AN APPLICATION OF GROUNDED THEORY TO INNOVATION IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION: NOTABLY, WHOLE LANGUAGE

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PREFACE

This study was an observation of teachers as they attempted to employ innovative practices in their respective classrooms. These practices were strategies used by whole language practitioners who claim that their educational philosophy represents a major paradigm shift in education. It was found that, while several innovative strategies were being used in these whole language classrooms, direct instruction continued to be the teaching model most commonly used. Additionally, only 25 percent of the participants stated that they read aloud regularly to their classes although the significance of reading aloud has been established as incontrovertible. Enthusiasm of students was a very positive factor in effecting change; whereas, mandates from higher levels tended to be met with resistance. The lack of a clearly-defined philosophical base was manifested in the discrepancy between many classroom practices and the whole language philosophy.

Although whole language is defined as a philosophy, none of those whole language neophytes used this term in their definition of whole language. The results suggest that, before a teacher can successfully make the transition from a traditional teacher to a whole language teacher, one needs time and encouragement to reflect upon one's beliefs and practices. It is also believed that it is possible to initiate a transition by first utilizing whole language

teaching strategies, and then gradually making the philosophical shift.

It has been an honor and a privilege to have worked with a committee whose professional expertise and personal kindness provided a much needed support system throughout this endeavor. To Dr. Carolyn J. Bauer, I wish to express my deepest gratitude for her tireless support and invaluable professional guidance. I am also grateful to Dr. Larry Perkins whose encouragement gave me the confidence to do a qualitative study. The flexibility of Dr. Margaret Scott and Dr. Kenneth St. Clair allowed me to do a study that I own. For that confidence, I am appreciative. To Dr. J. Randall Koetting, I wish to express my appreciation for his willingness to serve on this committee long distance although he was unable to complete this task. To Kay Porter and Wilda Reedy, I appreciate their flexibility and expertise in typing and formatting this effort.

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It is to my husband, Rick, that I wish to express my love and appreciation for his unflinching confidence in me and ceaseless support in achieving this mutual goal. It is to him that I dedicate this finalized work.

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INTRODUCTION

Significance of this Study

The historic report issued by the National Academy of Education and the National Institute of Education in 1985, Becoming a Nation of Readers (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985), found conclusive evidence that "The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children" (p. 23). However, less than ten percent of Americans are regular patrons of public libraries (Trelease, 1989). Trelease found that affluent parents, many of whom represented two-income families, tended to rely solely upon the daycare workers to read aloud to their children. Additionally, in a study of fifth graders' daily leisure-time activities (Fielding, Wilson, and Anderson, 1984), it was discovered that only two percent of that time was spent reading; half of those children read only four minutes or less; 30 percent read two minutes or less, and ten percent did not read at all. Yet, those same children watched approximately 130 minutes of television per day. To compound these already dismal figures, the United States is reported to rank 49th in literacy out of 159 members of the United Nations (Carbo, 1988).

To further complicate matters, it has been estimated that by

2020, nearly half of all school-age children in the United States will be children of color (Wortis and Hall, 1990). The results of the National Assessment of Education Progress (Harste, 1989) have indicated that only 60 percent of any given age group will graduate from high school, and of the minority students who do graduate, 75 percent of those will be girls. One might argue that children spend their class time reading. However, a study found that 70 percent of reading instruction time was spent on independent seatwork doing worksheets. The actual estimated time engaged in silent reading during class time was only seven to eight minutes per day (Anderson et al., 1985), and only approximately 25 percent of elementary school classroom teachers read aloud regularly to their classes (Trelease, 1989). Despite all these statistics, Smith (1988) has so cogently stated that children learn to read by reading.

The implications are that there is a need to implement innovative practices that will compel our aliterate children to become "a nation of readers". However, history has shown that "innovations have not fared well in the United States" (Altwerger, Edelsky, and Flores, 1987, p. 144). Consider a group of educators who claim to represent a major shift in thinking about the reading process. "Rather than viewing reading as 'getting the words', whole language educators view reading as essentially a process of creating meanings" (Edelsky, Altwerger, and Flores, 1991).

To address the issue of our growing ethnic population whose educational needs are clearly not being met, it has been stated (Harste, 1989) that several groups, including the Bureau of Indian

Affairs, are considering whole language as their official policy ". . . because it is the only approach to teaching reading and writing that does not deny children their culture" (p. 246).

Haycock (1989) maintained that the important ingredient in so many innovations is the teacher.

> Whether the basic philosophy of whole language is understood and whether the appropriate approach and strategies are used (or abused) will determine whether the innovation is effectively implemented. Whole language involves significant changes in approaches to teaching and learning and significant changes in the range and type of materials used to support the program (p. 22).

The importance of this study is based upon observing those who are in the beginning stages of innovative practices, specifically, whole language, in an attempt to develop new theory that will enhance the already existing body of literature in education. Ken Goodman (1989) enticed the would-be researcher into considering the whole language classroom as an object of study by stating that:

> Whole language offers a challenge to researchers. They need to understand that whole language is a major step forward. It involves bold new innovative programs and settings for teaching and learning. The professionals participating in this grass-roots movement are eager to have research support (p. 219).

Guiding Questions of this Study

The guiding questions of this study are two-fold: The questions are an attempt to ascertain: (1) What is it that is happening under the guise of whole language?, and (2) What factors are most effective in affecting change in the classroom? The purpose of this study is to propose a grounded theory of innovation in

elementary education, and to elucidate the original topic of innovative practices in elementary education.

Limitations of this Study

The nature of an ethnographic study is such that the results, in this case the theory that emerges, may not be generalizable to any other situation. This characteristic may be interpreted as a limitation; although the intent was to generate theory that is substantive. It is also the case that the researcher is admittedly biased toward the whole language philosophy. Every effort was made, however, to minimize the effects of this bias during data collection.

Organization of this Study

An introductory discussion concerning the study's significance, guiding questions, limitations, and organization is presented in Chapter I. Chapter II describes grounded theory and its relevance to research. A review of the literature regarding the historical background, current theories, and application of the whole language philosophy is included in Chapter III. Chapter IV is a review of educational institutions that have attempted to make the transition from traditional education to whole language. The fifth chapter is an in-depth description of the research study. Analysis of the data and emerging theory are discussed in Chapter VI. Finally, Chapter VII summarizes this researcher's endeavor to generate grounded theory and provides speculation for future efforts.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE: GROUNDED THEORY

Description

To understand how the concepts outlined in this study were developed, it is important to understand the method by which it was undertaken and how it differs markedly from quantitative methods. Most social science research has emphasized quantitative methodologies with goals of absolute objectivity (Douglas, 1976). In addition to objectivity, the emphasis has been on the verification of, rather than the generation of theory. From the arguments over quantitative versus qualitative research has emerged a variety of alternatives to absolute objectivity.

> One of those alternatives is that of grounded theory. Grounded theory is not at all glamorous, not at all esoteric, not at all 'grand'. It is, instead, pragmatic and sensible--sensible, that is as are "good sensible shoes" and sensible in that it is the application of one's senses to a phenomenon in order to know it (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 67).

It may be defined as theory generated from data systematically obtained through the constant comparative method. This inductive method of discovering theory was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The constant comparative method is a multi-faceted approach to research design which maximizes flexibility and aids the generation of theory. Grounded theory combines systematic data

collection, coding, and analysis with theoretical sampling. This theory is integrated close to the data, and is expressed clearly enough to allow for further testing (Conrad, 1982).

There are four overlapping stages in the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). First, the researcher collects and then codes the data into as many categories of analysis as possible. These categories, or concepts, come from the researcher based on the constant comparisons of incidents from one set of data to another. As the concepts develop, the researcher must begin to think in terms of theoretical properties, or elements of each concept. Then, the first stage blends into the second as the analysis moves from comparing data incident with data incident to comparing the data with properties of the concepts abstracted during comparison of incidents. The third stage is continuing analysis and further refinement of concepts and relationships which eventually leads to theory development. This theory continues to be delimited as a more refined set of higher level concepts emerges.

First, the collection of data is guided by the major research question and later by the requirements of theoretical sampling which is the process of collecting data for comparative analysis in order to generate theory. Data can be collected in various ways such as observations, interviews, and even by such quantitative methods as surveys (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). One technique qualitative researchers have used for collecting data is described by Bogdan and Taylor (1975) as personal documents. These documents are defined as "an individual's descriptive first-person accounts of the whole or

part of his or her life or an individual's reflection on a specific topic or event". These documents can include transcripts from unstructured interviews and are often open-ended conversations that capture an individual's perspective of a situation, event, or activity. These personal documents can include autobiographies, letters, diaries, et cetera. The main idea is that the researcher is not tied to any one predetermined method and may abandon one method for another if necessary. While the data are being collected, they are constantly being coded (Glaser, 1978). This factor forces the researcher to move from the empirical to the conceptual and theoretical level by identifying patterns in the data.

Next, these concepts are developed and, through a coding process, guide data collection and analysis through theoretical sampling. Collecting data by theoretical sampling means that a set of concepts is delineated and primitive theory emerges. This sampling controls further data collection. The researcher now has begun to collect, analyze, and code based on the emerging theory. As Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 47) stated:

> Beyond the decisions concerning initial collection of data, further collection cannot be planned in advance of emerging theory (as is done so carefully in research designed for verification and description). The emerging theory points to the next steps--the sociologist does not know them until he is guided by emerging gaps in his theory and by research questions suggested by previous studies.

When no additional data can be found to further explain the theory, it is said to be saturated. This saturation is said to be the way grounded theory is verified. The traditional rules of verification are relaxed and this allows for theoretical in lieu of

random sampling in quantitative research.

The analysis of qualitative research differs from quantitative. Whereas, the purpose of quantitative research may be to replicate the study, the qualitative researcher, on the other hand, is intended to produce a unique theory grounded in the situation or event under scrutiny. Such theory is also labeled substantive theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This theory is written in narrative form and may not be generalizable to any other situation, nor is it necessarily desirable to be generalizable. Schwab (1969) warned about the loss of practicality as theory becomes increasingly abstracted and removed from specific contexts.

There are three general advantages of grounded theory research (Gehrke, 1982). The first advantage is the development of theory grounded in the education situation rather than borrowed from other realms. The second advantage is the holistic focus of grounded theory research. While education often emphasizes proof of specific portions of behavior science theories, grounded theory research focuses on the system as a whole and the interrelationships of its parts. The third advantage is also a disadvantage in that this type of research is expansive in nature. If the researcher were to realize initially the dimension of the final product, one might be reluctant to begin the study. On the other hand, lack of preconception which accompanies this initial naivetè provides a fertile background for open-minded analysis of the data.

"What we in curriculum society need are paradigms for conducting research in a context of discovery to match existing paradigms

available from the research traditions of the behavioral social sciences for the context of verification" (Walker, 1973, p. 67).

"There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our hypotheses" (Cronbach, 1975, p. 103).

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF LITERATURE: WHOLE LANGUAGE

Definition

The definition of whole language when viewed from a proponent's perspective is considered an attribute. Conversely, when viewed from a critic, the definition is an Achilles' heel. Proponents profess that part of whole language's allure is the fact that each person who embraces the philosophy will bring a slightly different meaning to the movement which personalizes the philosophy, thus enhances it. On the other hand, critics have referred to this fluidity as a "slippery quarry" (McKenna, Robinson, and Miller, 1990, p. 3). Goodman (1986, p. 5) stated:

> Whole language is clearly a lot of things to a lot of people; it's not a dogma to be narrowly practiced. It's a way of bringing together a view of language, a view of learning, and a view of people, in particular two special groups of people: kids and teachers.

Whole language is not a program that is prepackaged or even a collection of practices to be followed. Whole language, in theory, is not materials driven. Instead, "it is a set of beliefs, a perspective" (Altwerger et al., 1987, p. 145). There is no simple definition of whole language. It is not an approach per se, but a philosophy. Within this philosophy, knowledge is considered internal and subjective, learning is construing meaning, and teaching is a

dynamic combination of coaching and facilitating. The whole language philosophy is based upon the notion that language is acquired through actual usage, oral and written, and not through practicing its separate parts (Toliver, 1990).

Whole language has been described as a philosophical issue, a political phenomenon, and also as a curricular movement (Pearson, 1989). Whole language has also been dubbed as a "grass-roots movement" that groups of educators including teachers, administrators, and researchers have begun in order to network, study, research, provide support, and so forth (K. Goodman, 1989). Harste (1989) stated that whole language is "an open invitation to inquiry into the nature of language, learning, and how these processes are best supported using children and ourselves as informants for purposes of improving education in our society" (p. 224).

Rich (1983) stated: "Whole language goes beyond the simple delineation of a series of teaching strategies to describe a shift in the way in which teachers think about and practice their art" (p. 165). She later (1985) described whole language as "an attitude of mind which provides a shape for the classroom" (p. 717).

Newman (1985) referred to whole language as:

> A shorthand way of referring to a set of beliefs about curriculum, not just language arts curriculum, but about everything that goes on in classrooms. Whole language is not an instructional approach, it is a philosophical stance; it's a description of how some teachers and researchers have been exploring the practical applications of recent theoretical arguments which have arisen from research in linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, child development, curriculum composition, literary theory, semiotics, and other fields of study (p. 1).

Watson (1988) elected to divide her definition of whole language into five categories. She included a curricular, cultural, social and psychological, instructional, and political definition. She stated that whole language means that students are at the heart of teaching and that they learn language as they use it in "reading, writing, listening, and speaking about science, math, social studies, literature, sports, and anything else that interests them" (p. 4). From a cultural perspective, Watson stated that the student's beliefs, life styles, interests, et cetera are a source of information and joy. Contributions from all the students result in a rich diversity within the classroom. Socially and psychologically, whole language means that a child's thoughts and language are valued in school and exchanges between students are encouraged. Instructionally, whole language teachers' authentic use of language which occurs in the classroom, includes such activities as discussions, debates, hypothesizing, et cetera. Politically, teachers, parents, and students are empowered.

Anderson (1984) commented that whole language is "written and oral language in connected discourse in a meaningful contextual setting" (p. 616); whereas, Bird (1987) considered whole language as "a way of thinking, a way of living and learning with children in classrooms" (p. 4). Routman's (1988) description of whole language also includes authentic ways of teaching: "whole language is a philosophy which refers to meaningful, real, and relevant teaching and learning" (p. 26).

Edelsky (1990) referred to whole language as a new "world view"

in education. "It is not an alternative methodology for language arts instruction. It is an educational paradigm complete with theoretical, philosophical, and political assumptions" (p. 7).

From the perspective of one interested in beginning literacy, Haycock (1989, p. 22) stated: "Whole language is a philosophy of emergent literacy and how children learn; it is not just an approach to instruction or a different set of materials." Similarly, Weaver (1990) developed a definition of whole language that included emergent literacy.

> My answer to 'What is whole language?' would include a characterization of what is 'whole' in whole language; language is kept whole, not fragmented into 'skills'; literacy skills and strategies are developed in the context of whole authentic literacy events, while reading and writing experiences permeate the whole curriculum; and learning within the classroom is integrated with the whole life of the child. Thus a whole language philosophy may also be referred to as a whole or authentic literacy philosophy which promotes whole learning throughout students' whole lives (p. 6).

Goodman (1991), in an interview for a newspaper article attempted to explain to the average citizen about whole language by explaining, in part, what it is not.

> The whole language approach is hard to define. It's not a specific method of teaching, but a set of beliefs. It favors letting teachers and students choose what they read and write about. It is against teaching phonics and other skills according to a fixed sequence, grouping children by ability, basal readers (reading textbooks) and standardized tests (p. 12).

In What's Whole in Whole Language, Goodman (1986) defined whole language in this manner:

> Whole language learning builds around whole learners learning whole language in whole situations.
>
> Whole language learning assumes respect for language, for the learner, and for the teacher.

> The focus is on the meaning and not on the language itself, in authentic speech and literacy events.
>
> Learners are encouraged to take risks and invited to use language, in all its varieties, for their own purposes.
>
> In a whole language classroom, all the varied functions of oral and written language are appropriate and encouraged (p. 40).

Upon reviewing the innumerable definitions, it was found that, indeed, its proponents provided an abundance of descriptions for whole language. However, those same proponents claimed that although they "may lack sameness, they never go outside the boundaries of an acceptable definition of some dimension of whole language" (Watson, 1989, p. 132).

Historical Roots

Much that undergirds whole language has been around for many years (vonGlaserfeld, 1983). As early as the seventeenth century, the prominent educator, John Amos Comenius was espousing beliefs similar to those of current-day, whole language proponents. Comenius (1987) believed that children could discover new information through the manipulation of the objects they were studying. He also believed that children should enjoy learning and that whatever one learned should be meaningful to him (Comenius, 1887).

Yet another forerunner of the whole language philosophy was progressive education which was a movement championed by the twentieth-century philosopher and educationist, John Dewey. In the 1920s and 1930s, new education or progressive education came about as a result of dissatisfaction with the product of traditional education

(Dewey, 1938). "The traditional scheme is, in essence, one of imposition from above and outside. It imposes adult standards, subject matter, and methods upon those who are only growing slowly toward maturity" (pp. 18-19).

The overall goal of progressive education was to help the whole child including the mind, body, and ideals while developing autonomy and an interdependence with others (Dewey, 1916). Progressive education was concerned with both the individual and society. The education of children was to be approached in an experimental fashion. Children would try out ideas and learn from the results, while teachers would approach teaching as an experiment as well (Dewey, 1963). Children were to self-select activities and real work that would act as a vehicle for learning.

A powerful contribution that Dewey (1963) made to the progressive education movement was his contention that language arts should be integrated with other curriculum. He argued that:

> We do not have a series of stratified earths, one of which is mathematical, another physical, another historical, and so on . . . All studies grow out of relations in the one great common world. When the child lives in varied but concrete and active relationship to this common world, his studies are naturally unified . . . Relate school to life, and all studies are of necessity correlated . . . if school is related as a whole to life as a whole, its various aims and ideals--culture, discipline, information, utility--cease to be variants (Dewey, 1943, p. 91).

Those in progressive education were also adamant that the integration of curriculum not be superficial (Dewey, 1916). They wanted integration in which subjects like reading and writing would be learned in the course of publishing a newspaper, for example. As

stated by Dewey (1897, p. 29):

> No one can estimate the benumbing and hardening effect of continued drill in reading as mere form. It should be obvious that what I have in mind is not a Philistine attack upon books and reading. The question is not how to get rid of them, but how to get their value--how to use them to their capacity as servants of the intellectual and moral life. To answer this question, we must consider what is the effect of growth in a special direction upon the attitudes and habits which alone open up avenues for development in other lines.

Another significant contribution of education theory made by Dewey (1916) was the belief that language was learned through use and not through lessons. He stated that the classroom was a laboratory for children where they used their tools including language to be active learners. "Therefore, language acquisition was the 'perfect model of educative growth'" (p. 92).

Dewey (1943) advocated following the child's lead in planning curriculum. He encouraged teachers to become more reflective in their approach as well.

Progressive education proponents also believed there was only one way to prepare children for living in a democracy and that was to give them a democratic experience in school. Dewey (1916, p. 17) commented, "The fundamental modes of speech, the bulk of the vocabulary are formed in the ordinary intercourse of life, carried on not as a set means of instruction but as a social necessity." This ideology was one in which there was justice between teacher and child through a classroom where decisions were made on an equal basis.

Whole language also has its historical roots in the work of another contributor to progressive education, constructivist, Jean Piaget. His constructivist theory demonstrated how children

construct knowledge by interacting with the world. Piaget (1973, pp. 15-16) emphasized: "Active methods . . . give broad scope to the spontaneous research of the child or adolescent and require that every new truth to be learned be rediscovered or at least reconstructed by the student and not simply imparted to him."

Piaget (1970) also made a qualitative distinction between a child's mental abilities and those of an adult.

> For traditional education theory has always treated the child, in effect, as a small adult, as a being who reasons and feels just as we do while merely lacking our knowledge and experience. So that, since the child viewed in this way was no more than an ignorant adult, the educator's task was not so much to form its mind as simply to furnish it; the subject matter provided from outside was thought to be exercise enough in itself. But the problem becomes quite different as soon as one begins with the hypothesis of structural variations. If the child's thought is qualitatively different from our own, then the principal aim of education is to form from outside, the question is to find the most suitable methods and environment to help the child constitute it itself, in other words, to achieve coherence and objectivity on the intellectual plan and reciprocity on the moral plan (pp. 159-160).

Another Piagetian tenet that is significant to the whole language philosophy is that children pass through stages of development.

> In order to understand certain basic phenomena through the combination of deductive reasoning and the data of experience, the child must pass through a certain number of stages characterized by ideas which will later be judged erroneous but which appear necessary in order to reach the final correct solution (Piaget, 1973, p. 21).

The value of this tenet in teaching techniques is the fact that a more traditional approach of teaching would constitute the transmission of correct information from the teacher to the learner.

Piaget (1973) further explained this premise by stating:

> Only this (spontaneous) activity, oriented and constantly stimulated by the teacher, but remaining free in its attempts, its tentative efforts, and even its errors, can lead to intellectual independence. It is not by knowing the Pythagorean theorem that free exercise of personal reasoning power is assured; it is in having rediscovered its existence and usage. The goal of intellectual education is not to know how to repeat or retain ready-made truths (a truth that is parroted is only a half-truth). It is in learning to master the truth by oneself at the risk of losing a lot of time and of going through all the roundabout ways that are inherent in real activity (pp. 105-106).

A directive to educators based on this information would be to meet the child where he is developmentally and to provide him with meaningful experiences.

Another early twentieth-century theorist, Louise Rosenblatt, has also contributed to the whole language philosophy. Rosenblatt (1938, 1978) encouraged educators to consider that each student has his own unique response to any literary work. She saw reading as a transaction, a two-way process involving the reader and text. She proposed that a text is merely symbols on a page until a reader reads the text. Rosenblatt (1976) defined the literary experience as a "synthesis of what the reader already knows and feels and desires with what the literary text offers" (p. 272). This experience puts readers in an active role of creating meaning while reading. The text itself does not embody meaning. Instead, it is responsible for stimulating and regulating the response the reader will have. The context in which the reader reads a text is also important to this theory. However, Rosenblatt contended that, although a general consensus may be obtained in a classroom, for instance, the significance of the text and one's response to it is unique.

Rosenblatt (1976) differentiated between efferent reading and aesthetic reading. She stated that the main reason for efferent reading is to glean information. In aesthetic reading, a reader's attention is focused on "living through" the experience. Rosenblatt went on to explain the significance of efferent reading and aesthetic reading in schooling:

> Throughout the entire education process, the child in our society seems to be receiving the same signal: adopt the efferent stance. What can be quantified-the most public of efferent modes-becomes often the guide to what is taught, tested, or researched. In the teaching of reading, and even of literature, failure to recognize the importance of the two stances seems to me to be at the root of much of the plight of literature today (p. 274).

The importance of Rosenblatt's theory in the whole language classroom is that this response to literature can be extended within the following context:

1. an environment filled with opportunities to read and respond to a variety of genres, styles, and authors.

2. a secure environment which appreciates individual differences and provides opportunities to explore and compare responses.

3. an environment which provides time and encouragement for responding in a variety of ways such as small-group discussion, writing, talking, art, drama, etc. (Galda, 1988, pp. 99-100).

Interdisciplinary Research

For the past two decades, there has been a plethora of educational research. In fact, it has been estimated that more research has been published during this period than in the entire history of research prior to this time, and much of it has been in reading (Hoffman, 1989). This new research in reading is different

from previous research because its scope has been broadened. In lieu of focusing on reading alone, the scope has been expanded to reading, writing, and oral language. Much of the research supports learning language (including reading and writing) through usage. Basically, there are three types of this kind of research. These types include language acquisition, emergent literacy, and usage in the classroom. Additionally, experts from various fields such as linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, anthropology, philosophy, child development, curriculum, composition, literary theory, semiotics, cognitive psychology, and other fields of study have added to the depth and breadth of the data through their contributions.

Harste (1982) contended that much of the theoretical framework that undergirds whole language was formed through research of ethnographers whom he defined as being researchers who observe a process in action in its natural setting. He and other whole language proponents view the teacher as a researcher. Their contention is that as a kid watcher, the teacher is an ethnographer.

The following is not an exhaustive review of all the studies conducted in the past 20 years that have contributed to the building of a theoretical base for the whole language philosophy. Rather, it is intended to be a concise sampling of contributors' work in a variety of fields.

Vygotsky (1986), a Russian psychologist has contributed to the whole language movement by his "zone of proximal development" theory. This theory emphasizes the important role teachers play in students' learning, even though learners are ultimately responsible for their

own conceptual development. Instead of learning in isolation, the student is supported or sometimes hindered by others in the school environment. He also explored the important social aspects of the role of peers and play in intellectual development. Vygotsky (1978) contended that play creates a "zone of proximal development".

> In play, a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself. As in the focus of a magnifying glass, play contains all the developmental tendencies in a condensed form and is itself a major source of development (p. 102).

Vygotsky (1962) explained how children's language learning begins with social interaction and acquired dual functions: communication with others, and self-direction. He claimed that egocentric speech represents the transition between speech for communication with others and speech that is self-directive. He stated that egocentric speech serves in the seeking and planning of a solution to a problem. It is the transition between external, communicative speech and internal, self-directive speech.

Smith's (1973) research has done much to contribute to whole language theory. The research conducted in Canada in 1969 demonstrated that isolated vocabulary study interfered with meaning because many words have different meanings. This study leant more credibility to his thesis that reading should be done in context. His term the "literacy club" which included those people who were successful in becoming literate in school has been widely used among whole language proponents.

Another term coined by Smith (1981), "demonstrations", has come

to mean intended and inadvertent messages. Smith described demonstrations in the following way:

> The first essential component of learning is the opportunity to see how something is done. I shall call such opportunities demonstrations which in effect show a potential learner 'This is how something is done'. The world continually provides demonstrations through people and through their products, by acts and by artifact (p. 108).

Smith further elucidated that the teacher's intended demonstrations are not always effective.

> Learning is not an occasional event to be stimulated, provoked, or reinforced. Learning is what the brain does naturally, continually . . . this is the time-bomb in every classroom--the fact that children's brains are learning all the time. They may not learn what we want them to learn. They may not learn what we think we are teaching them . . . Learning is the brain continually updating its understanding of the world, we cannot stop the brain from doing this. The hazard of so much instruction is not that children do not learn, but what they learn . . . In a sense most demonstrations are inadvertent but sometimes we can demonstrate one thing quite unintentionally when we actually think we are demonstrating another (pp. 108-109).

Smith further expanded this notion of demonstrations to the adult learner. He suggested that one's beliefs may be altered by demonstrations with which one has been in contact. The change is generally noticed in retrospect when one recognizes the difference between what he once believed and currently believes. This learning process is called "engagement." According to Smith (1981, p. 109), "There has to be some kind of interaction so that 'This is how something is done' becomes 'This is something I can do' . . . Learning occurs when the learner engages with a demonstration, so that it, in effect, becomes the learner's demonstration . . . ."

Smith also contributed to whole language literature in his study

of prior knowledge (1971, 1982, 1983). Since this information is available as Smith (1971) stated, from behind the eyes, it is referred to as "nonvisual information." This knowledge which is stored in one's head, in memory, is used during reading. Smith has described the reader as being engaged in anticipating meaning through a process of sampling the print guided by their syntactic, semantic, and graphophonic expectations. Generally, he stated that the more prior knowledge a reader has, the more hypotheses he or she will make about the text, and the less attention he or she has to give to the text. Conversely, the less prior knowledge, the more one must depend on print cues.

In writing, Smith (1982) argued that an environment should be provided where children will want to write. The primary condition for this type of environment is that they are allowed to own their work. In other words, students should be able to pick their own topics, and be allowed to write without attention to spelling, punctuation, et cetera. He also stated that: "Although children are capable of learning to write, there is very little that they can be taught, at least in the sense of explicit rules and exercises that will transform nonwriters into writers" (p. 199). Smith further argued that writing is learned by writing, by reading, and by perceiving oneself as a writer, and none of this can be taught. Part of this environment is an environment of demonstration. Smith stated that before children will be motivated to write, they will have to see writing being done.

As a systemic linguist, Halliday (1975) dealt with exploring the functional aspects of language. He argued that the beginning of

human language is identifiable when infants begin making vocalizations that their parents interpret as meaningful communication. Although these vocalizations hardly resemble those of an adult, they function as language since they do initiate and maintain social interaction.

Halliday's (1978) work has also shown that utterances serve several functions simultaneously. These utterances may be trying to involve or direct a listener to act, to alter what the listener already knows, or they may be trying to express feeling. Concurrently, the speaker must identify, select, and organize elements of their present, past, or imagined experience in ways that are relevant for current intentions. All of this activity must also be orchestrated in context.

Language is central to human communication and thought. Halliday (1978) described it as a social semiotic. Language is also the medium of human learning and makes human learning quite different from that of other species. Halliday referred to language learning as "learning how to mean" since in the process of learning language, people also learn the social meaning it represents. This phenomenon has been termed "dual curriculum" (Halliday, 1984).

Halliday (1975) stressed the significance of others in helping us make meaning. The implications for the classroom are that teachers should do away with individual and programed learning in favor of natural language, learning through language, and learning about language. This point has had a strong impact on the integration of language arts and other subjects in the development of whole language curriculum.

Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982), two Piagetians, found in their research in the barrios of Mexico City that, even in these poor and illiterate conditions, children in a print-rich society become aware of environmental print and are attempting to make meaning out of it developmentally, not through direct instruction. Written and oral language acquisition is seen as natural, not in the sense of innateness or an inevitable unfolding but in the sense that language is an integral part of a functioning community and when used around neophytes, it is learned incidentally. This study served to highlight the universality of young children's awareness of print.

Goodman (1964, 1967, 1973, 1977) and his colleagues researched the oral reading of young children. The theory that has evolved from their research is the notion of a unified, single reading process as an interaction between reader, text, and language. This transaction provided the rationale for literature and language-experience-based reading programs.

Several reading programs that have immersed children in actual reading were developed prior to the 1960s and Goodman's research has helped explain the success of these programs and also, why children who came from homes where they had been read to early and frequently tended to be successful in learning to read.

As his research methodology, Goodman (1964) selected first and third grade students to sit down on a one-to-one basis and read aloud a complete story to him. Then, they were to tell him what they had read. He found that these students could read over half of the words in context which they missed on a list of words out of context, and,

when they regressed, they did so mainly to self correct. From his work, Goodman (1965) coined the term "miscue" which described any departure a reader made from the actual text. If a reader substituted one word for another, reversed words, or omitted them, he had a miscue. There were two reasons for using the term miscue. First, Goodman wanted to emphasize that departing from the text was not necessarily bad and such departures indicate which cuing system the reader used. There are three major cuing systems: syntactic (such as word order), semantic (from each sentence to the whole text), and graphophonemic (letter/sound). Goodman (1973) developed a way of analyzing miscues, The Taxonomy of Reading Miscues, which has been used frequently in research.

There are several implications of Goodman's work on whole language theory. The major ones include:

1. It is not necessary to introduce words out of context.
2. Direct phonics instruction is unnecessary.
3. Allow children to take risks.
4. Meaning is in the mind, not the eyes.
5. There is no hierarchy of skills in reading development (Goodman, 1964).

Goodman (1982) stressed the importance of constant and conscientious observations in the classroom.

> Professional educators, whom I call kidwatchers, are always making judgments about how students are progressing and making decisions about what experiences and opportunities children may need to expand further on the child's progress or growth. It is this informal ongoing evaluation leading to continuous planning of instructional experiences for children that I have termed 'kidwatching' (p. 64).

The term, kidwatching, has gained such acceptance in the realm of whole language practitioners that it appears in practically every

piece of literature written regarding the subject of whole language.

Yetta Goodman and Burke (1980) studied the kinds of decisions readers make. These decisions are called reading strategies. They identified three basic kinds of reading strategies. Readers predict what is coming next. They confirm their predictions, and make corrections when their predictions are incorrect. Finally, they integrate their new information into existing knowledge.

Yetta Goodman's (1980) research on pre-schoolers indicated that children are aware of print before they come to school. This study has served to add to the growing body of research on emergent literacy.

Jacob's (1965) contribution to whole language theory is that of encouraging teachers to understand the "power of living through experiences." Specifically, he has encouraged the use of children's tradebooks in the classroom to provide vicarious experiences for students, both for individualized reading and literature-based reading programs. He has placed literature at the center of the curriculum right along with the student and teacher.

Read's (1975) observations of children's development of invented spelling supports the belief that children learn language in natural contexts and for their own purposes. He discovered that invented spelling provided a strong rationale for children to generate their own writing to a greater degree than previously accepted. The implication for the whole language classroom was that, in the case of the language experience approach where teachers had previously dictated students' original stories, it was found more beneficial for the student to write his or her own.

Veatch (1985) has been a long-time advocate of students having choices in their reading materials. She has taken issue with pre-packaged reading programs including basals and has urged that reading instruction utilize tradebooks. She was responsible for the popularization of individual reading instruction in the United States.

Mellon's (1983) research focused on children's pre-school knowledge of language. He noted that children begin school having already successfully learned word-order principles, semantic relationships, sentence-combining transformations, and lexical feature systems. The implications to education are that since this competence grows as it is used for real purposes without formal instruction, the emphasis of language use should be in authentic contexts.

A landmark study conducted by Cohen (1968) used a control group of 130 students in the second grade who were taught using basals and compared them to 155 children in an experimental group that used a literature component in addition to their regular instruction. The schools were selected due to their low socio-economic levels. The experimental treatment consisted mainly of reading aloud to children from 50 carefully-selected children's trade picture books. These were books without fixed vocabulary or sentence length. In addition to the oral reading, students participated in follow-up meaning-based activities. Students were also encouraged to reread the stories at their leisure. The results were that the experimental group showed significant increases in their reading achievement scores over the

control group. Since this study, it has been replicated several times in differing settings with the same results.

Ray Reutzel (Reutzel and Parker, 1988) took a sabbatical from his teaching position at Brigham Young University to teach reading to 63 first graders in Utah. He taught reading using tradebooks alone. As prescribed by the State of Utah, the goal was for the students to score 80 percent on the Utah Benchmark Skills Test. Reutzel's students scored 93 percent. In March, his students took the Stanford Achievement Test. The group percentiles across all reading categories including word study skills, comprehension, and total reading was in the 99th percentile. Individual student scores were well above grade level except four children who scored below 1.6. The lowest score was 1.2 and that was a boy who knew only a few letters of the alphabet at the beginning of the school year. Even one girl whose IQ tested a 68 scored at grade level.

Graves' (1983) various research projects have provided a multitude of data that has had profound implications for teaching writing in the United States. Graves' work is part of a knowledge explosion in the area of composition that has greatly influenced whole language. Graves' (1982) study along with other colleagues in Atkinson, New Hampshire, was conducted over a three-year period with first and third graders. From this study emerged several significant elements of the writing process. The over-arching element was that writing is extremely social in nature, and that oral interaction results in an energizing effect on the writers. Also, varying the groups in the classroom during writing was beneficial.

This environment where children are immersed in purposeful language activities is difficult to describe since so much is happening at once, plus the fact that it is very fluid and changes constantly. Those with whom the writer interacted had a significant influence on the writer's product also.

When students were allowed to select their own topics, the range was very broad. Graves (1982) confirmed that during composing, reading, writing, drawing, and talking are inextricably intertwined. This research demonstrated that there is a constant transaction between the emerging text and thought. He additionally found that when children are experimenting with something new or different during their composing, they tend to suspend the rules of writing that they typically followed. For example, proper punctuation may be ignored during this creative process. Their flow of ideas was, however, maintained. From this study was found that writing does not develop from mastering discrete skills. Instead, children's writing development involves a gradual refinement of the entire process.

Another issue studied during this research project was the importance of conferences during the writing process. The purpose of the student-teacher conference is to aid the student in maintaining a focus on the meaning of the composition. Primarily, the teacher's role is that of the listener. Secondarily, the conference is concerned with correctness. However, it was found that skills taught during a conference lasted longer because they were being taught within the context of the individual's own work. Often, editing conferences took place as a post-writing activity.

Graves (1982) also convincingly demonstrated that children who are writing in an environment where they are surrounded by literature instead of going through a basal and workbooks are learning to read, at least, as well as other children. Yet, at the same time, these children are also learning to write.

Calkins (1982) was one of Graves' colleagues at the Atkinson School. Since their research at the school, increasing numbers of teachers have implemented whole language practices within their classrooms. Also since the studies were conducted, achievement test scores have changed dramatically. Although Calkins admitted that she could not prove that a sharp rise in scores on their achievement tests could be attributed to whole language implementation, she stated that the correlation between the change on programs and rise in scores is so striking as to suggest more than mere coincidence. Scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills have risen 20 points during the past seven years. The third graders scored at the 98th percentile on the test according to national norms.

Calkins (1983) also wrote about the writing conference in the classroom. In Lessons from a Child, she described three functions for student-teacher conferences. These functions are meant to help students develop the specific content of a piece, to help them reflect on the process of writing and strategies used, and for helping them learn to judge their own efforts. Calkins also identified two types of peer conferences; sharing meetings and informal ones. The difference between the two is that the sharing meetings are group sessions set up by the teacher and informal peer conferences are initiated by the students and are one-to-one.

Calkins stressed the importance of an environment where students are free to tlk during the writing process. She discovered that the informal peer conferences were a reflection of the student-teacher ones. From these sharing meetings evolved a structure used for this type of conferencing:

1. Writers would begin by explaining where they were in the writing process, and what help they needed.
2. Usually, but not always, the writer then would read the piece--or the pertinent section of the piece--out loud.
3. The writer would call on listeners. Usually listeners would begin by retelling what they'd heard . . . sometimes they'd begin by responding to or appreciating the content of the piece.
4. Questions or suggestions would then be offered, not about everything, but about the concern raised by the writer. Sometimes other things would come up as well, but not always (Calkins, 1983, p. 126).

Chomsky's research has been centered around invented spelling (1971), oral language acquisition (1972), and teaching reading (1971). From the invented spelling studies she found that spelling development begins with approximations that gradually become accurate when students are given the opportunity to practice. Her research on oral language development has shown that children learn to speak by being actively engaged in communicating rather than through formal instruction, and oral grammar rules are acquired developmentally. Chomsky (1978) conducted a study in a middle class Boston suburb with five children, third graders who had average IQs, no speech or language problems, but were remedial reading students who hated to read and had made virtually no reading progress since first grade. In lieu of the traditional reading program they had been receiving, she had the students listen to tapes of tradebooks while they

followed along in the real book. This procedure was repeated until the stories were memorized. This neurological impress method proved enjoyable to the children and resulted in improved test scores. After a year of treatment, these "remedial readers" had an average increase in overall reading scores of 7.5 months, grade equivalent, and in word knowledge an average of 6.25 months, grade equivalent.

In the 1950s, the American Council on Education commissioned several educators to develop an integrated curriculum with a focus on intergroup education (Taba, 1950). It was the launching of Sputnik that had Americans clamoring for educational reform that would improve our competitive stance with Russia. Due to the fervor, there was considerable support for the integrated curriculum which Taba, Brady, and Robinson (1952) recommended. According to Taba et al. (1952, p. 51):

> A person who knows all the facts but whose feelings are limited is likely to have a 'So what?' attitude . . . One who can sympathize . . . with others but has neither conceptual framework nor basic facts . . . is likely to be a sentimental idealist . . . Those untrained in sound reasons will not be able to apply knowledge and be frustrated in practical situations and unable to behave accordingly.

Taba (1962) recognized the importance of social interaction as she reminded her readers ". . . that the so-called child-centered school was always, in a measure, also a social-centered school" (p. 30). She continued, "The learning process is primarily social. The innate tendencies of an individual are modified, suppressed, or encouraged according to social demands" (p. 131). This holistic, or integrated concept of curriculum is fundamental to most whole language classrooms although there is considerable variety in the degree to

which it has been implemented.

In New Zealand in the 1960s, Marie Clay began her study of emergent literacy. Clay (1985) observed that, after a year of reading instruction, by age six, children could be identified as making normal progress or as being "at risk" as readers. She found that approximately ten percent of those with whom she worked had developed inappropriate reading strategies, had not developed important reading strategies, or could not coordinate the different strategies they needed for reading effectively. As a result, Clay devised a "reading recovery" program to assist these "at risk" students in making normal progress in reading. The steps of this program included:

1. Rereading of two or more familiar books
2. Rereading of previous day's new book (while the tutor does a running tabulation and analysis of the reader's miscues
3. Working with the particular skills or strategies the reader needs to develop
4. Writing a story
5. Introducing a new book, which the reader attempts to read (Clay, 1985, p. 27).

The emphasis in this tutorial program was to immerse the students in real reading and to encourage them to write about topics of interest to them. After using this methodology for 12 to 20 weeks of daily, half-hour sessions, Clay (1986) found that all but a small percent were able to succeed in the regular classroom reading program. This program has been extended to the United States through Ohio State University where it has been so successful that currently, teachers nationwide are going there for training in the program.

Clay (1975) also investigated the writing of pre-schoolers. She

found that, when children first create scribbles, they expect them to carry meaning as noted in her observations of children who, assuming any adult should be able to read, asked her to "read" what they had "written". Thus, even before children are literate, they generate hypotheses about how written language works.

Another New Zealander, Don Holdaway also began his research in the 1960's. Holdaway (1986) developed a theory that a developmental model for the way children acquire oral language could probably be used for learning to read and write as well. The following steps are the oral language learning model he used. The assumption is that these experiences would be in the context of a supportive home environment.

1. They observe 'demonstrations'.
2. They are encouraged to participate actively.
3. They try out or practice independently.
4. They gradually become competent and confident. (Holdaway, 1986, pp. 58-60).

Working with New Zealand teachers, Holdaway took the above model and began applying it in the classroom with several new teaching strategies which will be discussed later. From his studies, he found that young children can learn to read without formal instruction when exposed frequently to interesting literature and when encouraged to read along (Holdaway, 1979).

Harste (1990) and his colleagues have been conducting their own research in literacy development. In addition to their research, Harste reviewed the findings of others and succinctly summarized the research results into the following conclusions:

1. Language is learned through use rather than through practice exercises on how to use language.

2. Because the markings 4-year-old children produce prior to formal schooling reflect the written language of their culture, we can no longer assume that children come to school without some knowledge of written language.
3. Because the markings 3-year-old children make when asked to draw a picture of themselves look quite different from the markings they make when asked to write their name, we can no longer dismiss these efforts as mere scribbling.
4. By age 5 and 6, most children have sorted out how language varies by context of use and have begun to explore the graphophonemic system of language.
5. By age 4, the texts that children produce when asked to write a story, as opposed to a letter, are beginning to be distinctive.
6. Most children as young as 3 can read environmental print such as a McDonald's sign. The findings mean that we do not have to teach young children to read, but rather we need to support and expand their continued understanding of reading.
7. By age 3, when asked to read or pretend to read a book, children start to vary their normal speech to sound like 'book talk'.
8. Learning proceeds from the known to the unknown. In short, there is no better way to begin instruction than in terms of the learner's language and current background experience.
9. Children learn best in low-risk environments where exploration is accepted and current efforts are socially supported and understood (pp. 316-317).

Based upon Harste's and many others' research findings, whole language proponents have substantial evidence that children come to school, not as a "blank slate", rather with a wealth of prior knowledge, depending upon their background. These findings have been the foundation for the "rethinking" of education by whole language proponents, and the impetus for what these professionals are calling a "paradigm shift" in education.

Paradigm Shift

As mentioned earlier, the definition of whole language is rather nebulous. While most whole language proponents agree that it is a

philosophy, they are also quick to point out that it is not a thing per se. In fact, many spend their time explaining what whole language is not. Therefore, before discussing specific strategies that may be found typically in the whole language classroom, it seems necessary and appropriate to elaborate the far-reaching significance of whole language as seen by whole language devotees.

Whole language theorists are coming to see the whole language movement as a new paradigm or "worldview" in education. As stated by Meguido (1989, p. 10):

> Whole language, in sum, is not just a prescription for the classroom and it is not just 'about' what is traditionally known in school as 'the language arts'. It is, rather, a shorthand way of referring to assumptions and beliefs and values and theories not only about language --what it is and how it is used and learned and taught --but, more generally and pervasively, about curriculum and learning and teaching. And, in a real sense, it ultimately encompasses a particular view of the world.

Similarly, Crowell (1989, p. 60) explained:

> The label whole is in part an expression of our shift from a Cartesian-Newtonian segmented view of the universe--in which the accent has been on parts and elements; on fragments, discrete, independent multiplicities; and on order, linear sequence and mechanistic prediction--to a configuration view, with its emphasis on wholes and patterns and on the universe as a single, dynamic unity.

Rich (1985) further embellished this idea by stating that:

> Whole language, in its essence goes beyond the delineation of teaching strategies to describe a shift in the way in which teachers think about and practice their art. In essence, the term whole language outlines the beginning stage of a paradigm shift. As a movement, whole language encompasses prior research information then goes beyond to extend thinking about language and learning into new realms (p. 717).

Short and Burke (1989) discussed traditional teaching methodologies in the view of "the other paradigm". For example, "The traditional paradigm of teaching is based on a transmission model of learning in which teachers pass on specific sets of content and skills to students" (p. 193). They further aligned this idea of whole language as a paradigm shift by paraphrasing Kuhn (1970):

> The assumptions of the traditional paradigm have been challenged by a new paradigm that views the world and the individual as changing and dynamic rather than static and stable (Short and Burke, 1989, p. 194).

They continued to state that out of the new paradigm, transactional theories of learning and new questions are guiding teaching and learning.

Ken Goodman (1989) discussed the grass-roots whole language movement by stating,

> In a very real sense, whole language represents a coming of age of educational practice, a new era in which practitioners are informed professionals acting on the basis of an integrated and articulated theory that is consistent with the best scientific research and the theories in which it is grounded (p. 208).

Goodman pointed out that most whole language teachers are themselves in transition from the traditional paradigm to the new whole language paradigm. To emphasize the newness of this new worldview in education, Goodman commented, "There are no teachers today who were themselves learners in whole language classrooms" (p. 219).

Whole language represents a major shift in thinking about the process of reading (Edelsky et al., 1991). Whole language educators view reading as a process of creating meaning. In this instance, meaning is created through a "transaction" with whole meaningful

texts. This transaction includes the text as well as the meaning the reader brings to the text. This view represents a drastic shift from a view of reading as "getting the words right" (p. 32).

Edelsky et al. (1991) have stated that such a paradigm shift gets its meaning from its historical context. They liken this shift to the social reconstructionist branch of progressive education in the Depression years of the 1930s when schools were looked upon as "instruments for building a new social order" (Counts, 1932).

Today's paradigm shift has begun in a climate of "late capitalism, a time when people are talking of a permanent underclass, and when few hopes are held out to those on the short end of the stratified society stick" (Edelsky et al., 1991, p. 51). They explained, however, that although this Yuppy era has been characterized by extreme selfishness, both in the public and private sector, there are dissenters.

> As in the early part of the century, however, there are cross-currents. A general move toward holism has begun to appear in disciplines from physics to medicine to linguistics to education. Increasingly, people try to offset alienation in a search for relatedness and meaning (p. 51).

Whole Language Curriculum and Teaching Strategies

It has been stated that "curriculum is everything that goes on in students' heads" (Watson, 1989, p. 132). Harste (1989) called it the learner's "mental trip". Whole language curriculum is in keeping with this idea that "whole language teachers approach curriculum on a 'planning to plan' basis" (Watson, p. 132). In lieu of a

pre-packaged program, whole language curriculum is based on the teacher's knowledge of children, literature, content areas, et cetera and involves creating a multitude of ideas for possible study. "In whole language classes, students are at the heart of curriculum planning, nothing is set into classroom motion until it is validated by the learners' interests and motivated by their needs" (Watson, p. 133).

To have a classroom that is congruent with the whole language philosophy, one must utilize instructional materials that are meaningful to children, language must be treated as a meaningful message from an author to a reader, and the teacher's role must be one of a facilitator. In a whole language approach to reading and writing, the units of language are sentences and story units (Hall, 1981). A key tenet in a whole language classroom is that all learning should be comprehension centered, and should begin where the child is in terms of language and experience (Anderson, 1984).

Teaching strategies that may be employed are as numerous and unique as whole language teachers. However, there are a number of strategies that are fairly commonplace within the whole language classroom, and, in order to be considered to be congruent with whole language practices, these strategies must be consistent with "natural learning theory" (Cambourne and Turbill, 1990). This theory has developed from the naturalistic research, described earlier in detail, that stresses the need for learning to occur in an environment that represents daily living.

In this context, there are two key curricular attributes that are essential to whole language. The first attribute is integration. Integration is important for three reasons. First, curriculum should be integrated in the sense that it seeks to preserve the wholeness of literacy events. (A student's reading lesson will not consist of isolated phonics instruction.) There are no artificial boundaries between any of the language functions: writing, speaking, reading, and listening. Finally, the curriculum is integrated in the sense that the literacy curriculum is not viewed as separate from the content areas (Pearson, 1989).

The other key curricular attribute in whole language is authenticity. The criterion for an authentic task in a whole language classroom is a "real-world" experience; that is a school task is authentic to the degree that it is the kind of task an individual would exercise on his own (Pearson, 1989). Edelsky and Smith (1984) described the conditions necessary for authentic language use. They stated that all four language systems, graphophonic, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic, must be operating interactively and interdependently in order to be authentic. A concrete example used was learning to ride a bike in which case, steering and pedaling are done simultaneously. The intent is that children become "skilled language users", not necessarily that they "learn language skills" (Edelsky et al., 1991, p. 38).

This is not to say that whole language teachers do not teach language skills, but it is significant to note that skills are taught to individual children as they need specific skills. For example, in

a classroom where children are composing, one student who is editing her work before publication may need help with the proper usage of quotation marks while, at the same time, another student who is in the composing stage may ask for a conference so the teacher can listen to a particular segment of his writing because, "It doesn't sound right." During this conference, the teacher may find that the problem is in subject-verb agreement. A quick lesson in conjugation would be appropriate for that student at that moment.

As Altwerger and Resta (1986) pointed out through their research, "skills" and being skilled are definitely not synonymous. They have shown that there are many proficient readers who cannot do skills exercises, although many poor readers can.

Edelsky and Draper (1989) considered assigning students to a group to read one tradebook a "simulation" of real reading and writing. Since the goal in the whole language approach is to close the gap between literacy tasks in school and real events, perhaps, allowing students to decide if they want to join a group to do a novel study would be considered a more authentic task.

Another way of judging a task's authenticity would be to decide if the activity occurs in an action-oriented context and if it makes a difference in day-to-day living once completed, then the task is considered authentic (Brown, Collins, and Duguid, 1989). If a student has been involved in an accident at a street crossing near his school and, as a result, his classmates decided to write letters to their city council to encourage them to install a stoplight, this would be considered an authentic task.

Journal writing is a teaching strategy common, in at least some form, in the whole language classroom. There are several types of journals including story journals, literary journals, or logs, and dialogue journals.

A story journal is a written reaction to a book either read by children, or that has been read to them (Farris, 1989). The main purpose of this journal is for students to think about the story and interpret the story through writing and illustrations. This strategy is first introduced by handing each student a story journal which is simply several sheets of ditto paper stapled together. The teacher may elect to write the title of the book and the author's name on the front of the journal for the students. Once the teacher has read the book to the class, students react. Discussion of the book may precede responses in the journal. The teacher may decide to write the children's reactions on the board, or students may ask questions regarding the story. Support for this strategy is abundant in research and Teale (1986) further pointed out that reading and writing mutually reinforce each other inasmuch as their development is interrelated.

In literary journals children may adopt the personality of a character from a book they have read and choose to write letters from that character's point of view. Students may choose to write reactions to stories in their journals. The main point of this type of journal is that students are getting involved with the characters and the plot of a quality piece of literature and are responding to reading through writing. The possibilities for types of reactions in literary journals are endless (Johnson and Louis, 1987).

A dialogue journal is one in which there is a "written conversation between two persons on a functional, continued basis about topics of individual (or even mutual) interest" (Staton, Shuy, and Kraft, 1988, p. 312). The journal entrants may write about anything. Topics are not assigned. There are no rules for length or duration of writing. The teacher will write in his or her journal and often shares what he or she has written as a form of "demonstration" (Newman, 1985). Commonly, students will write in their journals and the teacher will take the journals home to respond to each. The following day, students will find their journals in their mailboxes (Bode, 1989). Edelsky et al. (1991) found that, at the beginning of the year, journal entries are mostly inauthentic examples of writing, but after several weeks of writing, the nature of the writing shifts to more authentic work. For example, one teacher shared that one of her young male students was concerned for her safety as a single person and suggested that she get better locks for her home.

Dialogue journal writing is described as a liberating experience for more than one reason. It allows for the possibility of mutual conversations, "This is the essence of teachers becoming liberating educators, for example, teachers learn with and from their students. Both are empowered . . ." (Shor and Freire, 1987, p. 30). Also, as children are allowed to spell with invented spelling, they are freed to communicate, meaningfully at a more complex level (Rich, 1985). As Sowers (1982) explained, "invented spelling gives young writers early power" (p. 39).

In some instances, teachers will read a book to the class and the students will respond to the book in their dialogue journals (Five, 1988). This is an excellent example of a literacy lesson if one agrees with Smith (1982) who argued that all a beginning reader needs to learn to read are good materials and a more experienced reader to act as a guide and to answer questions.

Serebrin (1985, p. 53) so eloquently stated, "To see their products would to be to miss the significant 'language events'--language users bringing all they currently know to bear upon the task with which they are faced." This type of learning experience meets the criteria of "whole language" by beginning where the child is developmentally.

Holdaway (1980) stated that too often we become confused by the complexities of teaching reading and must provide for the most sensible and obvious things first. This logic must have been the impetus for Holdaway's "shared book experience" teaching strategy. Using enlarged teacher-made books, Holdaway taught teachers to create an intimate environment for sharing a favorite children's book with several children at once. These favorite picture books often rhymed and were highly predictable. Holdaway (1979) realized the critical role of repetition in literacy acquisition and referred to it as "support from memory." These stories were actually read repeatedly until the children were able to read them on their own. Fondly referred to as "Big Books", they are now available commercially.

Trachtenburg and Ferruggia (1989) utilized this strategy to improve the self concepts of high-risk readers. They followed a

typical shared book experience format. They began by reading the story several times to the children. Next, they had the students do dramatizations of the book and taped each child engaging in a picture reading of the story. The most fluent renditions of the taped story were combined, edited, and transcribed onto a chart. Finally, the book was bound and laminated. The remarkable result of this experience was that the attitudes of the children changed from "I can't" to "I can!"

The purpose of the Directed Listening Thinking Activity (DLTA) is to give children an organizational framework for organizing and retrieving information from a text. This strategy can be internalized and used repeatedly with new material. Basically, students are prepared to listen to the story through asking questions and discussing the text. At this point, students might be asked to make predictions. Next, the story is read. During this time, the teacher is careful to show illustrations and to pause for questions or comments. Finally, the reading of the story is followed by a discussion which allows the teacher to ask higher-order comprehension questions (Strickland and Morrow, 1989).

An integral part of the writing process is the "author's chair".

> As writers, children struggle to put their thoughts on paper, and they talk about these thoughts with other writers. As readers, they compose messages and ask questions about published books. They play, they invent, they mimic, when they compose in reading and writing and sitting on the author's chair (Graves and Hansen, 1983, p. 970).

An author's chair is a strategy whereby students are able to get practice taking and giving feedback during the revising process of

composing. Generally, students sign up for a turn at the chair. The experience trains students how to conference and also develops a sense of being a "community of authors" (Graves and Hansen, 1983).

"If we want children to write, we must treat them as writers. That means treating students to that final and ultimate writerly pleasure of finding their words come alive in the faces of listeners and their readers" (Willinsky, 1985, p. 619). In some schools, parent volunteers set up a "publishing house" to assist teachers. With this strategy, students are able to "collaborate" with the typist in order to design the layout of their illustrations, and also to help design the book cover. Often, teachers will teach students how to bind their books with contact paper and wallpaper. This completed project helps to instill a sense of pride in one's work, and, as a result, it becomes important to the students to publish only their best work. Once the best of their stories are published, a classroom set of books is provided for students to check out (Lamme, 1989). Conferences with practicing whole language teachers have revealed that many of their past students have come back to visit their old classrooms and have stated that they still have the books they published in class.

Personal dictated stories are another strategy used with young children to start reading and writing. The child will tell a story to the teacher based on his real life experiences or from stories he has heard. The teacher will write down the story, modeling the conventions of print and writing. Reading and listening is also "demonstrated" when the teacher reads the story back to the child.

"This approach is holistic because it is child-focused, process-oriented, and interweaves speaking, writing, listening, reading, thinking, and the arts" (Heald-Taylor, 1989, p. 19).

Theme cycles are a means of investigating a topic. The theme originates from a question a student or students would like to answer. As a result of this question, subjects and skills related to those subjects such as science and math are used to investigate the topic. The whole language premise underlying which topics are pursued and how they are treated is as follows:

> All knowledge is socially constructed. Therefore all knowing is political. In an effort to promote critical literacy and thus to help children learn to read the world, not only the word (Shor and Freire, 1987), teachers who work with theme cycles try-no matter whether the topic is overtly 'political' or not-to-show how the topic is related to other more general questions (Edelsky et al., 1991, p. 67).

Reading in a whole language classroom is not a subject in itself. Rather, students learn to read as they enjoy the reading and analysis of quality literature through a literature-based approach. However, there are many strategies that are employed among whole language teachers to foster reading such as: group and guided reading, independent reading, silent reading, and literature extension and response.

Group reading includes an authentic or appropriate activity such as reading poetry, songs, rhymes, riddles, jokes, informational books, plays, et cetera (Watson, 1989). The purpose of reading as a group is to enhance the student's understanding and appreciation of literature (Routman, 1988). Typically, students will meet in heterogeneous groups for 30 minutes daily and will read either orally

or silently and follow up with some type of discussion. Often, students and the teacher will discuss the literary elements such as the plot, theme, or character development.

In a guided reading lesson, the teacher will introduce the story with background information such as notes on the author, highlighting illustrations or the technique, or encouraging predictions about the book. Next, several pages of the book are read aloud and several high-level questions are asked. At this point, the teacher may elect to do an activity such as "oral cloze" where, using an overhead projector and a transparency of a page from the book, the teacher will gradually expose the text as the class reads orally and predicts words. The teacher then will read a few more pages orally and will provide another transparency for the class to read in unison. As an individual or team activity, the teacher will provide the students with a page from the book that has had the last letters of approximately every fifteenth word deleted. Students are encouraged to predict the word in order to make the text meaningful. Finally, the story is completed with the group reading aloud together from the overhead projector (Holdaway, 1980).

Independent reading is generally reading that students self-select and read at home or during independent study time. It is recommended that the student read for 20 to 30 minutes per day. Routman (1988) entitled her independent reading program in her classroom, WEB (Wonderfully Exciting Book). In order to check student progress, the first five to ten minutes of reading group is spent conferencing with individuals. Since their books are selected

from the class set, the teacher has read most of them and can, therefore, discuss and ask questions of the students.

Sustained silent reading (SSR), uninterrupted sustained silent reading (USSR), or drop everything and read (DEAR) is called by any other number of names, and is generally, a brief time set aside daily when every one, including the teacher, reads by him or herself (Newman, 1985; Routman, 1988). Students select their own reading materials, although some teachers require that they not be magazines or comic books (Routman, 1988). This activity usually lasts approximately 25 to 30 minutes, depending on the group.

Literature extension activities are defined as "any meaningful extension of a favorite book" (Routman, 1988, p. 67). The activities could include anything as simple as a rereading, retelling, or discussion to comparisons of different versions, drawing murals form favorite scenes, rewriting the story into a play or presenting the story as a puppet play, et cetera. These activities can be part of "shared experiences" or individual projects.

Another way to extend a story is to study the author of the book or to read other stories by the same author. One strategy used to promote an author study is through writing letters to the author. Lamme (1989) cautioned that this activity should be one that the students want to do rather than making an assignment of it. Having an author visit the school once students have read their books has served as an effective extension for making the connection between reading and a "real" writer. A common substitute for the visiting author is the use of filmstrips that introduce the author to students.

The preceding description of whole language strategies that are widely used in the classroom is only a sampling of possibilities. The key tenet that needs to be reiterated when judging a strategy against the "yardstick" of whole language standards would be to follow the suggestion made by the body of research at hand: to provide open-ended classroom activities in which written language functions as it does in the real world (Rich, 1985).

The Whole-Language Classroom

It is important to stress that there is no prescribed whole language classroom. No two are exactly alike, but, even so, there is never any question about the model of instruction that underlies the curriculum (Watson, 1989). Due to these underlying beliefs, there are elements typical of whole language and in any given situation, some or all of these elements might be found.

In the whole language classroom the teacher is seen as a facilitator. The typical whole language teacher is more interested in discovery learning than in expository teaching. In fact, the phrase, "leading from behind" is popular among whole language advocates (Newman, 1985). Although the "teacher-as-facilitator" philosophy holds true in most cases, many whole language proponents also encourage providing students with learning models through teacher "demonstrations" (Smith, 1981, 1983).

". . . whole language teachers never do for students what students can do for themselves" (Watson, 1989, p. 135). Instead, peer collaboration is openly encouraged. They talk about their

writing, problems they are having, stories they have read, and experiments they are doing. They have real reasons to read, write, listen, and speak.

Typically, the whole language classroom has a homelike environment. At least, one corner will probably be carpeted and may even be furnished with an old sofa, or, at the very least, large throw pillows. This corner will also contain bookshelves with a large array of tradebooks. The room will probably be decorated with students' work including compositions, poetry, and visual art (Reutzel and Hollingsworth, 1988). Desks are pushed aside and possibly grouped into tables for cooperative work. One might also find a puppet stage with a variety of puppets including commercial and student-made for acting out plays that students have written. There may even be an assortment of play-acting costumes. There could possibly be a variety of audio-visual equipment for students to utilize when producing written or visual activities to present to the class. Centers might abound that promote reading and writing, listening, sharing, and creating visual works of art. Social studies and science will be incorporated in the format of tradebooks and various projects and experiments (Lovitt, 1990).

Other appropriate materials might include old telephones and telephone books, note pads, cookbooks, magazines, newspapers, typewriters, calculators, and computers. A monthly birthday list, a sick list, and special events may all be posted on bulletin boards. A post office or mailbox might be included with a mailcarrier selected daily (Toliver, 1990). All kinds of "real world" reading

might be available such as cereal boxes, bags, and travel brochures (Melvin, 1990).

Instruction in the whole language classroom frequently occurs in learning centers focusing on a single theme (Goodman, 1986). A writing center might have several story starters regarding one theme to get students thinking. Although this type of theme approach seems to be typical, some whole language devotees might take exception to this description since they do not agree that the thematic unit approach is congruent with the whole language philosophy. Edelsky et al. (1991, pp. 64-65) stated, "In thematic units, the topics are used for teaching subjects or skills. In thematic units, music, art, and literature are exploited for nonmusical, nonart, nonliterary ends." Instead, in their view of the typical whole language classroom, theme cycles would be implemented which are guided more by the interests of students.

In any case, in-depth studies replace learning reading and writing skills and finding the topic sentence. Grouping is based on interests and is short-term. No student is placed in a group based on ability and left there. Often, groups are formed with a deliberate attempt to have a wide range of ability (Reutzel and Hollingsworth, 1988).

Teachers will be available to give information for children as they need it throughout the day. For example, during a free-choice activity, the teacher could help a child who is making a get well card. Teachers will accept approximations of conventional printing knowing that this will improve as students get more experience (Toliver, 1990).

Formal instruction might take place on the playground where teachers and children are finding lists of things in nature and recording them. Students might also be writing various forms of poetry about the nature they see. The teacher might simply select outdoors as a place to share nature books (DeMars, 1990).

This section was intended to describe the whole language classroom in order to develop a mental picture of what one might expect to see. This image is only one of an endless number of possibilities. In short, the whole language teacher and students are an interactive group of people engaged in "real world" learning.

Student Assessment in Whole Language

One of the most pervasive difficulties that new whole language teachers have to face is the fact that, although they may be adopting a new teaching philosophy, by and large, the methods of assessment for their students have continued to be the traditional standardized instruments. Whole language proponents have argued that trying to impose this type of assessment on a whole language philosophy is a little like trying to fit a nut onto a bolt that has a different thread. They claim that this can only be done with force and even then, it does not fit (Johnston, 1988). Watson (1988) commented that it is tokenism to say that teachers can develop whole language curriculum but the children must pass the skills tests.

Based upon the research that undergirds the whole language philosophy, discussed in detail earlier, a theory of "natural learning" (Cambourne, 1988) has emerged. This type of learning

is based upon how children acquire language, and since reading and writing are part of language, it has been theorized that reading and writing can be taught based upon the same natural way that language is acquired, through a holistic approach (Holdaway, 1979). With this belief firmly implanted in the whole language educator's philosophy of learning, the rejection of the traditional method of assessment that breaks language down into discrete subskills is inevitable.

Heald-Taylor (1989, p. 109) stated:

> Standardized tests are not congruent with new research in language training; they are skill, not process, oriented; they are used to sort and classify youngsters rather than to give direction for learning; they are incomplete; they have a mistaken aura of objectivity.

However, she further admitted, "In schools across the United States, it is almost blasphemous to question the use of standardized tests because they are so institutionalized at school district, state, and federal levels" (p. 109).

Educators in the Kamehameha Elementary Education Program (KEEP) recognized that, although many of their teachers were being encouraged to move toward whole language, they continued to have doubts about the methods of assessment. As stated by one of their teachers:

> I've really come to believe in a whole literacy approach. I see the value of having a writers' workshop every day, and I enjoy discussing real books with the children instead of basal reader stories. The children love to read and write, and they know more about literacy than any class I've ever had. But this progress doesn't seem to be shown on our criterion-referenced tests, and I worry about what the principal, the other teachers, and the parents will think. I don't want to go back to teaching to narrow objectives, but I would like to have a better sense of whether the children and I are on the right track (Au, Scheu, Kawakami, and Herman, 1990, p. 574).

From a whole language perspective, the purpose of assessment is seen as "the formal, informal, and incidental documentation of positive student growth" (Moore and Moore, 1990, p. 595). Several educators have developed alternative methods of assessment in the whole language classroom that claim to be more congruent with their philosophy. Goodman, Goodman, and Hood (1989) have written The Whole Language Evaluation Book which, in summary, defines assessment in this way: "Evaluation is a continuous ongoing, integral and dynamic process that utilizes observation, interaction, analysis, and reflection to make significant educative decisions about student growth." They have stated that the ultimate goal of evaluation in whole language is self-evaluation for the students and teacher. Goodman et al. (1989) used the metaphor of the classroom as a mirror. She stated that, as we look at the children in the classroom, we are seeing what the teacher does, and this evaluation of children in many ways, becomes an evaluation of ourselves.

From the Goodman et al. (1989) text are chapters detailing how specific whole language teachers have addressed assessment in their own classrooms. Basically, these teachers have taken a more qualitative approach utilizing "thick description" as a primary methodology. Goodman (1978) described this method as informal observation or "kid watching." The two important questions explored through kid watching are (1) "What evidence is there that language development is taking place? and (2) When a child produces something unexpected, what does it tell the teacher about the child's knowledge of language?" (p. 43). Bird (1989) described observation as the link

between theory and practice. She captured the events and interactions of her class through a daily journal of classroom happenings called anecdotal records. Jacobson (1989) developed her own inventory for evaluating her Chapter 1 reading students whom she teaches using a whole language approach. She also utilized the Reading Miscue Inventory (RMI) that was developed by Goodman, Watson and Burke (1987).

Lincoln and Guba (1986) developed a more naturalistic method of assessing students as well. Responsive evaluation is based on the assumption that the "human-as-instrument" is as valid and effective as traditional standardized tests when assessing human growth. The evaluator, teacher, gathers information by being "responsive" to the students by observing them and collecting "artifacts" from their classroom activities.

Another method of assessment that appears to be utilized often in the whole language classroom whether as a formal means of evaluation or as affirmation of growth for the teacher and student is "portfolio assessment" (Valencia, 1990; Jongsma, 1989; and Y. Goodman, 1989). Portfolios have traditionally been used by such professionals as artists, architects, and models as a way to collect work samples to show potential employers. Several theoretical and pragmatic reasons have been cited for the use of such a portfolio for language arts students. Some of the reasons include: (1) Sound assessment is anchored in authenticity. This principle insures that the assessment will be made in meaningful contexts; (2) Assessment must be continuous and must chronicle development; (3) Since

reading is multifaceted, reading assessment must be multifaceted as well; and (4) Assessment must provide for active, collaborative reflection by both teacher and student (Valencia, 1990). Portfolios generally consist of "best" examples of the student's work and observational notes by the teacher and student collaboratively. This collaboration may provide a focus for the student and teacher to discuss the progress of the individual. In essence, "Portfolios should be viewed as a growing, evolving description of students' reading and writing experiences" (Jongsma, 1989, p. 264).

Even with the congruency of these new assessment methodologies, there is still the pressing problem of accountability from administrators. The educational program in Hawaii (KEEP) developed a portfolio system that gives teachers the information they need, and it was also designed to summarize data according to grade level benchmarks which satisfy the accountability factor (Au et al., 1990). They developed a framework based upon six aspects of literacy: ownership, reading comprehension, writing process, word identification, language and vocabulary knowledge, and voluntary reading. Based upon these aspects of literacy, these writers also developed five assessment tasks. It is these tasks that have been measured against the grade level benchmarks and have allowed teachers to provide an objective measure of performance when called upon to do so.

The assessment of students who are being taught using the whole language philosophy is, in essence, the assessment of the philosophy. Therefore, until this issue is resolved to the satisfaction of whole

language proponents and those to whom they must pay occasional homage, this approach to teaching will never become the norm in a country where objective standards of measure continue to be the rule.

Teachers Applying Whole Language

There is, however, evidence that whole language proponents are undaunted by mere standardized test scores. In 1978, two teachers who were discouraged by the insistence of their principal that they stick to their basal readers, attended a seminar where they heard Dorothy Watson speak about teaching the "whole child." They were so impressed with her presentation and the fact that they shared her views that they shared their enthusiasm with her. She admitted that she had visited with other teachers who felt the same way and suggested that they get together to share ideas. They did; thus, marking the first organized meeting of a group that has come to be known as TAWL, Teachers Applying Whole Language (Hood, 1989). Currently, there are over 200 TAWL Groups (Manning and Manning, 1990) across the United States. "These teachers draw strength from each other, and through that strength, they gain confidence and power--power to change the way they teach" (Hood, p. 62).

CHAPTER IV

REVIEW OF LITERATURE: INNOVATION

The Transition to Whole Language

As one educator, Henke (1988), so aptly and humorously stated: ". . . the only person who enjoys change is a wet baby" (p. 51). This statement has been verified repeatedly through numerous unsuccessful attempts at innovation in the nation's public schools. It has been charged that a primary reason for failure to effect change has been the manner and degree to which an innovation has been implemented. An example is "open education" which has reportedly failed due to the fact that many educators mistook the "openness of ideas" for "open space" (Altwerger et al., 1987). Rather than investigate the theoretical base of a movement and decide if it is congruent with one's own beliefs, educators have traditionally accepted "bits and pieces" of a program without knowing the underlying theory. "This type of 'whole-sale' adoption can prevent change before it gets started" (Edelsky et al., 1991, p. 3).

The whole language philosophy is so contrary to traditional education, it is regarded as an innovation if not a revolution (Hoffman, 1989). Although the term whole language has become a veritable "buzz word" in education, such a degree of confusion has

been amassed in its name that proponents fear its demise before it can become the norm (Y. Goodman, 1989).

Already, studies have shown a propensity for the majority of teachers in school districts attempting to "adopt" whole language, to take an "eclectic" approach. The result has been statements such as: "I'm doing whole language, but I supplement it with workbooks and basals and spellers" (Maguire, 1989, p. 146), or some refer to the movement as no more than "recycled Deweyism" (p. 157). Fullan (1982) described this attitude as a sense of a "false clarity" of interpreting change in an "oversimplified" way. "Educational change means change in one's methods, strategies, and beliefs and assumptions" (p. 58).

Henke (1988) disclosed how the school system in which she is employed began their transition from the basal-text approach to a literature-based approach to reading through a textbook-adoption committee who decided that their past teaching strategies were resulting in aliterate students. In order to ameliorate this condition, they decided to utilize workbook monies for multiple copies of children's tradebooks. Recognizing that mandating whole language was neither possible nor desirable, the 17 committee members approached their colleagues by involving more of them in the decision-making process. In order to implement the program, the committee secured administrative support and, throughout the year, provided the teachers with professional guest speakers, coursework that complemented their program, extra monies for needed resources, and monthly support meetings. In addition, every principal

committed to taking a 15 hour course in managing and supporting a literacy program. Judith Newman, one of their guest speakers, cautioned them that the transition would take up to five years. However, several of the teachers boasted successful implementation within one year. Henke (1988) found that, the more closely aligned to a teacher's existing beliefs and practices, the easier it was to make the transition.

Farris (1989) commented that "as school districts move away from the basal reader to whole language, teachers find themselves in a tenuous position" (p. 24). She stated that the reason teachers are so uncomfortable making this change is that this new style of teaching is in conflict with their own philosophy. She also stated that administration should not force teachers to adopt whole language strategies if they are philosophically opposed. It is, in fact, this type of overzealousness that whole language proponents warn against (Edelsky et al., 1991). Farris recommended that making a slow transition into whole language as a system is preferable.

In a small district in New Hampshire, the transition to whole language began ten years ago. It (Robbins, 1990) was a grass-roots movement led by teachers who found a dramatic difference in achievement when students applied the writing process, a whole language strategy. Robbins identified the following elements which she considered essential to their success. The first element was that innovation is highly valued. Therefore, teachers were not afraid to take risks. As the movement gained momentum, the staff and administration shared a common goal. Also, support was provided

for the teachers including paid consultants and materials. The system maintained full-time consultants for the three years of transition. Additionally, the teachers had the security of structure within their new-found philosophy by using the writing process which is defined in six phases, plus a guide to whole language. Finally, the change was strictly voluntary. Through this grass-roots movement, the small district claimed a successful attempt at implementing whole language.

From the perspective of a researcher, Clarke (1987) and a paid consultant, Ridley (1990), the implementation of whole language over the past seven years in Denver Public Schools resulted in valuable information regarding making the transition from a traditional approach to a whole language approach to teaching. Clarke (1987) described the results of his research as having far-reaching implications for innovation. He concluded that systems naturally resist change, and there is no absolute authority in a system. He also concluded that: "we can't make people do what we want them to do: we can only establish the conditions which encourage certain behaviors" (p. 390). Clarke added that reform does not occur over night.

Ridley (1990), who was hired for one year as a consultant to help the teachers make the whole language transition, found three types of teachers with whom she interacted. There were those teachers who were proponents of whole language who had already adopted the philosophy and who were implementing its strategies. The largest group, however, consisted of those interested in

learning the strategies without adopting the philosophy. Finally, there were those teachers who were not at all interested. Ridley (1990) found that there were several constraints that interfered with the transition. These constraints included concern for accountability since students were still taking standardized achievement tests. Teachers also felt the need for more materials, and they had several misconceptions about whole language. The resistance to change was also a constraint. Stevick (1990) stated that teachers are often unwilling to change due to the risk involved, and that risk sometimes involves painful losses. Ridley commented that she believed some teachers perceived her as a top-down attempt to force change. Ridley concluded that, if she had been there for three years, and had been able to provide the teachers with adequate support, most of them would have made the transition. She sensed that the resistance to change was keyed to the teachers' sense of freedom in how they teach.

From a similar study of implementation of whole language in Quebec, Maguire (1989) reported that she, too, found three types of teachers involved in change. The first type was the reflective group who knew about whole language and continued to refine whole language concepts for themselves. The second type was the eclectic group who were the ones wanting the teaching strategies only, and finally, the resistant group who refused to consider change. McCaslin (1989) also identified these three types of teachers and surmised that one reason there are eclectics was due to the overwhelming nature of goals that whole language advocates set. The eclectics simply elect to be selective.

Although historically, whole language was mandated in 1982 in Quebec by the Minister of Education, Johnston (1986) claimed that the transition actually began as a result of grass-roots discontent expressed by teachers who were spending too much time managing programs instead of teaching children to read and write. The mandate, however, has been viewed, and resented by some, as a top-down mandate, and has, therefore, received some negativism. For example, one principal claimed, "whole language was sold here but it wasn't bought" (Maguire, 1989, p. 147).

Maguire reported that several instances have aided in the transition. These instances include having influential guest speakers in to visit about whole language, a one-year course provided for teachers to expose them to research and theory, and, most significantly, she said, was when teachers began talking to and supporting teachers.

Upon reviewing several examples of the implementation of innovative practices in public education, key factors appeared to be significant in success. The primary factor was teacher autonomy. Innovation also took time. It has been estimated that some programs have been implemented within one year; whereas, others have taken up to ten (Routman, 1988). Teacher support in the form of resources such as consultants and materials were important as well. Finally, administrative support as well as teachers supporting each other were essential components in the innovation formula.

CHAPTER V

THE RESEARCH STUDY

Description

Nine elementary school teachers, three primary (K-2) and six intermediate (fourth grade) teachers were interviewed and it was learned that teaching experience ranged from six to 18 years with 12 years serving as the mean. Eight were female and one was male. All primary teachers taught in rural schools; whereas, three intermediate teachers taught in rural schools and three teachers taught in a suburban school. Four schools were represented in the study. Most conversations with the teachers were held in the teacher's classroom or in the faculty lounge. Three conversations, however, were conducted in the homes of the teachers. The unstructured interviews varied in length from 30 minutes to two hours. In some cases, these conversations were followed by telephone conversations to continue a discussion or clarify a point made earlier. Directly following each session, notes were taken to record the data using as much detail as possible and simultaneously analyzing the data from the perspective of a whole language approach. Plus, each teacher was asked to complete the open-ended survey before the end of the session.

Classroom observations were made of all nine teachers. The duration of these observations ranged from one hour to the entire

school day. The observation period began as early as October and lasted until May. The selection of these teachers for the study was based on the premise that all were interested in, or directly involved with adopting the whole language philosophy and they represented a variety of types of schools. This information came from supervisors or colleagues who were familiar with the teachers and their working environment. Previous to the classroom observations, the teachers were told that the observer would take copious notes for the purpose of thick descriptions in the study. None of the teachers objected to this activity. Verification of the data was made by reviewing the information recorded before leaving the observation sites. In order to ensure anonymity, each participant was assigned a fictitious name using the female gender throughout.

The researcher's teaching experience was an advantage to the extent of easily understanding "jargon" and establishing rapport. The disadvantage was the tendency for the interview to evolve into a two-way discussion. This tendency was restrained as much as possible.

The Survey

The following phrases made up the written, open-ended survey given to the participants:

1. My view of whole language is:
2. My definition of whole language is:

3. I do or do not consider myself a whole language teacher because:

4. I teach reading by:

5. I utilize children's literature in my classroom by:

6. The person(s) or thing(s) most responsible for my teaching philosophy and methodology is:

7. The person(s) or thing(s) most influential in affecting a change in my philosophy and methodology of teaching is:

Triangulation

In order to strengthen the validity of any data collected from this study, it was decided to incorporate multiple methodologies, such as interviews, questionnaires, and direct observation. This process, methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1970), was advocated since each method had its own strengths and weaknesses. Blumer (1969) argued that methodological triangulation is very important and that ethnographers should feel free to:

> . . . use any ethically allowable procedure that offers a likely possibility of getting a clearer picture of what is going on in the area of social life. Thus, it may involve direct observation, interviewing of people, listening to their conversations, securing life-history accounts, using letters and diaries, consulting public records, arranging group discussions, and making counts of an item if this appears worthwhile (p. 41).

Research Roles

As an ethnographer, one finds there are four roles that may be assumed during the course of a study. These roles range from complete observer to complete participant. Two of those roles were

assumed during this study; the complete observer (Gold, 1969). In this instance, the researcher enters the setting to record activity but does not interact at all with participants. Although this is a effective tool for recording detail, there are disadvantages. First, it is impossible to enter a naturalistic setting and not alter it. Plus, the artificiality of this role may make the participants uncomfortable. In the case of children in the study, it is posited that this role is impossible to maintain for extended periods of time. Also, the ethnographer will probably need to interact with the participants in order to clarify meanings of observed behavior.

When the role of complete observer was inadequate, that of participant-as-observer (Gold, 1969) was established. This role allowed the researcher to establish an acceptable rapport with participants, and also allowed the exchange of conversation for the purpose of clarification. Shatzman and Strauss (1973) detailed specific benefits of this role:

> This type of activity has two distinct advantages: it gets at meaning, and it meets the expectations of the hosts insofar as the researcher is not only an observer, but is revealed as personable and interested; through his comments or questions his apparent agenda is indicated. The agenda is understandable and appears appropriate; therefore, the observer can be thought of as at least 'kind of' a member of the group (p. 60).

A possible disadvantage was if the researcher should become so engrossed in the activity that he or she would have to regroup in order to regain the observer aspect of the role.

The TORP

Several instruments have been developed to help teachers determine if what they practice in the classroom is congruent with what they believe. One such instrument is the DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) which uses a Likert scale response system to determine teachers' beliefs about practices in teaching reading. This instrument has been proven as reliable and valid for discriminating teachers in regard to their theoretical orientation to reading through the use of descriptive data, factor analysis, and discriminant analysis (DeFord, 1985). The purpose for its inclusion in this study was to provide methodological triangulation in order to strengthen an emerging theory. Teachers were asked to answer the 28-item questionnaire. Six of the nine teachers completed and returned the questionnaire.

Application of Grounded Theory

Grounded theory emerges as a result of data analysis and is not based on a preconceived hypothesis. Its purpose in regard to existing theory is not to prove or disprove; rather to broaden or extend it (Glaser, 1978). Given, the review of the literature, one can recognize several theories upon which whole language is based. The purpose of this study was to answer substantive questions regarding whole language as an innovation. However, if accepted as a positive change, existing theories must be broadened, and more effective methodologies for implementing whole language must be discovered through thick descriptions that are grounded in the

dynamics of teacher interaction with students, colleagues, administrators, and others. Grounded theory may prove to be the approach that allows whole language to become viewed as the norm rather than an innovation. In order to visualize this approach to research, it was useful to develop a concrete model that could be recalled during the process of the constant comparative method. Figure 1 shows this model.

Eisner (1984) contemplated the need for educational research that is relevant to our field of endeavor.

> What I believe we need if educational research is truly to inform educational practice is the construction of our own unique conceptual apparatus and research methods. The best way I know of for doing this is to become familiar with the richness and uniqueness of educational life. If we are sufficiently imaginative, out of such familiarity can come ideas, concepts, and theories of educational practice. Out of these theories can come methods of inquiry that do not try to achieve levels of precision better suited to fields other than our own (p. 452).

It was in this context that this qualitative study was engendered.

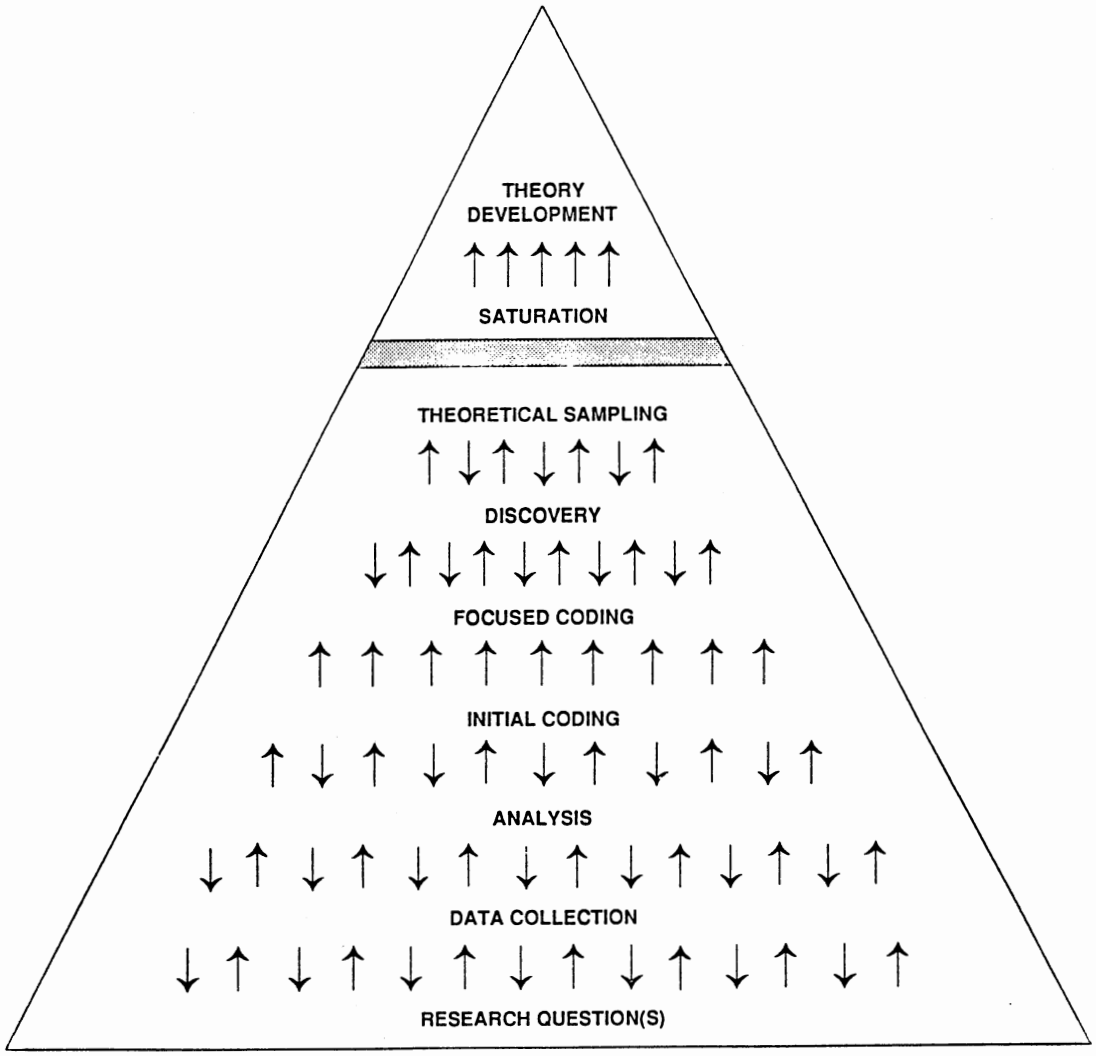

Figure 1. Grounded Theory: A Constant Comparative Method

CHAPTER VI

RESULTS AND ANALYSES

Articulation

The purpose of this study was to determine: (1) what it is that is happening under the guise of whole language, and (2) what factors are most effective in affecting change in the classroom. Since methodological triangulation was utilized through a grounded theory approach, the analyses and data were interpenetrated in this chapter. In other words, analytic passages were interspersed with descriptive materials in order to show the relationship between the two, and also to convey a sense of "wholeness" (Lofland and Lofland, 1984, p. 146).

During the search to answer the question: "What is it that is happening under the guise of whole language?", several strands of information began to emerge as relevant to the whole language classroom. The strands include: (1) classroom management, (2) teaching strategies, (3) physical environment, (4) student-teacher relationships, and (5) peer relationships among students. Additional strands were discarded due to a seeming lack of relevance to the study.

A View of the Classroom

The definition of classroom management in this instance

encompasses how the teacher maintains a learning environment for students. Teachers will manage their classrooms based upon their beliefs about human nature whether they are cognizant of these beliefs or not (Dobson, Dobson, and Kessinger, 1980). Dobson et al. have succinctly classified teachers' beliefs into three educational camps that follow a continuum. The belief furthest to the left of the continuum is Behaviorism. This camp is psychologically based on Skinnerianism and philosophically based in Essentialism. Basically, this camp believes that there is information such as reading, writing, and arithmetic that are "essential" to everyone. From a classroom management standpoint, it is believed that practically all behavior in children can be controlled by varying types of reward and punishment.

The camp in the middle of the continuum is based on cognitive field psychology and is philosophically from Experimentalism. From this standpoint, individuals construct their own knowledge or reality. Tenets of this camp are couched in the work of Dewey and Piaget who are part of the historical base of the whole language philosophy (Edelsky et al., 1991 and McCaslin, 1989). In terms of management, the classroom would be run democratically, and students learn socially and academically through interaction with their environment and peers.

The final camp as discussed by Dobson et al. (1980) is Existentialism which is psychologically aligned with Arthur Combs and Carl Rogers who believe that the actualization of one's potential is the single basic motivator of all. Psychologically,

this camp is Humanistic and focuses on man himself. Classroom managment is seen as self-regulating and liberating. Although a review of the literature has resulted in most whole language advocates subscribing to the Experimental camp, others view whole language as Existential (Edelsky et al., 1991 and Shor and Freire, 1987).

Observations in whole language classrooms revealed a variety of classroom managment practices. For example, Mary utilized Behavioristic techniques consistently through positive comments such as, "I love to see how people know how to carry their chairs," or "Thank you for a quiet hand," and, "I really like the way you are sitting with your feet on the floor doing your best work." Oral comments were reinforced with written conduct reports sent home and returned weekly. Rewards for positive behavior in Mary's room included computer time. Another technique utilized in her room to quieten the class as they came in was flipping the lights off and on until the room became quiet.

In Lynn's room, students were busy drawing life-size self-portraits. Joey, a native American, was about to color his hair yellow when Lynn saw him and insisted he color it black since the project was a self-portrait. Joey refused. Lynn gave him an option of finishing his work correctly, or sitting in the hall. He left but returned shortly, gave Lynn a hug, and he proceeded to cut out his self-portrait, but still did not color his hair. This excerpt represents a failed attempt to control behavior.

In the case of Billie's room, students were working on papier-machè mummies that were a culminating activity of their thematic unit on ancient Egypt. When cleanup time was announced the students quickly put finishing touches on their mummies and began their cleanup. Students picked trash off the floor, wiped spilled paint, rinsed paintbrushes, and finally, rinsed the sink. After class, Billie was asked how she had managed this feat. She explained that through cooperative learning groups, students found that they could enjoy creative projects only if they were responsible for clean up. The natural consequence of not doing the work would have resulted in no paintbrushes for the next session. Billie further explained that getting her students to this point of cooperation took patience and persistence and was very difficult for her, at first. She also confided that this was the noisiest and messiest her room had gotten during her 14 years of teaching and she was loving it. This type of democracy-in-action is congruent with the whole language philosophy. Examples of Existential classroom management were either undetected or nonexistent.

Whole language teaching strategies were described when teachers responded to the survey question asking if they considered themselves whole language teachers. Seven of eight who responded to the survey responded "Yes". Marla said, "No", that she did not know enough about it to consider herself whole language. All except one teacher qualified their answers with terms such as "modified". Bobbie answered, "I am using some whole language, but I am not a purist." Others said they were trying to become complete whole language

teachers. Lynn commented, "The whole language approach is not something you can do overnight or in a year's time. I am working on moving to a whole language approach, but it may be years before I am total." Based upon these responses, it is evident that all of these teachers are aware that they are not content with this position; rather they are striving for more knowledge.

Jo uses thematic units almost exclusively to teach kindergarten. She also incorporates the use of Big Books for guided group and independent reading. Students in her class are actively involved in becoming literate and often greet visitors with a book in hand. During one visit, Tad, a student identified as mentally handicapped shared a book by Eric Carle. He "read" the story through the pictures and proceeded to find another book by the same author. When questioned about how he knew it was another book by Eric Carle, he responded by saying he knew his illustrations. This student who could not "read" was already a discerning art critic. Jo utilizes nonfiction tradebooks in the classroom. Her children enjoy "reading" the pictures of books that are beyond their reading level. These students have joined the "literacy club" Smith (1971) often described. They also exemplify the types of emergent literacy detailed by Holdaway (1979).

Other strategies used in her class include the frequent use of guest speakers. During their study of firemen, they took a field trip to the local fire department. The following week, a fireman visited their class and allowed students to try on his gear. On another day, her class was visited by a dairy cow and a baby calf.

Mary has begun using cooperative learning groups consistently in her classroom. Students were observed working in groups of two to four writing poetry and completing math activities. Cooperative learning can be found in varying degrees in all of the intermediate classrooms. Support for this strategy can be found in the whole language literature. Watson (1988) stated that the language of a child is nourished in situations that encourage peer interaction.

The survey question asking teachers to explain how reading is taught in their classrooms received the most detailed responses. All nine teachers claim to use a literature-based approach to teaching reading although six of nine still rely upon a basal as a guide. Bobbie stated: "I still don't feel confident enough to teach my second graders reading without the support of the basal. I feel they get the best of both worlds when I use the basal and then enrich with literature." Although Mary is still using the basal to teach reading as a discrete subject, she has begun to incorporate strategies such as the Directed Listening Thinking Activity (DLTA). Cheryl stated: "Although no one has told me that I have to use a basal, I feel that since taxpaying dollars have already been spent for the class set, I should, at least, use them occasionally. I usually spend a week or two in the basal and then two or three weeks doing novel studies". One possible explanation for the reluctance to let go of the basal is the fact that every one of these teachers was trained to use a basal.

Lynn uses the Language Experience Approach (LEA) to teach reading although she does not have a designated reading period. Whole language advocates distinguish between LEA and whole language

by explaining that whole language sees oral and written language as being structurally related without one being an alternate rendition to the other. Teachers also feel that written language can be acquired before oral; and finally whole language proponents feel that during the act of writing, students are making meaning. Therefore, although whole language teachers may take dictation when students request it, they usually encourage students to do their own writing (Altwerger et al., 1987).

Throughout the study, teachers were attempting to incorporate more literature into their reading programs. After novel-study groups in Cheryl's class complete their books, they are required to create an extension activity that relates to the stories. One group elected to do a mural of Odell's Island of the Blue Dolphins. Throughout this experience, students were engaged in dialogue regarding the exact placement of various items on the island. When students could not agree, they would refer to the book. Cheryl's comment was that she is confident that her students are comprehending what they read when they can recall enough information to produce a project with such incredible detail. Edelsky and Smith (1984) would argue that this sort of task is inauthentic since its actual purpose is to test whether certain content has been learned.

In response to the question about how children's literature is utilized in the classroom, only two of eight respondents said that they read aloud to their classes regularly. According to Trelease (1989), this figure of 25 percent is the same as all other teachers. While answering this question, Bobbie replied, "I introduce my

letters through literature. I am very literature-based. We read to listen for letter sounds and for comprehension and concepts too." Sue said that she uses children's literature as a springboard for creative writing and also for expanding social studies and science. A couple of the teachers have Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) time set aside in class, and five of the nine required independent reading at home.

Although various innovative strategies are being implemented in these classrooms, direct instruction continues to be the dominant method of teaching. This has been explained, in part, by the rigid schedule of three of the six intermediate classes. Teachers have discussed their frustration at not being able to design curriculum that allows students to do in-depth projects. Teachers also admitted their reluctance to "let go of" the control of direct instruction. Ken Goodman (1989) acknowledged this common plight by saying, ". . . most whole language teachers and advocates are themselves in transition from more conventional subject and skill paradigms" (p. 215).

Since the course of this study spanned most of the school year, it was possible to observe most of the changes as they occurred. As mentioned earlier, the length of time of the transition from a traditional teaching approach to whole language to occur varies greatly. As Watson (1988, p. 7) stated: "It's been observed that once a teacher begins to understand the power of whole language, she or he will be changed. For some, the change seems to be 180 degrees overnight. For others, the change is considerably slower."

The physical environment was recorded in detail during each observation. Six of the nine rooms were arranged with their desks forming "tables" to better accommodate cooperative learning. The rooms remained in this arrangement throughout the study. Jo's room was arranged in centers. These learning centers were designed around thematic units. For example, at the beginning of the year, the room was a seashore complete with a live hermit crab. At Christmas, the room was a montage of Christmas around the world. Finally, by the end of the year, the room had been transformed into a jungle. For the most part, the room decorations were teacher made. Near the end of the year, Jo had decided that, maybe, for the following school year, she would rely more upon student work to provide visual stimulation. She had seen a photograph of a similar room in a journal article about a school in New Zealand. In essence, she will have relinquished some control of the room to the students which may indicate a philosophical shift toward a more democratic classroom. During the conversation, she indicated a certain amount of ambivalence about giving up this responsibility. Shor and Freire (1987) might refer to this step as a shift toward a more liberating educator.

Marla, who responded on the survey that she was not a whole language teacher, was the only teacher who had her room arranged in rows. However, by the end of the year, she had rearranged the desks in pairs. This was due, in part, to student request to work as partners. She also confided that she was beginning to see the benefit of collaboration between students, and that, after all these

15 years of teaching, she had decided it did not matter so much how students arrived at correct answers as long as they understood how they got them. It is also believed that Marla's proximity to Sue and Cheryl has influenced her attitude about cooperative learning.

In general, bulletin boards in these classrooms were decorated by the teacher. However, student work was also posted. The only room that really varied greatly from the others was Billie's, whose room was rearranged frequently to accommodate the day's activities. With the exception of occasionally feeling the need to apologize to visitors for the "look" of the room, Billie expressed satisfaction at how well students were able to work in this informal setting. Although she has been teaching for 14 years and had been a traditional teacher until less than two years ago, Billie seems to be one of those teachers who was able to make the transition rather quickly.

Mary's room was very similar to the rest with the exception of the background music she consistently played during classtime. She said that it had a calming effect on the class. Both teacher and students appeared to be oblivious to it most of the time.

Routman (1988) described the most critical factor in developing a personal philosophy as the way the teacher views and treats children. She said that the emotional climate and tone created in the classroom may well be the most important factor in the success of the classroom. Based upon the observations made in these whole language classrooms, teachers are attempting to provide such an environment.

Teacher and student empowerment is central to the whole language philosophy. To empower students, teachers must believe in the student's ability to learn and to move from the directing mode of the Behaviorist to a facilitator of learning or experimentalist. If one accepts the whole language theoretical base, then one must accept the constructivist view of knowledge and meaning. This means accepting interpretations from students such as those of Lynn's students who were writing stories about their trip to the fire station. Stories were written and accepted as complete using invented spelling. Another example of empowerment of students was found in Billie's class where students were allowed to select partners and research social studies topics of interest to them.

"A whole language philosophy asserts that in order to grow and learn, teachers and children must all be learners, risk-takers, and decision-makers, taking significant responsibility for learning within their classroom" (Weaver, 1990, p. 24). Mary's classroom is conducive to taking risks. Daily, fourth grade students are encouraged to read original poetry and to share their talents. Students have been observed singing favorite popular songs or sharing other meaningful experiences during these periods.

Jo's kindergarten students are empowered by having the freedom to select the activities in which they will engage daily. On a given morning, students were observed designing mosaics with melted crayons, presenting an extemporaneous puppet show to a one-person audience, sharing favorite tradebooks, and writing about their class pet, a hermit crab. These tasks may be construed as authentic in the

context of the classroom because they were self-selected activities. Pearson (1989) explained that the criterion for authenticity in a whole language classroom is that, a school task is authentic to the degree that it represents the type of task one would elect to do of their own free will.

Making the Transition

In an effort to ascertain what factors were effective in helping teachers make the transition from a traditional teaching philosophy to whole language, it was first necessary to determine how they defined and perceived it. Teachers were asked to define whole language on the survey. Having reviewed these definitions, it was found that no one referred to whole language as a philosophy. In fact, only three of eight referred to it as a noun such as "an approach", "a method", or "a program". The analysis is that they have not come to recognize it as a philosophy. Billie defined whole language in this way: "Whole language is using a literature based approach to teaching. All of the other subjects can be brought in;" whereas, Bobbie stated, "Learning reading by reading, an integrated approach using many varieties of written and oral language." Sue responded "The use of multiple disciplines (reading, science, social studies, etc.) integrated to teach a specific concept or skill."

This ambiguity may be a result of the lack of a "concrete" definition as found in the review of the literature, or, it could be that these teachers have not defined their own teaching from a philosophical base. Combs (1982) stated that consciously or

subconsciously every person has a personal belief theory and these beliefs guide our behavior. Weaver (1990) stated that since implementation of this philosophy is dependent upon the teacher's understanding of it, as well as upon her ability and willingness to depart from more traditional methods, each teacher will define and redefine whole language as they "increasingly manifest their philosophy in their teaching" (p. 8). This statement points to the need for clarification of one's own beliefs. Instead of a philosophy, it would seem that to the "neophyte" whole language teacher, perhaps, it is seen as merely another method or approach.

This theory first began to emerge when, upon repeated attempts to visit Kathy's class, she would respond, "But I'm not going to be doing whole language on that day," and on another occasion, Billie stated: "Oh yes, that would be a good time. We will be doing whole language. You know, it is so much more work than teaching the other way that you just can't do it all of the time."

The survey item that asked for the teacher's view of whole language rendered similar responses. Billie expressed her view of whole language by stating:

> Most of us have been doing 'some whole language' for years. Fourteen years ago we had no social studies books and we made our own units. For years another fourth grade teacher and I have taught a tall tale unit with a lot of research. I love all types of literature so I like using it. I also teach a nursery rhyme and fairy tale unit. This year I used Sign of the Beaver and Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing as 'texts' and did units on them - bringing in spelling, social studies, science, math, and writing as well as reading.

Bobbie commented, "I feel it is a good approach at the primary level, but more difficult at the intermediate and upper elementary because these classes often are departmentalized." Lynn said, "As a teacher of six and seven year olds I'm real excited about it. I have used whole language off and on for about a year and my children seem so much more excited when I use it."

Dobson et al. (1980) stated: "Many teachers operate from a philosophic base or combination of bases that are unknown to them; they are practicing something for an unknown reason toward a known end." Combs (1982) suggested that the crucial beliefs of good teachers fall into six main categories:

1. What are the nature and possibilities of human beings?
2. What does one believe about human behavior?
3. What does one believe about learning?
4. What are society's purposes?
5. What are appropriate teaching techniques?
6. What does one think of oneself?

A philosophical base can only be established through a willingness to reflect upon one's beliefs. This reflection with action is known as praxis. Grundy (1987) sagaciously summarized the concept of praxis:

> 1) The constitutive elements of praxis are action and reflection . . . Praxis does not entail a linear relationship between theory and practice in that the former determines the latter; rather it is a reflexive relationship in which each builds upon the other.
> 2) Praxis takes place in the real, not an imaginary or hypothetical world.
> 3) This reality in which praxis takes place is the world of interaction; the social or cultural world. Thus praxis, like practical action, is a form of interaction.
> 4) It is the act of reflectively constructing or recognizing the social world.

5) Praxis assumes a process of meaning-making, but it is recognized that meaning is socially constructed, not absolute (pp. 104-105).

Results of the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) by DeFord (1985) helped solidify this emerging theory about the beliefs and practices congruency of the participants of this study. There were three possible categories in which the participants could have fallen; basal, skills approach, and whole language. Based upon the scores of this instrument, only two teachers scored congruently with the whole language philosophy. Two others scored favoring the basal approach to reading; while the last two fell in the skills category. The significant point is, that while these teachers are attempting to become whole language teachers, their theoretical orientation to teaching reading is incongruent with that of the whole language philosophy.

Caution is urged in the literature. Many whole language advocates have been critical of teachers whom they call "eclectic" (Edelsky et al., 1991 and Y. Goodman, 1989), fearing that their lack of understanding will be the nemesis of the whole language movement. Dobson et al. (1980) made the statement that: "As a consequence of superficial understanding of the basic philosophies and theories on which innovations are based, new ideas are often adopted indiscriminately and applied inappropriately" (p. 15).

Heald-Taylor (1989) identified six phases through which teachers generally pass as they make the transition from a traditional to a whole language classroom. They include the resistant phase where the teacher may demonstrate hostility, the receptive phase where he or

she may begin to listen to discussions about whole language or even attend a Teachers Applying Whole Language (TAWL) meeting, and the experimental phase where the teacher may observe a specific whole language strategy being demonstrated, or even try it him or herself. The fourth phase is initiation where there is evidence that the teacher is trying several strategies; the transitional phase is when these strategies are becoming perfected, and finally, the institutionalization phase which may be noted when the teacher is willing to share ideas with others.

Heald-Taylor's (1989) list of phases may prove helpful to those trying to implement whole language, but the basic philosophical issue is ignored. Perhaps, she assumes, as do many whole language proponents, that the beliefs are already in place. Browne in a communication cited in Whole Language: What's the Difference? (Edelsky et al., 1991, p. 44) stated: "Like a liquid, practice takes the shape of whatever belief-container it is in."

The survey in this study also asked the teachers who or what they felt was most responsible for their teaching methodologies. Five of the eight responded that their college professors were most responsible; one said peers, another stated it was an administrator, and only two said their own experiences. These responses seem to reiterate a lack of reflection as well.

The final survey question asked who or what was most influential in affecting a change in methodologies. All respondents stated that their students were most effective in getting them to change their methodologies. If this is true, it seems quite feasible that

teachers could possibly make the transition from traditional teaching strategies to whole language; and as they see success reflected in their students, make the philosophical metamorphosis.

The circumstances for the teachers in the four schools varied from those who were the only ones interested in becoming whole language to those who felt the top-down pressure mentioned in the review of the literature. In some cases, this top-down approach was viewed with resistance. Fullan (1982, p. 125) stated: "It is unrealistic to expect all teachers to be interested in change." He further stipulated: "It has to come from the grass-roots; top-down does not work" (p. 4). In Kathy's situation, she perceived her principal to be insisting that she change even when she was uncomfortable; yet, her principal's perception was that of encouragement, not insistence.

In sum, it is believed that this study has revealed the possibility of "the tail wagging the dog" when it comes to the metamorphosis from a traditional teaching philosophy to one of whole language. Particularly, in the situation where teachers have not been encouraged to reflect upon their philosophical base, it is possible to make the necessary curriculum changes that will result in a philosophical change once the curriculum changes have been proven successful with one's students.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The need for innovative practices in public education in the United States has been emphasized through statistics that permeate our communication system. By observing teachers who were attempting to make the transition from a traditional teacher to a whole language teacher, this study sought to find out what is happening under the guise of whole language and also, what factors are effective in affecting change in the classroom. If accepted as a positive change, it is possible that this study could enhance the possibility of a paradigm shift in education to whole language.

A grounded theory approach was selected in an effort to generate new theory through the constant comparative method. Methodological triangulation was utilized in this ethnographic study in an effort to validate the data collected. The allure of using grounded theory to study whole language was the fact that both the method and topic to be studied are pragmatic and liberating in nature.

Since each teacher who advocates whole language interprets its meaning in a slightly different way, there are almost as many definitions in the literature. However, it was found that most agree it is a philosophy which can be best summarized by Goodman (1986).

> Whole language learning builds around whole learners learning whole language in whole situations. Whole language learning assumes respect for language, for the learner, and for the teacher.
>
> The focus is on the meaning and not on the language itself, in authentic speech and literacy events.
>
> Learners are encouraged to take risks and invited to use language, in all its varieties, for their own purposes.
>
> In a whole language classroom, all the varied functions of oral and written language are appropriate and encouraged (p. 40).

The historical roots of whole language have been around since the seventeenth century, at least. Two of the more current forerunners are John Dewey (1938) who headed the progressive education movement in the early 1900s. The integration of curriculum and emphasis on experimentation were significant contributions to this movement. Jean Piaget's (1973) constructivist theory also has its impact in whole language.

Interdisciplinary researchers have contributed a plethora of information that has formed the current theoretical base upon which whole language curricularists base their work. Much of this research supports learning language, including reading and writing, through practice. Vygotsky (1986) helped define learning as profoundly social, and Smith (1982) established that prior knowledge is extremely important to literacy. Clay (1986), Holdaway (1986), and Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) made important contributions to the knowledge base regarding emergent literacy.

Many whole language advocates have described whole language in

terms of a paradigm shift. Rich (1985, p. 171) stated:

> Whole language, in its essence goes beyond the delineation of teaching strategies to describe a shift in the way in which teachers think about and practice their art. In essence, the term whole language outlines the beginning stage of a paradigm shift. As a movement, whole language encompasses prior research information then goes beyond to extend thinking about language and learning into new realms.

A variety of teaching strategies has been identified as congruent with the whole language philosophy. However, it must be stressed that there is no prescribed method for teaching in the whole language approach. Specific strategies included guided reading, the use of Big Books for group reading, theme cycles, independent reading, and the use of invented spelling in order for young writers to be able to transcribe their own stories. Mainly, the emphasis is on autonomy and interdependence for children who are actively engaged in their learning through authentic experiences.

Student assessment is approached from a qualitative stance using such tools as portfolio assessment which is a compilation of a student's work used in collaboration between teacher and student to reflect upon student progress.

The review of literature on whole language as an innovation revealed that there are several key factors in its implementation. These factors included teacher autonomy, a variance in transition time from one to ten years, support in the form of consultants and materials, administrative support, and finally, support from colleagues in various forms including their organization known as TAWL.

The research study included nine elementary teachers from kindergarten through fourth grade whose teaching experience ranged from six to 18 years, and represented four schools; three rural and one suburban. These teachers were selected based upon information from supervisors or colleagues who knew they were attempting to implement whole language in their classrooms. Direct observations, unstructured interviews, a written survey, and the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile, or TORP, were used in data collection. The ethnographer assumed both the complete observer and participant-as-observer roles as circumstances warranted.

While attempting to answer the question regarding what is happening in whole language classrooms, five strands of information began to emerge including classroom management, teaching strategies, physical environment, student-teacher relationships, and peer relationships among students.

In order to discuss classroom management, it was necessary to review the three main philosophical camps from which most teachers can base their beliefs about education. These camps were the Essentialists, Experimentalists, and Existentialists (Dobson et al., 1980).

Whole language teachers are more philosophically aligned with Experimentalists. However, it was observed that many classroom management techniques were Behavioristic in nature.

Although many whole language teaching strategies were used in these classrooms it was found that direct teaching is still predominant. Most teachers still rely upon a basal to teach reading

although tradebooks were also utilized frequently. Only two of eight teachers said that they read orally to their classes daily. That statistic was the same as in the population of all other teachers in the United States according to Trelease (1989).

Most of the classrooms were arranged where children could work in cooperative learning groups. One kindergarten teacher used learning centers exclusively. One teacher rearranged her classroom almost daily depending upon the activity.

By virtue of many teaching strategies such as self-selected books, acceptance of invented spelling, and choices on research topics, students were considered to be empowered by the teachers in these rooms. In general, the primary grades were found to be more liberating.

When answers were sought to questions regarding the definition and their view of whole language, it was found that no one referred to it as a philosophy. When nouns were used to describe whole language, "a method", "a program", or "an approach" were mentioned. The data seemed to indicate the emergence of a theory that, perhaps, these teachers did not speak in terms of philosophy because they had not verbalized their own philosophy of teaching. It is this type of incongruence that many whole language advocates (Edelsky et al., 1991, and Y. Goodman, 1989) fear will be the demise of the whole language movement.

It is theorized that a clarification of one's beliefs and time for reflection can result in teachers making the philosophical as well as curricular metamorphosis to whole language; especially, given

the fact that all teachers responded that students were the main factors that were effective in affecting change. Students seemed to be responding well to the whole language strategies being implemented.

It is recommended, as a result of the review of literature and data collected, that teachers and administrators need to become enlightened about the whole language philosophy. Although Americans claim that they are ready for innovation in our classrooms, Shor and Freire (1987) postulate that there is fear of the kind of liberating education that challenges people to know their actual freedom, their real power. Whole language encompasses this type of liberating education although the average whole language teacher never acknowledges it. Watson's (1988) definition of whole language explicitly denotes the political and cultural aspects of whole language which are imbedded in social reconstructionist theory (Sleeter and Grant, 1988) and have not yet been accepted in our educational system. Advocates of social reconstructionism ". . . begin by assuming that resources should be distributed much more equally than they are now and that people should not have to adhere to one model of what is considered 'normal' or 'right' to enjoy their fair share of wealth, power, or happiness" (p. 176).

To administrators, it is recommended that teachers should be encouraged and afforded the means to acknowledge and reflect upon their own belief bases before attempting implementation of an innovation such as whole language.

For future research, it is recommended that a comparison be made between teachers in traditional classrooms and those in whole language ones to note the major differences in practice, if any. Also, since the teachers in this study were experienced, it might be significant to compare what beginning teachers do when they try to implement whole language to the behavior of more experienced ones. Also, the further investigation of teachers' beliefs and practices congruency in regard to the implementation of innovative practices needs more attention.

Finally, to whole language advocates who are cynical of those who have not made a total metamorphosis to whole language, it is recommended that they continue sharing their expertise in the whole language movement, but encourage rather than repress these whole language neophytes. It may be from their continued struggles that whole language may become the new paradigm for education in the United States.

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