation of problems in teaching and learning? Given the impending influx of novice teachers who will replace a retiring cadre of experts in the nation’s schools, how should districts rethink past practice to make the most of opportunities for reshaping internal governance and in-service structures?

Whether or not integration of theory can be taught--and perhaps it cannot--teacher education programs can introduce discussion of these complexities to pre-service teachers. Programs should plant the idea that “something more” is needed. This is where theory enters the picture and influences practice. I know that the teacher education program in which I teach acknowledges the value of theory in preparing teachers. But, I suspect that it has been overwhelmed by the demands of pre-service teachers for more practical work. I propose that teachers educators need to be more intentional about their commitments to theory as a tool for reflective teaching *in* practice. Theory, the neutral arbiter, allows us to step back, and alongside ourselves and our dispositions and actions, acquire a beginning answer to the questions, How? Why? Put another way, as Gaia Leinhardt states,

Theory has obvious advantages. It can be applied over many unique situations; it can predict or handle situations not yet encountered, and it is unbiased toward the

particular However, teachers also appear to learn in their profession and to communicate with their colleagues and others in the language of craft and practice—in fact, in the language of the particular.(1990, p. 18)

All is not hopeless; theory can be an ally in solving problems of teaching and learning.

I am now convinced more than ever that Kate, Mary, and Adam would have benefitted from early assistance to reflect within their teacher education program in which theory reflection, and practical experiences are even more carefully meshed. They should have been called upon to continually theorize, psychologize, and think about learners while also experiencing the more mundane and practical side of teacher education to see where it takes them. John Goodlad discusses the future of schools of schools, colleges, and departments of education in *Whither Schools of Education?* and heads directly to John Dewey for a succinct statement on the current state of affairs in teacher training. There can be no doubt that Dewey saw theory as the foundation to good teaching. According to Goodlad, Dewey deemed teacher education programs

as engaged almost exclusively in giving teachers in training *working command of the necessary tools of their profession; control of the technique of class instruction and management; skill and proficiency in the work of teaching* (Dewey, 1904, p. 1) to the neglect of principles derived from theory tested in the laboratory. For Dewey, there was no duality of purpose that separates practice and inquiry. They nourish each other. (1999, pp. 325-326)

While it may be the case that no teacher education program, the traditional four year model or even the five year program, is able to ensure that all graduates have all of the nuances of intellectual powers (i.e., theory and reflection) and practical powers (i.e., “on-the-spot” decision making) of action they need in place professionally upon

graduation, there is a message in this study for them as well. Teacher education programs need to consider ways in which the necessary theory and pedagogical content knowledge can be melded more successfully with subject matter knowledge, the impact of strong and weak instructional frames, the means for teaching children to appreciate literature aesthetically, and for stimulating them to ponder their own personal responses to literature. Of course, teacher educators would have to consider Calderhead's and Vinz's exhortations to better assist graduates to reflect on their work, on their craft. Naturally, all of this would have to be accomplished within the milieu of the ever expanding influence of political and social forces which are relentlessly standardizing the elementary reading curriculum. At the very least, teacher education needs to help novice teachers work within the nested contexts of the classroom, school buildings, and districts.

In the end, we can embrace the remarks of one of Ruth Vinz's teacher colleagues in her study of teacher reflection. *Joe* stated: "inquiry is a form of literacy all its own. When we abandon possibility, someone else will step in to take control, leaving us with our complacency. Reinventing is hard work and the labor of it may be a form of mind masochism, but to neglect it is to let someone else co-opt [sic] the power" (1996, p. 124). While Kate, Mary, and Adam, are not complacent yet, they may become so if they believe they have completed their evolution as teachers and do not need to reflect on their teaching of reading and literature.

APPENDIX A

Benchmarks to Guide Professional Development of Individual Teachers

Adapted from a framework by P. David Pearson
Michigan State University

Tool #1: A Rubric

Rubric for Levels of Accomplishment in Becoming a Teacher of Reading

Level 1: I am just developing a rudimentary awareness of the issues and ideas surrounding it.

Level 2: I am aware of the idea and issues, and I *also understand why it is important in the teaching and learning of reading.*

Level 3: I not only possess an awareness of the idea and the issues **and** why they are important, *but I also understand how to incorporate the idea and the issues into planning for the teaching of reading and language.*

Level 4: I not only possess an awareness of the idea and the issues **and** why they are important **and** how to incorporate them into my planning, *but I also can adapt my planning and teaching as need and circumstance demand.*

Tool # 2: A Set of Sample Standards

Big Idea #1: *Reading as a Concept*:—I understand the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of reading

- * I understand reading as an interactive and constructive process rather than simple reproduction of the ideas that the author had in mind in setting pen to paper, and I can use that knowledge to create instructional activities for children.
- * I understand and can illustrate the vital role played by experience and oral language when children learn to read and when they try to comprehend the texts they read.
- * I can identify and explain the importance of different funds of knowledge in learning to read, including knowledge about the world of print (letters, genres, text-structures) and the social, cultural, and political uses of literacy.
- * I have a sense of the continuum of growth as a reader from the emergent stage to the novice stage to the expert stage. I can articulate those stages and the benchmarks (descriptions of what students know and can do) that characterize each stage.

Big Idea #2: *Student development and diversity*—I understand children, their growth and development, their knowledge and experience, and their unique personal, linguistic, motivational, and cultural characteristics. More importantly, I can use that knowledge to analyze what is going on in classroom situations and to plan instructional activities.

- * I know something about the role of language in reading.
- * I understand the influence of dialect and language differences and know how to respect and accommodate it in my classroom at the same time as I strive to help children.
- * I know that children differ in their approaches to learning and can create opportunities for them to use a variety of approaches.
- * I know that children differ in terms of the incentives, feedback, and rewards that motivate them to learn and participate in classroom activities.
- * I understand the importance of culture and how to use it as a strength in helping individuals learn and finding a sense of belonging and community in my classroom.

Big Idea #3: *Program management*--I know how to use space, materials, feedback, and time to structure a reading/language arts program.

- * I know how to select literature that would meet the needs and interests of a whole class, a small group of students, and individual students.
- * I know how to structure activities that engage and meet the needs and interests of a whole class, a small group, and individual students.
- * I know how to create learning centers at which students can work independently on important tasks.
- * I can create independent learning activities for students to work on while I am engaged with small groups.
- * I can schedule myself (my time and place within the classroom) so that I can provide maximum assistance for all of my students.

Big Idea #4: *Teacher repertoire*--I know and can use a range of teaching and interaction strategies.

- * I know how to lead a discussion; I know how to manage a discussion in which kids take the lead.
- * I know how and when to provide various sorts of scaffolding to help students accomplish what they cannot accomplish on their own.
- * I know how to teach a lesson for a skill or strategy; I also know when to engage in explicit instruction and when I do not (i.e., kids can pick it up without explicit explanation on my part).

Big Idea #5: *Assessment and evaluation*--I know how to assess student progress and evaluate the quality of my literacy program.

- * I understand the uses and limitations of different forms of reading assessment, including standardized tests, specific skill tests, performance-based assessments, and classroom-based assessments.
- * I can use informal information gathered in the classroom (during discussions, as I listen to kids reading orally, from written assignments, as I watch them work) as a basis for judging their growth and accomplishment as well as for determining appropriate curricular activities.
- * I have an overall sense of the areas in which students should be making growth at different stages of their development and how to assess progress in each area.
- * I can hold individual conferences with kids for various purposes, e.g., (a) determining how well they are responding to things they are reading, (b) discussing their growth and progress, and (c) engaging them in evaluating their progress and setting future goals.
- * I can use information gathered in the classroom (during discussion, from oral reading, from written assignments, as I watch kids work) as a basis for evaluating and adapting my reading program.



Big Idea #6: *Reading as a policy phenomenon*--I know enough about the ideas and issues that surround the controversies over what and how to teach in the domain of reading and the language arts to be able to engage in public and professional dialogue.

- * I know about the phonics/whole language debate, the positions taken by the two sides, and the nature of the arguments and evidence used by each.
- * I understand why parents gets concerned about whether their kids are “getting the basics” and can discuss how my classroom program helps kids acquire those basics.
- * I can talk about the advantages and disadvantages of embedded (part of the fabric of reading and writing) and isolated (let’s pull it out for careful examination) skill instruction.
- * I have taken a personal position on these controversies and can articulate and justify that position.

The Lenses. There are many lenses one could use to gauge progress and achievement. Here are several. I encourage you to select as many as you wish in coming to terms with a judgment about what you have done.

A. **A personal lens.** When I started this experience, I had a vision of what I wanted to learn and I had a **set of goals** toward which I worked. The question I have to answer in determining my accomplishments is, **How well did I achieve my goals and/or my vision?**

B. **A comparative lens (among peers).** I have a sense of how hard I worked and how well I achieved in comparison to others. Given my own sense of my **relative standing**, **how well did I do?**

C. **A comparative lens (across professional development experiences).** I have a sense of how hard I worked and how much I learned in this class [or program] in comparison to others I have taken. Given my own sense of the **relative level of work and learning in this class**, **how much did I accomplish?**

D. **A professional lens (against some set of standards).** I can select a set of standards upon which to evaluate my growth and accomplishment. Given that **selection of standards**, **given my own assessment of how far I have come on each standard**, **how am I doing?**

APPENDIX B

HOPE COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK STATEMENT

Essential Features of the Teacher Education Program

The Hope College Department of Education prepares professional educators who are catalysts for the academic, intellectual, social, emotional, moral, and spiritual growth of children and adolescents. The curricular and instructional choices we have made for our professional preparation programs reflect this multi-dimensional, learner-centered view of teaching and our commitment to the success and well-being for all students in our diverse society.

We view our professional sequence, as well as the general education provided at Hope College, as embedded in a developmental perspective. We believe that both liberal arts general education curricula and initial teacher education programs must continually take into account the interplay of students' individual biographies, ever-widening social contexts, and emerging understanding of what it means to be an effective teacher. We embrace this developmental perspective in the professional sequence of courses in each of our programs.

Against this backdrop of a developmental perspective, and in concert with our vision of teachers as catalysts for students' holistic development, we have identified six professional abilities that serve as touchstones for our collective curricular, instructional, and assessment decisions. These six professional abilities describe teachers as effective communicators, professional collaborators, decision makers, curriculum developers,

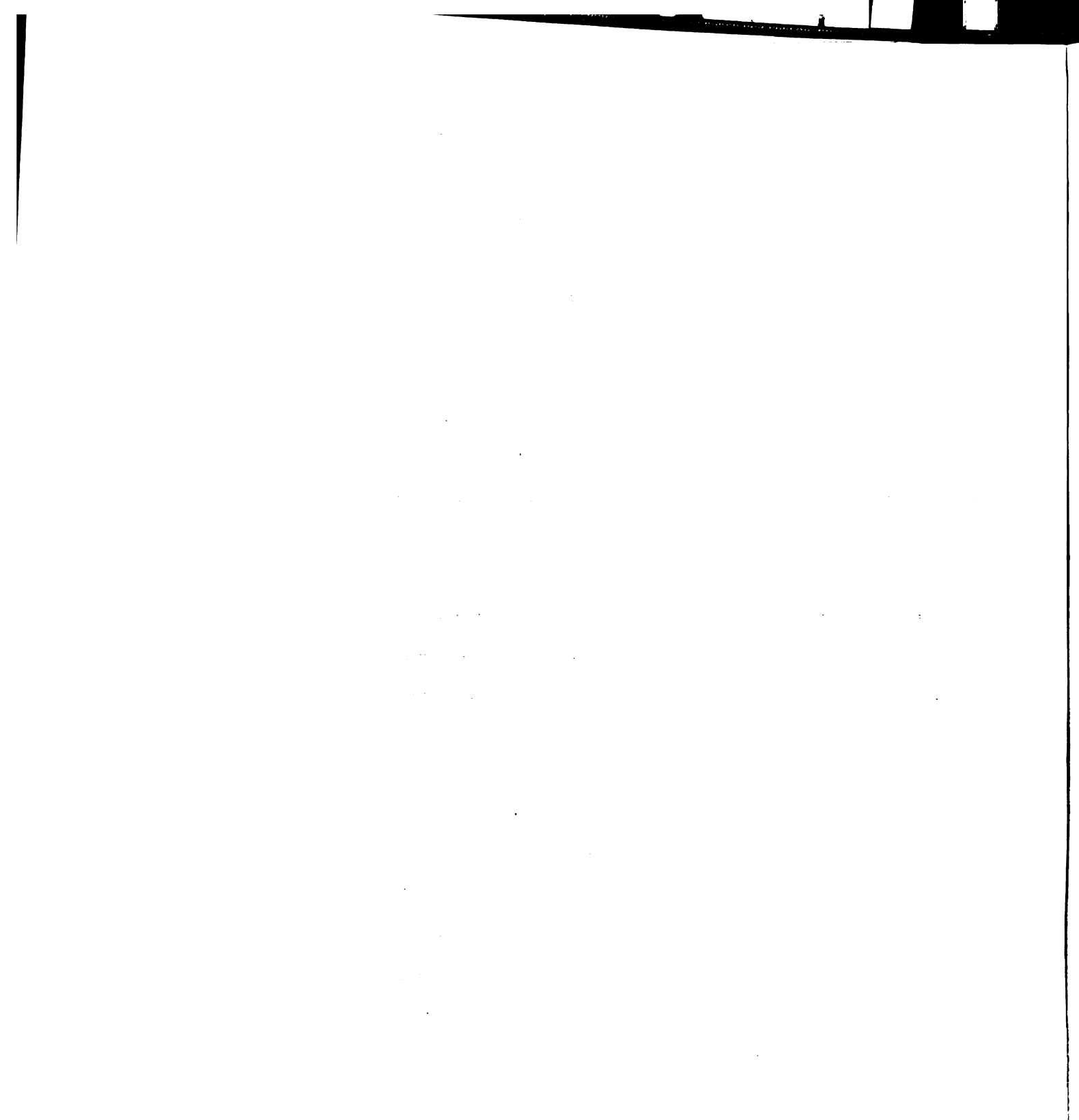
problem solvers, and scholarly educators. We find that the six abilities are understood easily and provide the "conceptual glue" for our students as they progress through our programs. The six abilities range from dimensions of the teaching profession with which our students are already familiar to dimensions of the profession that broaden their understanding of teachers' work. In addition, the six abilities provide a structure that helps department faculty develop authentic experiences to nurture students' understanding and synthesizing of the knowledge bases in our programs.

Student development is articulated and described across three levels: Level One, Choosing to Teach; Level Two, Learning How to Teach; and Level Three, Applying Learnings Through Teaching. We have described each ability for students from the developmental perspective of Levels I and II. As an example, the Level II Abilities sheet characterizes these abilities in student-centered language as follows:

Effective Communicator Teachers must be able to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences in diverse settings--with children each day in class; with parents in person, in writing, on the phone; and with fellow teachers and administrators; and with community members. In addition, teachers need to be increasingly conversant with technology to both communicate and educate.

Now that you have decided to pursue a career in education, you must continue to strengthen your verbal, written, and technological abilities to meet the demands of the profession. As a developing educator, you will be assuming responsibilities in field placements where you will be expected to communicate as effective teachers do with students, supervisors, parents, and peers.

Professional Collaborator Teachers must have strong, positive interpersonal skills and be both enthusiastic and confident about working with diverse groups of people--



"teamwork." Teamwork involves cooperating with students, colleagues, and parents; providing leadership; coping with complex power and influence issues; and helping people solve their problems through collaboration. Teamwork involves communication, effective coordination, and division of labor.

Schools today require you to understand the dynamics of teamwork and to find your voice in contributing knowledge and expertise that will help to accomplish group tasks.

Curriculum Developer Teachers are not just "recipe readers" or followers of mandates. Teachers must know how to adjust the classroom environment, materials, and activities to meet the needs of all learners. All children do not learn the same thing, at the same time, in the same way.

As developing educators, you will learn how to generate original, creative, and appropriate curricula for all learners, as well as how to adapt existing state or district curricula to meet student needs. Level II courses and field placements will provide extended and in-depth opportunities to design and implement lessons and other learning experiences for K-12 students.

Problem Solver Teachers in today's world are faced with multiple problems of varying degrees of severity. The source of some problems come from outside the classroom, but many can be addressed in the school environment.

In Level II courses, you will further develop your strengths in problem solving as you learn a number of specific strategies that can be applied to a variety of school-related situations. As you participate in class activities and in your field placement, you will learn to identify problems, apply problem solving strategies, and analyze the effectiveness of those strategies.

Decision Maker Often teachers must make decisions based on incomplete information, ambiguous circumstances, and predictable rather than certain outcomes. A professional must be able to take a risk and decide a best course of action.

All of our personal and professional decisions spring from our value systems. As developing educators, you will be asked to clarify the personal values you began to identify as Level I students. You will also be asked to recognize personal choices as being grounded in teachers' value systems. Level II classes and field placements will require you to become articulate about the foundation of personal values supporting all of your actions and decisions as a teacher.

Scholarly Educator Professional educators see beyond the obvious in life and classroom situations. They recognize assumptions people hold as truths and challenge themselves to distinguish between fact and opinion by regularly consulting the professional literature.

As developing educators, you must understand teaching as an intellectual activity. Although educational research is continually expanding our understanding, knowledge about the teaching/learning process will always be incomplete. Still, while we can never know everything about effective instruction, the rich and varied professional literature of our field can inform our classroom and curricular decisions. As you develop your teaching effectiveness, you need to understand how to access this knowledge base to create stimulating experiences for learners. You must also regard professional development as a lifetime endeavor and continue to keep abreast of current research and innovations in education.

These six abilities are strengthened in the pre-professional and professional sequence classes through significant experiences in class, projects, and in the field. The

Levels I and II Abilities sheets list several specific criteria that realize each ability in the classroom. We see these abilities as implicit in current standards which define the criteria for novice teachers. Department courses, within the framework of the six professional abilities, provide a solid foundation for preservice teachers throughout Levels I, II, and III.

Our vision of teaching, supported through course work and the six professional abilities, rests securely on a knowledge base specific to each of our program areas: elementary education; secondary education; and special education (learning disabilities, and emotional impairments/emotional and/or behavior disorders). Accompanying documents outline the theorists and research that serve as the foundation for each of our programs. The knowledge base articulated in the professional education sequence of Level I courses supports all program areas, with differentiated content at Levels Two and Three for each separate program. Curricula, instruction, assessment, and accompanying field experiences in each program are informed by standards from the appropriate professional organizations.

Our Conceptual Orientation to Teacher Education

Rather than limiting our programs by claiming that they rest primarily on a "reflective" or "decision-making" foundation, our conceptual framework is eclectic in nature, coherent, and draws deliberately from several significant themes in teacher education. Our conceptual framework abides in a vision of the teacher as servant to both the intellect and spirit of young people. This focus requires that our knowledge bases address meaningful themes in all five conceptual orientations for teacher education found in the literature (Feiman-Nemser, 1990).

Departmental discussion of these orientations has helped us to clarify our program goals. We have chosen not to include these orientations as an explicit component of the

knowledge base in specific programs. We believe this would be neither appropriate nor necessary in an initial teacher education program. However, these themes are evident throughout the six professional abilities emphasized at each level of our programs, although they appear with differentiated significance across the three levels, as well as across separate programs.

The *personal orientation* speaks of learning and teaching as transformative experiences. This view of teaching and learning is aligned with the developmental perspective that serves as the backdrop for our programs. Many of our students enter the Department of Education initially as first year students at the college; essentially, they are still high school students who come to us with curiosity about being a teacher. All students enter college with an "apprenticeship of observation" about the teaching profession (Lortie, 1975); first-year students have had at least thirteen years in K-12 classrooms observing teachers, and they believe they know the nature and extent of teachers' work. Students enter our programs with traditional conceptions about teaching that are broadened initially in their first course, Educational Psychology, and throughout the rest of their teacher education program.

If new teachers are to work effectively as change agents in the schools, they need to enter the profession with broader conceptions of the teaching-learning process. We view the constructivist concept of teacher as facilitator of learning as part of the personal orientation to teacher education. This concept is reinforced across all levels in the elementary, secondary, and special education programs. In our collective experience, we have found that providing opportunities for our students to experience a richer vision of teachers' work also nurtures their personal transformations.

In addition, the personal orientation places primary importance on the student-

teacher relationship. As faculty members of a small liberal arts institution, we are fortunate that one hallmark of Hope College is the emphasis on interacting with students in a variety of contexts. Department of Education faculty serve as mentors to our students well beyond the usual expectations of academic advising. Because we are a relatively small department and know our students well collectively, we can serve effectively as mentors to their personal development and their development as educators.

Finally, the personal orientation supports our departmental belief that teachers' decisions are based ultimately on their value system. We agree with Ginott (19__) that it is the teacher's "personal approach that creates the climate." We realize that our students learn much from our personal modeling in the classroom. How we actualize our curricular choices tells our students much about how we view the relationships among students, teachers, content, and the purposes of schooling.

Some aspects of teachers' daily work require the systematic training provided by the *technological orientation*. The technological orientation refers to generic teacher behaviors associated with student success. A focus on the direct instruction model of teaching emphasizes the role of teachers as technicians. However, we consider our program to be ability-driven rather than competency-driven. Our interpretation of this distinction acknowledges the developmental nature of learning to teach throughout one's professional career over the more traditional technological emphasis. The Hope College program fosters professional dispositions rather than mastery of specific technical skills in teaching at the novice level. Our criteria for assessing our teacher candidates is informed by, but not limited to, the "Entry-Level Standards for Michigan Teachers".

The technological orientation to teaching and teacher education is found most obviously in our learning disabilities program through emphasis on a diagnostic-

prescriptive approach to curriculum development and instructional design. Still, aspects of the technological orientation, such as writing performance objectives and task analysis, will be found in different measure in all programs.

The *practical orientation* gives beginning teachers a respect for both the wisdom of classroom practice and the understanding that we learn teaching best *by* teaching.

While we model practical dimensions of teaching in our own classes, we realize that the practical orientation comes to life for our students most vividly as they work in the field placements that accompany each of our courses. We have worked diligently to integrate theory and practice through course-related tasks in the field. We are blessed with many excellent supervising teachers each semester who mentor our students throughout each level of the professional sequence and provide feedback on syllabi, instruction, and field experience tasks.

The *academic orientation* redefines the role that teacher education can play in developing pedagogical content knowledge in the major and minor areas of study. We continue to strengthen our ties with the liberal arts professors on our campus who have held this responsibility traditionally. In each of our professional sequence classes, we enable students to make clear, rich connections between the content of their liberal education and their professional studies. Rather than wait until the last two years of undergraduate study to focus on teacher education curricula, our programs traditionally begin when our teacher candidates are first year students or sophomores. By sequencing teacher education over the course of four years at Hope College, we believe we accomplish two complementary goals. The first goal relates directly to the academic orientation in that we challenge our students to synthesize seminal ideas in education with their academic studies. The second goal relates more to the personal orientation in that the

four year span of the programs provide a sustained opportunity for students' reflection about learning, teaching, and the life of the mind.

Our teacher candidates reflect holistically on their experiences as undergraduates in the Hope College capstone course, Senior Seminar. Typically, Hope students take Senior Seminar during their senior year. Generally, Education students take Senior Seminar during the five weeks directly prior to their student teaching experience. In this seminar, students are guided to synthesize their experiences in the liberal arts, professional studies, and their growing understanding of the relationship between faith and learning. In this respect, Senior Seminar unites the personal and academic orientations in a culminating intellectual experience on campus.

Most importantly, we believe our programs also support the *critical-social* perspective that all children can learn and that teachers must promote democratic principles of justice and equality in learning communities. Our students see professional educators as agents of social change. In addition to a primary focus on addressing diversity in our courses, students are encouraged to take "Encounter with Cultures" their sophomore or junior year as part of their core curriculum requirements. This course deals with language, history, culture, gender, and power relationships in American society both past and present. "Encounter with Cultures" provides a solid foundation for the discussion of social and policy issues in Level Two and Level Three courses. Courses at all levels in each program critique current schooling practices and promote the teacher as a viable, influential agent of justice in a democratic society.

Each of the six professional abilities functions somewhat differently in these conceptual orientations. By addressing significant themes in each of these orientations, and by providing experiences based on the six professional abilities, we believe that we

prepare our students to negotiate the "real world" of the classroom; to access the ever-growing literature that should inform professional practice; to view the role of teacher as social and professional change agent; and to understand that professional decisions will always be based on a personal set of values and beliefs. We believe these themes are both implicit and explicit in the six professional abilities and resonate with differing emphases throughout all three levels in each of our programs.

The Hope College Teacher

What, then, distinguishes the Hope College teacher from teachers prepared at other institutions who share similar goals and objectives? While the interdependent scaffolding provided by the developmental perspective, six professional abilities, and three levels of course work supported by current knowledge bases undergirds each of our programs, the defining characteristic of Hope College graduates lies in their understanding that teaching and learning are both intellectual and spiritual endeavors. Our students understand teaching as a vocation that requires knowledge, passion, commitment, flexibility, as well as a sense of humor. They understand that they will serve as personal and professional role models for their students, and for each other, both in and out of the classroom. Hope College students experience themselves as individuals who are discovering their unique gifts as educators. Perhaps more importantly, they see themselves as part of a larger social-spiritual context in their growing understanding of stewardship as they offer those unique gifts in the service of others.

In keeping with the mission statement that defines a Hope College education as being grounded in the "context of the historic Christian faith," our students see themselves as members of a community of faith. We realize that each student will understand, define, and actualize this in a distinct and personal way. What unites the Hope College

Department of Education faculty with our teacher education candidates can be summarized best by our college-wide motto, "Spera in Deo," Hope in God. Together as novice and seasoned educators, we trust in our individual and collective vocations; we accept the challenges of teaching for equity, and for the moral and spiritual growth for all children and youth; and we place our hope in God that our efforts will foster justice, peace, enlightenment, and renaissance. We are confident that the education beginning teachers receive at Hope College shapes their love of learning and teaching and promotes positive professional, personal, and spiritual dispositions that will last for a lifetime and will have a lasting impact on the future

APPENDIX C

THE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

I would like to begin by describing for you a third grade classroom and ask you think about and respond to issues embedded in reading instruction in this classroom. This classroom is a typical classroom in West Michigan. There are twenty-two students in your class; twelve are white students, six are Hispanic students, and four are Asian students. Several of these students receive free or subsidized school lunches. At least six struggle with learning English. You have decided that you and your class will read a book together. After brief descriptions of several titles, you and your students have selected Phyllis Reynolds Naylor's book *Shiloh* (1991) (or *Abel's Island* by William Stieg, 1976, or substitute another title of your choice).

Tell me how you would use this piece of literature with this group of students. What activities would you select for promoting comprehension of the story (or the use of descriptive language, the understanding of suspense, etc.). What skills would you want your students to practice and acquire and integrate during the reading of this title? How would that be accomplished?

The formal interview:

A. Do you consider yourself a reader? Describe yourself as a reader.

1. What do you choose or prefer to read when you have the

opportunity?

2. How would describe yourself as a reader? Which adjectives would you select to describe yourself as a reader (e.g., , excited, passionate, average, etc.)?

B. How and when did you learn to read? What factors or people or actions played a significant role helping you learn to read?

1. Describe the role reading played in your own home when you were a child. Describe how you learned to read. How and when were taught to read?
2. Describe reading in your own elementary school experience? What was the primary delivery system for reading instruction? Give and example or two of specific class sessions you remember.
3. When you consider the nature of your experiences in learning to read, were these generally positive or frustrating? Describe a specific instance which illustrates your remembrances.
4. How and to what extent do you think your own experiences in learning to read have influenced your own professional attitudes about reading instruction? An example or two?

C. Describe the school where you teach reading: Where is the school located? Describe the neighborhood? Describe the general school population and the population of students in your classroom? Is the school well supplied with instructional materials and supplies? Explain what you mean?

1. What personal and professional support is available to you in this context/building/district?

2. What specific challenges do you face as you teach reading in this context? Give an example or two.
- D. What do you KNOW about the concepts and theories which support instruction in reading?
1. How do you believe those concepts and theories will affect your classroom practice? Provide an example or two of what you mean.
 2. How and to what extent does the selection and use of particular reading strategies get played out in your classroom? How do the teachers/cases perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy(ies) and adapt them to do the best they can with the learners they have in class?
- E. Describe your own ability to produce effective reading instruction in your classroom. Describe your ability to be flexible and adaptive in that instruction as you become informed about the learners in your charge.
1. Do you employ reading strategies during in-class instruction as tools for continued learning rather than as ends in and of themselves? What evidence supports this?
 2. Are the teachers/cases aware that reading strategies, such as DR-TA can also be used in science or social studies, not only reading? How is that accomplished? What evidence is available?
 3. How and to what extent do reading strategies get reinforced in other parts of the language arts program? Is evidence available for this?
- F. What areas in reading do you have specific concerns about? What do you plan to do about that in the classroom?

- G. Transferring what you learned in your teacher education courses into actual classroom practice is a necessary component of growing professionally as a teacher of reading. How would you describe how you currently are able to take your understanding of reading theories, concepts, and pedagogy and apply them to your own teaching situation? What informs your ability to do this?
- H. What is your preferred means for “delivering” reading instruction in your classroom: a commercial basal reading series?
1. A literature-based program? A Basal? What sort of basal? Why?
 2. Is your choice dictated by the school district? If so how have you adapted these materials to the students in your charge?
 3. Have you developed your own literature based program or use a district framework for literature based instruction?
 4. Describe how that approach works for you--what are its major components?
 5. In any case, is this instruction aimed at the whole group, small groups (ability or interest?) and/or individuals?
- I. When you report that your are a literature-based reading teacher what do you mean? Describe your strengths in this type of reading instruction. What challenges do you face in literature-based reading instruction.
1. What is involved in teaching a child to read using real literature?
 2. How will you promote the acquisition of necessary skills along side the notions of reading for meaning and pleasure?
- J. How and to what extent do you promote continued professional learning

and growth in your understanding of reading instruction and how children learn to read (e.g., Do you regularly read professional articles? Do you regularly collaborate with colleagues on these issues?)? Give examples.

K. Describe the role a liberal education played in your decision to be a teacher

APPENDIX D

MATERIALS USED IN KATE'S CLASSROOM

MORNING GIRL

NAME _____

LESSON 4; read pages 30-36

1. In what way did Mother help Morning Girl to see what she looks like? (K)
2. How did Father show her to look at herself? (K)
3. Which way do you think is better? Why? (E)
4. How do you see yourself? (E)
5. Find at least two literary devices. Write them and give the page number. (K)

[Kate is asking readers to locate these devices. Later she asks them to use the devices in their own writing.]

MORNING GIRL

NAME _____

Lesson 5; Read pages 37-44

1. Read the first paragraph and make a prediction. What do you think is going to happen? (C)
2. Describe the storm in your own words. (C)
3. How did Star Boy know that the situation was really serious? (C)
4. How did he feel? (K)
5. Write about a strange Taino custom. (C)
6. EXTRA CREDIT: Literary Devices (K)

RACING THE SUN

NAME _____

Lesson 4; Read pages 63-79

1. What did Grandpa teach Brandon about family? (C)
2. Brandon was embarrassed when his grandfather showed up at the mall. Later, he was ashamed of those feelings. Why? (E)
3. How would you describe the friendship between Brandon and Ham? (C)
4. At the end of the chapter, why does Grandpa say, “not all summer?”(C)

RACING THE SUN

NAME _____

Lesson 5; Read pages 81-101

- A. Certain smells bring back memories. What did the smell of sage remind Grandpa of? (K)
- B. Can you think of a smell that reminds you of something? (K)
- C. On pages 85-86 Brandon has a conversation with Grandpa. What do you think Brandon learned from that conversation? (E)
- D. What did Grandpa teach Brandon about growing squash? (C)
- E. At the beginning of the story, Brandon doesn’t even want to take his posters down to please Grandpa. Now he’s planting squash outside what he calls “our bedroom window.” What does this tell you about how Brandon’s character has changed? (AN)
- F. What do you think about Brandon’s plan to get Grandpa back to Little Water? Is it a good idea or not? (C)

G. EXTRA CREDIT: Literary devices (K)

Student Planner

A Sampling

For each day of the week, Monday through Friday, the student has a page in the planner which requires a statement for each of four areas:

- A. Reading: list the book title, list comments, questions, pages to be read.**
- B. Spelling: what is to be done that day?**
- C. Writing: I wrote XXXX (with minimal for comments).**
- D. A blank box is provided for additional plans in math, map skills, etc.**

A final page in the planner requires the student to respond to several prompts for thinking about planning and learning:

- 1. What were some new learnings for me this week?**
- 2. What went well?**
- 3. What will I do differently next week?**
- 4. What was difficult for me?**
- 5. How can I improve in my management of time?**

Compound Words

Use the clue to figure out each small word. Put the words together to make a compound word that solves the puzzle.

Example: a group of students + a friend = a classmate

F. A woven container + a bouncing toy= _____

G. To hop on both feet + a heavy cord= _____

H. The season after spring + 12:00, for example= _____

I. Sudden brightness + what a bulb gives off= _____

J. The letter after S + a piece of clothing= _____

Now you try it. Write clues for each compound word shown. Then think of three compound words and write clues for them. See if your partner can solve your puzzle.

1. _____ + _____ = toothpick

2. _____ + _____ =jungle gym

3. _____ + _____ = _____

4. _____ + _____ = _____

5. _____ + _____
_____ = _____

What compound words did you and your partner find in the newspaper? Write down the words you found as well as the two smaller words that make up the compound word. [16 blank rows follow].

1. _____ = _____ + _____

What a team! Keep up the great Work!

APPENDIX E
MATERIALS USED IN MARY’S CLASSROOM

PREDICTING

We introduce predictions by asking children to predict from their own background knowledge and experiences (items 1 through 10). Begin this activity by explaining that when we make predictions, we try to think about what will happen next.

NOTE: Each item below has spaces for five predictions. These are eliminated here in the interest of space.

1. What would you predict you will see when you visit a pet store?
2. What kinds of shows do you predict will be on Saturday morning television?
3. What kinds of activities do you predict you will do on vacation?
4. If you were to visit a zoo, what types of animals do you predict you might see?
5. Lisa’s parents built her a playhouse in the backyard. What kinds of things do you predict that Lisa might put in her playhouse?

The next items are designed to give the students practice predicting from titles. Introduce these items by telling the students that a title is often a good clue to what the story will be about.

6. Your friend asks you to go to the movie. She tells you the name of the movie is “Monsters of the Deep.” What do you predict the movie will be about?
7. Ghosts! Ghosts! Ghosts! is the title of a story. What do you predict the story will

be about?

8. Animals Homes is the title of a story. What do you predict you will learn in this story?
9. Cowboy Chores is the title of a story. What do you predict you will hear about?
10. The Flyers of the World is the title of a story. What do you predict you might learn about a story with this title?

While a title is one good way of figuring out what a story will be about, it is also possible to make predictions from the information presented in the story itself. Have the students listen to the following paragraphs (items 11 through 13) and predict what they might hear about next.

11. This is a very special animal that has fins and scales. It can move in the water. But it likes to stay still. This animal is called a leaf fish. Do you know why? What do you predict you will hear about next?
12. When bees find food, they fly home and do a tail-wagging dance. The tail-wagging dance will tell the other bees where to find food. Do you know about how other animals tell about food? What do you predict you will hear about next?
13. In Rockport, Maine, I saw a big, grey statue. I have seen many statues of important people. This statue was a surprise. It was a statue of a seal! What could a seal have done that was so important? What do you predict you will hear about next?

APPENDIX F
MATERIALS USED IN ADAM'S CLASSROOM

FRINDLE

Before you begin reading, answer the first few questions:

14. What do you think a “frindle” might be?
15. Tell me about a teacher who you thought was really mean or tough.

Read Chapter 1

- I. Describe Nick in three sentences.

Read Chapter 2

- A. List the characters that you have read about so far> Circle the main character.
- B. Describe Mrs. Granger in three sentences.
- C. Do you think Nick is looking forward to fifth grade? Why or why not?

Read Chapter 3

1. Nick is a master at sidetracking the teacher and getting the class out of homework assignments. What happened when he tired this on Mrs. Granger?
2. What is the nickname Nick gives Mrs. Granger at the end of chapter three?

Read Chapter 4

1. Look back over chapter four and pick out five spelling words for your list next week.
2. Nick has an idea on how he can make his report on dictionaries fun. What do you think he has in mind?

Read Chapter 5

1. How did Nick make his report fun?
2. How do you feel about Nick? Is he like any of his friends?

Read Chapter 6

1. When Nick was younger he would say a really weird word when he wanted to hear music. What did he say?
2. O.K. Now you know. What is a “frindle”?
3. Where did Nick go to try out his new word?

Read Chapter 7

- A. Your job at recess, during class today or after school is to use the word “frindle.” You must use it in the same way that Nick did. Tomorrow write down the five people’s names that you said “frindle” to. Also give a description of how they reacted.
- B. Their reaction was

Read Chapter 8

1. What did the fifth graders do in their class picture?
2. Make a prediction about what you think Mrs. Granger wrote in the letter she gave to Nick.

Read Chapter 9

1. What did Mr. And Mrs. Allen have to say to the principal?
2. Do you have an idea how Nick can get people to stop using the word “frindle”?

Read Chapter 10

1. Explain a time when you got into trouble by a teacher. Do you think you deserved it?

Read Chapter 11

1. How many homes was the Westfield Gazette delivered to?

Read Chapter 12

- A. Mrs. Granger looked at the CBS TV camera and said, "It's not over yet." Who do you think will win this war?
- B. Do you trust Bud Lawrence? Why or why not?

Read Chapters 13 & 14

1. Nick had an idea about having all of the students in the fifth grade not buy lunch at school. Why did he re-think his idea?
2. One more chapter is left. The title of the chapter is "And the winner is." Will the word "frindle" survive?

Read Chapter 15

1. Did your opinion of Mrs. Granger change in the last chapter? How?
- 2.

MANIAC MAGEE

1. Before you begin reading—List five things you know about maniacs.
2. Look at the cover and then read "Before the Story" on pages 1 and 2 and then make two predictions about the story.

Read Chapters 1, 2, & 3

1. How did Maniac get his name?
2. Describe what the author calls the "The Lost Year."
3. Describe Amanda in three sentences.
4. You have read the first three chapters, what do you think will happen in the next three?

Read Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10

1. Jeffrey (Maniac Magee) made three appearances that first day. Explain all three.
2. What do you think the word “pandemonium” means? Look back over page 25 and reread and see if you can find some clues that will help you explain what it means.
3. Tell me about the character Mars Bars.

Read Chapters 11, 12, 13, & 14

- A: At the end of chapter 12, why did Maniac look at the numbers nailed on the doorframe before he went to bed?
- B: What is Maniac allergic to?

Read Chapters 15, 16, 17, & 18

1. The last two sentences on page 56 read, “Maniac loved almost everything about his new life. But everything did not love him back.” What do you think the author is trying to tell you?
2. On pages 57-58 it says that Maniac is blind. How is he blind?
3. Think about what the confrontation between maniac and the old man at the fire hydrant. Why did the old man say what he said? We will meet either today or tomorrow to discuss this issue.

STOP READING AND YOU MAY DRAW A NEW COVER FOR MANIAC MAGEE ON A BLANK PIECE OF PAPER.

Read Chapters 19, 20, & 21

1. You are about halfway through the story of Maniac Magee. What do you think so far? Would you recommend this story to a friend? Explain.

Read Chapters 22, 23, 24, & 25.

1. Where does Mr. Grayson live? (Chapter 23)

2. In chapter 24 Maniac explains to Grayson the time when he lived with the Beales.
Why did Mr. Grayson ask if the Beales used toothbrushes, too?

Read Chapters 26, 27, 28, & 29

1. Mr. Grayson helped Manic to learn about baseball. What did Manic teach Mr. Grayson?
2. What was the first book that Mr. Grayson read?
3. Why did Maniac paint the number 101 outside of the door?

Read Chapters 31 & 32.

1. What did Mr. Grayson give Maniac for Christmas?
2. Chapter 32 is a very sad chapter. What has happened? How do you think Maniac feels?
3. Once again Maniac is on the run. Where do you think he is going to end up next?

Read Chapters 33, 34, 35, & 36

1. Maniac was dared to knock on Finsterwald's door. He did and stood there and talked to Finsterwald. How do you think he was able to do it and stay alive?

Read Chapters 37, 38, & 39

1. Describe this second meeting between Mars Bars and Maniac Magee. What did Mars challenge Maniac to do?
2. When you finished reading chapter 30, did you get the feeling that Maniac is happy? Explain why he is happy or sad? Or is there a better word you can think of to describe how he feels?
3. Giant John says there is going to be a revolt. Who does he think is going to revolt?

Read Chapters 43, 44, & 45

1. Why did Maniac bring Mars Bar to the birthday party?

2. There are only four more chapter left. Make a prediction about how you think the book will end.

Read Chapters 43, 44, & 45

1. Mars Bar is black, Maniac is white. They have many things in common. List at least three of them.
2. What do you think of Russell and Piper not wanting to go home?
3. Write an ending to the story before you read the last chapter. In your paragraph tell what happens to Maniac and Mars Bar.

Read Chapter 46

1. How does the author choose to end the story?
2. What do you think was the theme of this story (there are actually several)? Why did the author write the story and what did he want you to learn from it?
3. Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?

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