

THE EMERGING CURRICULUM PARADIGM
IN A FIRST GRADE CLASSROOM: THE
CHILD AS PHILOSOPHER/POET

By

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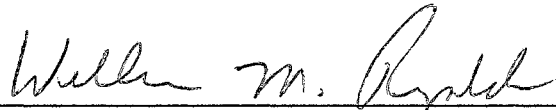
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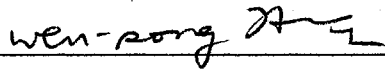
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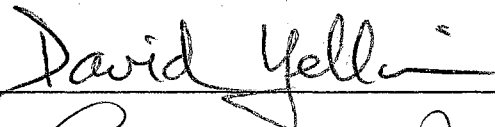
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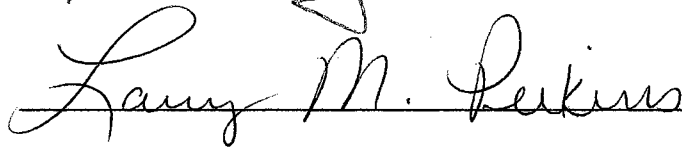
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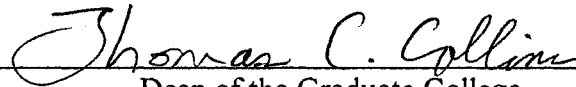


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CHAPTER I

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Introduction

Members of a profession or community live by a given "paradigm" (world view) which directs the thinking and colors the perceptions of most members of that profession or community and has a direct effect on the ensuing culture (concepts, habits, skills, and institutions). A paradigm gains its status because it is more successful than its competitors in solving a few problems that the group of practitioners has come to recognize as acute (Kuhn, 1970). A paradigm is always an object for further articulation and specification under newer or more stringent conditions.

Change usually occurs when rising tensions and contradictions reach a point where the dominant paradigm no longer seems to work. A new way of conceptualizing the world is sought. More than one theoretical construction can always be placed upon a given collection of data. The new conceptualization can be described as "picking up the other end of the stick," a process that involves "handling the same bundle of data as before, but placing them in a new system of relations with one another by giving them a different framework" (Butterfield, 1949).

Any new interpretation of nature, whether a discovery or a new theory, emerges first in the mind of one or a few individuals. They are able to see the world differently.

Their attention has been focused on the contradictions of the old paradigm, and in addition, they are not as committed to the world view and rules determined by the old paradigm (Kuhn, 1970).

Professionals, working within the culture of education, live by a given paradigm. Their basic approach to education, and to curriculum, is a function of the world view they accept. The dominant curriculum paradigm, which is currently directing the thinking in our profession today, is a combination of the "Tyler Rationale" and logical positivism. The "Tyler Rationale" is comprised of: (a) specifying objectives in behavioral terms; (b) selecting activities to meet those objectives; (c) organizing the activities; and (d) evaluating the outcomes.

Logical positivism is a blending of symbolic logic and the scientific method. It emphasizes principals of control and certainty, operates in the interests of law-like propositions that are empirically testable, assumes knowledge to be value free, assumes knowledge to be objectified, values efficiency, and accepts unquestioningly social reality as it is (Schubert, 1986). Management by objectives, competency-based testing, the accountability movement, competency-based teacher education and diagnostic, prescriptive treatment are all offshoots of logical positivism (Dobson, Dobson, and Koetting, 1985). Logical positivistic practices have a controlling effect. This ideology of control is manifested in many school functions such as labeling, homogeneous grouping, tracking, positive reinforcement, emphasis on correct behavior, and the grading system. Emotional management and control become extremely important with priority placed upon passive, controlled behavior.

According to James MacDonald (1985) we have paid attention to the rhetoric of goals, objectives and product assessment for far too long, as if these statements or measurements reflected fundamental meaning. Children are looked upon as what Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1969) called an information machine. He used the term in an essay called "Eye and Mind." He wrote:

Scientific thinking, a thinking which looks on from above, and thinks of the object-in-general, must return to the "there is" which underlies it; to the site, the soil of the sensible and opened world such as it is in our life and for our body-- not that possible body which I may legitimately think of as an information machine but that actual body I call mine, this sentinel standing quietly at the command of my words and my acts. Further, associated bodies must be brought forward along with my body. . . the others who haunt me and whom I haunt; the others along with whom I haunt a single, present, and actual Being. . . (pp.160-161).

Gadamer (1975), warns of the peculiar falsehood of modern consciousness: the idolatry of scientific method and the anonymous authority of the sciences and he calls for a concern with understanding rather than a preoccupation with method.

Statement of the Problem

The current dominant paradigm in education may not be in the best interest of children (Rogers, C. 1983; Apple, M. 1986, 1990; Grundy, S. 1987; & Schubert, W. 1986). Standardized testing, retention, homogeneous grouping, directed instruction (with emphasis on drill, worksheets, sitting and listening quietly) and the fragmentation of curriculum into isolated skills and subjects are all products of this approach to education.

When emphasis is placed only on what can be measured and quantified, as it is in the dominant paradigm, then consideration of subjective elements can be excluded.

Aesthetic and ethical sensibilities, values, quality, form, feelings, motives, intentions, soul, consciousness and spirit may prove to be excluded. The push today is for more testing, for improved standardized test scores and accountability. This has resulted in a narrowed curriculum consisting of rote learning of academic skills (skills that can be quantified) rather than active, experiential learning in a meaningful context (much more difficult to evaluate). Evaluation could be based on daily authentic language experiences (the lived stories of children). It could include process and product, informal and formal measures, observational data, work samples, conferences, and interviews. Evaluation could be an integral, ongoing part of the teaching-learning process, not separate from it. The learner could be involved in assessing strengths and weaknesses and in setting goals.

Is there an alternative to the current dominant paradigm? Does the educated person need to appreciate the diversity of things and ideas rather than be told that one particular way is the right way? Should the educated person have been exposed and re-exposed to as wide a variety of experiences and contrasts as possible? Above all, should he learn to search for and develop his own potential, individuality, and uniqueness?

Arthur Combs suggests that the past thirty or forty years have seen enormous strides in psychological science and in our understandings about the how and why of human behavior. Experiential psychology regards behavior as a symptom of what is going on inside the behavior. People behave according to how things seem to them. The causes of behavior lie in people's meanings, generally known as perceptions, beliefs, feelings or attitudes about self and the world. (1991). Every behavior is a direct outcome of how one sees one's self and how one sees the world at the moment. Whatever the self concept, it affects every behavior, including how students learn, behave or misbehave in school.

People are constantly searching for personal meaning, to make sense of their experience. According to Combs, that is what learning is all about. Learning is the discovery of personal meaning. It happens inside the person and cannot be accomplished with the active involvement of the person. Today, far too many students complain that school is largely irrelevant, having little to do with the world as they know it. Far too many find their experience so unrewarding that they drop out of the system physically or mentally. Too many traditional schools seek to operate in a "no nonsense", purely objective fashion. If learning is a deeply human, personal experience then shouldn't schools be warm, human places?

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine a possible alternative to the current dominant curriculum paradigm. Curriculum can be described as a contrived environment. The environment, in other words, is whatever conditions interact with personal needs, desires, purposes, and capacities to create the experience which is had (Dewey, 1938). Therefore, schools today could be seen as places where the curriculum could or might be quite different from what it is. Instead of viewing the student as one who absorbs knowledge directly, can the student be viewed as a unique being who constructs meaning and can engage in interpretive modes of knowing? Children have the capacity to constitute their worlds as they begin to name them. It is important to recognize that there is no "reality" that is unquestionably given, the same for everyone. Reality must be understood as interpreted experience. There can be multiple perspectives and multiple interpretations. Dewey (1938), discusses discovering how others, across the sea or down

the corridor, organize their significant world. It is important to educators to try to read the world as it presents itself to children.

The purpose of this study is to look at curriculum with the child at the center instead of subject matter. Can the child be viewed as a dynamic individual, a creator and lover of knowledge, with the ability to name and interpret his world with power and beauty? Emphasis will be placed on listening to and looking at the words of the students as they constitute their worlds. The environment, social setting, and milieu will be examined as integral components of this approach to curriculum.

Definition of Key Terms

Problems can arise when we share the same words in common, but find ourselves interpreting them differently. This is especially true when the words themselves refer to abstract concepts. For the purpose of this paper, the following key definitions are presented:

CURRICULUM: As a term in educational discourse, curriculum is used in a wide variety of ways. It has a common sense meaning as broad as what schools teach to a more narrow interpretation of a specific educational activity planned for a particular student at a particular point in time. Historically, schools have established "courses" of study through which a student must pass; a course to be run, something with a beginning and an end, something that one aims to complete.

One of the most recent positions to emerge concerning curriculum is the emphasis on the verb form of the word, "Currere". The interpretation is no longer of the race course but the running of the race with emphasis placed on the individual's own capacity

to reconceptualize his or her autobiography. It becomes a social process whereby individuals come to greater understanding of themselves, others, and the world through mutual reconceptualization. The curriculum is the interpretation of lived experience. (Schubert, 1986) This definition reflects the intent of this paper.

PHILOSOPHY: Originally, love of wisdom or knowledge.

PHILOSOPHER: A person who lives and thinks according to a system of philosophy.

POET: A person who writes or expresses himself/herself with imaginative power and beauty of thought and language.

Organization of the Study

An introductory discussion concerning the study's significance, guiding questions, and assumptions is presented in Chapter I. The Chapter II consists of a review of the literature which is relevant to this study: life in schools today, process writing, voice ownership, empowerment, and autonomy. The focus of Chapter III is the research process used for this study. Chapter IV reveals the child as philosopher/poet under the new paradigm. Chapter V looks toward the future and the possibility for change. It contains a summary of the study, conclusions which may be drawn, and a challenge for the future.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Landscape for Change/A New Mind Set

Being Yourself

The hardest battle is to be nobody
but yourself in a world which is
doing its best, night and day, to
make you like everybody else.
e e cummings

Present Reality

Carl Rogers in his book, "Freedom to Learn", (1983) shows two possible pathways to education. For one pathway, he shows the reader a young boy entering school on his first day. The boy is eager to go, he knows that big boys go to school. He has heard many stories about school--about teachers, report cards, exciting times and about punishments.

He enters his classroom. His teacher is businesslike. Here is his desk and chair, one in a straight row of desks and chairs. Here are his books and pencils. Then come the rules. He cannot leave his seat, even to go the restroom without raising his hand and receiving permission. He is not to whisper or talk to his neighbors. He must wait to be called on to speak. No one is to make unnecessary noise.

Class begins, the reading book, letters and words on the board, the teacher talks and talks and talks. She calls on him to answer a question. "Wrong, who can give the right answer?" He feels stupid. Will the day never end?

Recess is fun--shouting, running, games but it is over too soon. Then the ordeal begins again. He squirms, his mind wanders.

His educational career has begun. Even though he may not be able to articulate it, he has already learned several important lessons:

there is no place for his restless energy in the classroom
 submission to rules is very important
 making a mistake is very bad
 spontaneous interest does not belong in school
 teacher and disciplinarian are synonymous
 school is, on the whole, an unpleasant experience

As the days, months, and years roll by he learns other things. He learns that:

most textbooks are boring
 it is not safe to differ with a teacher
 exams and grades are the most important aspects of
 education (Rogers, 1983).

Alternative Reality

Rogers goes on to discuss an alternative pathway, another way to education.

A small girl goes to school for the first time. The atmosphere is friendly and informal. The teacher greets the child warmly and introduces her to some of the other children.

When class begins, they sit in a circle with the teacher. She asks the children to tell of one thing they are interested in, one thing they like to do.

There are all kinds of interesting things in the room. Books, maps, pictures, building blocks, crayons, and paper, toys and stuffed animals are included in the

surroundings and the children are soon investigating their environment.

When the teacher calls them together again, she asks if anyone would like to tell a story. The girl tells about going shopping with her mother. The teacher prints part of the story on the board and points out the words and letters. And so the day has begun.

Now, in comparison to the boy on the first path, what has the small girl learned?

She has learned that:

her curiosity is welcomed and prized
 the teacher is friendly and caring
 she can learn new things, both on her own and with the teacher's help
 there is room for spontaneity
 she can contribute to the group learning
 she is valued as a person

She is on the way to becoming an educated person, one who is learning how to learn (Rogers, 1983).

Children come to school already possessed of the major psychological attributes crucial to produce productive learning. They are thinkers and doers before they come to school. They are eager to remain thinkers and doers, to integrate new worlds into their old ones. This must be an integration, not a separation. They already know that there is much they do not know and are eager to learn. Motivation is really not a problem.

Should not our aim be to judge whatever we do for children in our school by the criterion of how we are fostering the desire to continue to learn about self, others, and the world, to live in the world of ideas and possibilities, to see the life span as an endless intellectual and personal quest for knowledge and meaning (Sarason, 1990, p. 162)?

John Holt (1989), tells us that children are born passionately eager to make as much sense as they can of things around them. Children observe, they wonder, they speculate, formulate theories and modify the theories as needed, or reject them, and the

process continues. Freire (1981, p. 62) expresses, "Reality is really a process undergoing constant transformation."

If we attempt to control, manipulate, or divert this process, we disturb it. If we continue this long enough, the process stops.

Learning as Process

Real learning is a process of discovery, and if we want it to happen, we must create the kinds of conditions in which discoveries are made. The conditions include time, leisure, freedom and lack of pressure.

Holt describes children as able to recognize when one thing they've said, or that somebody has said, isn't quite consistent with another. They want their mental model to fit. If the parts don't fit, they're disturbed, they are in a sense, philosophers; they like to resolve contradictions. They're made uneasy by paradox, they like to have things make sense. But they have to do this in their own way and in their own time.

Until a child becomes really dissatisfied with his own mental model, until he feels it isn't right, corrections don't make sense. Corrections that he makes, or at least is in the mood to listen to, are the corrections that he needs. Holt states that the reason why teaching in the conventional sense of the word--telling children things--is almost inherently impossible, is that we cannot know what the state of a young child's mind is.

Wells (1986) goes further in suggesting that children bring different aptitudes and experiences to each learning task. The learning itself involves an active reconstruction of the knowledge that is presented on the basis of the learners existing internal model of the world. The process is therefore essentially interactional in nature, both within the learner

and between the learner and the teacher, and calls for a negotiation of meaning, not its unidirectional transmission.

The well known precept of "start where the child is" all too often is interpreted in practice to mean administer a test or some other form of assessment in order to decide which ability group to place the child in or which reading primer or worksheet to give him or her. But this is not discovering where the child is--what his or her current needs and interests are. Instead, it is discovering into which of the places that are prepared in advance the child can most easily be slotted. Really to discover where a child is and, hence, how we can most helpfully contribute to his or her further learning, it is necessary to listen to what the child has to say--to try to understand the world as the child sees it.

One of the things that we find when we listen to the conversations of children is that the questions that they ask themselves about the world are likely to be very big question, not little ones. They may ask--"Where did the Universe come from?" or "Did God make everything, even the table and chairs that we are sitting on?" Holt suggests that children are not only philosophers, they are cosmologists, they are inventors of myths, of religions. Children's fantasies and stories are serious work. The child is trying to make a model of the universe. He is asking himself questions about time, and life and God and creation. These are philosophers at work.

Holt (1989) sums up in five to seven words what he learned as a teacher-- "Learning is not the product of teaching, in other words, teaching does not make learning" (p. 160) Learners make learning. What do we do when we make learning? We observe, look, listen, touch, taste, smell, manipulate, and sometimes measure or calculate. And then we wonder, we say "why this?" We think, speculate, theorize, test and experiment.

Children learn from anything and everything they see. They learn much more from things, natural or made, that are real and significant in the world.

From observations outside school, we know that children are innately predisposed to make sense of their experience, to pose problems for themselves, and actively to search for and achieve solutions.

Children will bring these characteristics into the school provided that the tasks that they engage in are ones that they have been able to make their own.

Ownership

What is important is that, in the curriculum, there be genuine negotiation that enables students to feel that they have initiated some of their activities and have taken on others and made them their own. "Ownership" is the word that Donald Graves (1982) uses to make the same point when discussing children's writings.

Wells has done research on helping children to make knowledge their own. His findings show that classroom situations provide an opportunity for learning if children are purposefully engaged. In such situations, language provides a means not only for acting in the world but also for reflecting on that action in an attempt to understand it.

Children contribute freely from their own experience. As they narrate these experiences to others, they are, perhaps for the first time, discovering their significance for themselves.

These are the conditions that foster language development: when someone has something important to say, and other people are interested in hearing it. It is then that language and thinking most fully interpenetrate in the struggle to make meanings that

capture what one has observed and understood and communicate that understanding to others (Wells).

Empowerment

Empowerment is a deeply personal process of meaning making within particular historical, cultural, and economic contexts (Sears, 1990).

The intent of empowering students is to enable them to recognize, create, and channel their own power. The learning environment must encourage active, responsible participants. One cannot enable students who act (or are expected to act) as passive receptors of another's power:

When students share the burden of the classroom dialectic, classrooms become incubators in which ideas are germinated, shared, nurtured, argued, acted upon, and often transformed by teacher and students alike (Spears, 1951, p. 18).

Research shows that young children's learning is enhanced when the children are engaged in interactive processes (Brown & Campione, 1984; Nelson, 1985; Rogoff, 1983; Wertsch, 1985). In addition to learning through trial and error, and observation, children gain a great deal socially and cognitively by interacting with each other, adults, and their environment (Katz, 1988).

Current research findings on young children's literacy behaviors that have emerged in recent years include works by Clay, 1979; Goodman, 1986; Graves, 1978; Harste, Woodward & Burke, 1984; Schickendanz, 1986; Sulzby, 1986; Taylor, 1983; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines, 1988; Taylor and Strickland, 1986.

Jana Staton's dialogue journal research (1980, 1982) studied the written dialogues that a sixth grade teacher sustained over the school year with each of her students.

Another important factor is the importance of the teacher's quality of listening. By listening attentively, by giving children her full attention, she indicates that what they have to say is important, that they have expertise that is of value. When the teacher asks a question, it is to be further informed, not to see if the child's answer conforms with her knowledge about the topic. By inviting other children to listen and ask questions in the same way, the teacher builds up in each child a feeling of self-respect and confidence in what he or she knows and can do and, at the same time, a feeling of respect for others as well.

Self Reflection

Donaldson (1978) states that children need to be helped to become more reflectively aware of what they already know and still need to know, so that they can gradually take over more and more responsibility for their own learning.

Initially, such reflection takes place through conversation--through dialogue with another, more knowledgeable person. But gradually, if children have many positive experiences of this kind, they begin to be able to frame questions and interrogate their own experience in the search for an answer. The dialogue begins to be carried on internally.

As far as learning is concerned, entry into school should not be thought of as a beginning, but as a transition to a more broadly based community and to a wider range of opportunities for meaning-making (Wells, 1990, p. 17).

All aspects of literacy develop simultaneously and interactively (Strickland, 1990). Children learn to read and write by simply reading, writing and responding to their reading and writing (Pappas & Brown, 1987). Literacy develops as students encounter many authentic or real literacy experiences in which they are able to approximate the real tasks of literacy (Cambourne, 1988).

Children learn to read, write, speak, listen and think as opposed to completing contrived exercises that involve marking, circling, and underlining exercises on worksheets.

Emergent Literacy

The new view of emergent literacy is the idea that children grow into reading and writing with no real beginning or ending point, that reading and writing develop concurrently and interrelatedly and according to no right sequence or order (Strickland, 1990; Teal & Sulzby, 1986).

Construction of Meaning

The process begins long before children enter school, through the activities and experiences in their everyday lives and through their interactions with peers and adults (Goodman, 1986; Harste, Woodward & Burke, 1984; Heath, 1983).

J. D. Cooper (1993) discusses principals for guiding the construction of meaning:

1. Reading, writing, speaking, listening and thinking develop simultaneously as learners grow into literacy. the major focus of instruction should be the development of activities that promote the authentic use of reading, writing, speaking, listening and thinking using real literature as the basis for learning.

2. Individuals learn to read and write by reading, writing and responding to their reading and writing. Through opportunities to respond to their reading and writing and to share their reading and writing with others, learners develop the skills and strategies of successful readers and writers. The opportunities to approximate real reading and writing help learners develop their abilities to read and write. This concept of learning parallels the way in which children acquire oral language (Halliday, 1975).

3. Prior knowledge and background are major elements in one's ability to construct meaning. The literacy program must incorporate instructional procedures that help learners activate or develop and relate that background to what they read as well as what they write.

4. Comprehension is the process of constructing meaning by relating ideas from a text to one's prior knowledge and background. The construction of meaning is a personal process (pp. 19-20).

Response Centered Classroom

Responding is a part of the natural process of constructing meaning. When a child responds to a piece of literature or his or her own writing, the child is using prior knowledge to construct meaning. Therefore, each person's construction is individual and personal, the result of the transaction between the reader and the text (Rosenblatt, 1991).

Students respond to literature or writing in a variety of ways. Applebee (1978) describes four responses that they make, each reflecting a different level of their thought processes:

1. Retelling--simple recall of the title and events
2. Summary--events are retold in order of importance
3. Analysis--the response is personal and subjective
for example: a student might respond 'This story is like what happened to me when . . .'
4. Generalization--the student is able to look into the theme or meaning of the story.

Applebee concludes that these responses are hierarchical in terms of age, suggesting for example, that younger children can only do retelling. This conclusion, however, has not been found to be true; even younger children can often make limited generalizations and analyze a story to some degree (Many, 1991).

Other researchers have also studied the literacy responses of elementary children and their relationship to comprehension (Eeds, 1989; Gambrell, 1986; Morrow, 1985). These studies indicate that encouraging personal responses is important in helping students learn to construct meaning. Kelly (1990) says, "Allowing students to respond to what they read or heard from a read-aloud provided the framework for what Piaget (in Gallagher & Reid, 1983) referred to as the active involvement in learning through the construction of meaning" (p. 470).

When children are given opportunities to function in a response centered classroom, they develop a sense of ownership, pride, and respect for learning (Hansen, 1987). They know that their responses will be valued and accepted by peers and teacher and in turn they learn to value the responses of their peers. This type of respect leads to a sense of community and ownership.

Nancie Atwell (1987), when discussing guidelines for teachers using the writing process in the classroom, states that the teacher should not tell writers what should be in their writing or, worse yet, write on their piece. Teachers should remember the centrality of ownership in students' growth as writers. The piece of writing belongs to the writer (p. 95).

Journal Writing. Students can be encouraged to respond in the classroom by using journals. Journals are booklets, notebooks, or folders where students keep personal reflections about their reading and writing. Many educators discuss the use of journals (Atwell, 1987; Harste et al., 1988; Weaver, 1990)

Basically, journals can be divided into five categories (Cooper, 1993):

1. Diaries: private records of personal observations, random jottings, or a daily record of thoughts and feelings. These are shared only if the student agrees.
2. Response Journals: sometimes called reading journals or literature logs. Used by students to keep a record of their personal reactions to, questions about, and reflections on what they read, view, write, or listen to.
3. Dialogue Journals: same basic purpose as the response journal except that the teacher reads and responds in writing to the student's responses.
4. Double-entry Journals: pages are divided into two parts. On the left hand side students make notes, list predictions, and draw diagrams before and during reading. On the right hand side, they respond to their reading.
5. Learning Logs: daily records of what students have learned (Harste, Short & Barke, 1988).

Regie Routman (1991) discusses the benefits of journal writing. Journals provide a nonthreatening place to explore learnings, feelings, happenings, and language through writing. "I see the power of personal writing as connecting what is significant in children's lives with what goes on in school. Personal journal writing can be a means of validating each child, of saying to each child that what goes on in your life is important, that what you think and feel is relevant, and that everyday events are the things writers write about. children are full of stories, regardless of their background" (p. 197).

Journal writing promotes fluency in reading. The very first reading that some young students do is their own writing. When that writing is transcribed, students read it

easily because it is their own language, the most predictable of all. Journals encourage risk taking because students know they will not be corrected or graded. They can write freely, exploring spellings, conventions, language and feelings. Journals encourage thinking about life and learning. Peter Stillman says, "Think of your journal as being a net for catching shining particles from the day" (Fulwiler, 1987, p. 80). Journal writing promotes thinking and makes it visible. Having to write thought--and learning processes--down forces the learner to recall, re-examine, and organize information. The teacher also sees what has been valued and understood or what the student is confused about. Journal writing provides a record so that years later, students can look back at their journals and see what was important to them and what they were thinking about at a particular stage in their lives.

Recent research and scholarship suggests that the informal language of journals is too important to ignore. Leading language scholars, including Vygotsky (1962) have argued that human beings find meaning in the world by exploring it through language--through their own easy talky language, not the language of textbooks and teachers (Fulwiler, 1987, p. 1).

Process Writing. Process writing (Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1983) is an approach to teaching writing that allows students to take charge of their own writing and learning. It involves five steps: selecting the topic (sometimes called planning or previewing), drafting (sometimes called composing), revising, proofreading (sometimes called editing), and publishing.

Invented Spelling. Cooper (1993), believes that process writing should begin in kindergarten. At this earliest level students will be at various developmental phases in their writing. Some will be at the picture-writing phase. As students progress, they will move into the random letter phase and then into the invented spelling phase in which they begin to associate some letters and sounds. Finally, they will reach the conventional writing phase, in which they will spell most words correctly. It is normal for children in any grade to be at varying points in these stages.

Perry & Hornsby (1985) discuss the developmental stages of spelling as described by Gentry (1982). There is a continuous development in spelling; the stages are not fixed or discrete. In fact, one piece of writing may show attempted spellings which slot into more than one stage.

1. **Precommunicative stage:** at this stage, the writing is not readable by others. There may be random strings of symbols (letters, numbers, or invented symbols). There is no indication of any knowledge of letter-sound correspondence.
2. **Semiphonetic stage:** Spelling at this stage is characterized by first attempts at letter-sound correspondence. It may be abbreviated, with only one or two letters (usually consonants) to represent a word, e.g. WK (walk), PO (piano), and S (saw). At this stage, children have great difficulty with vowels. the writing may display spaces between words.
3. **Phonetic spelling stage:** at this stage, the spelling is not standard, but the writing is meaningful and can usually be read by others. All essential sounds may be represented by letters, e.g. STIK (stick), TABL (table) and FLOR (floor).
4. **Transitional spelling stage:** vowels appear in every syllable, e.g. ELAFUNT. Common English letter sequences are used, e.g. MAIK and MAYK. Correct letters may be used but in the incorrect sequence, e.g. BECUASE (because) and PLIAN (plain). Learned words (those spelled correctly) generally appear more often.

5. Correct spelling stage: most of the words the speller wants to write are spelled correctly. The speller can often recognize when a work doesn't look right and can experiment with alternatives. A large reservoir of words is spelled automatically.

Perry and Hornsby emphasize that these "stages" are continuous and overlapping, and that one piece of writing may show attempted spellings at various stages.

When children write, they should be encouraged to use invented spelling--that is, to spell words the way they think they sound in their initial draft without worrying about correctness. A better term for this type of spelling might be temporary because it says to everyone concerned (teacher, parents, administrators) that this type of spelling is going to give way to correctness (Cooper).

Authorship

A review of the literature would not be complete without a discussion of "Authorship". The notion of authorship for this research is that authorship is the reflective generation of written text. Authors are people who make decisions; they take responsibility for the selection of what goes on the paper and are sensitive to the contexts in which they write, and to the audiences for whom they write. Children are reflective people and they usually act with serious intent; in other words children have reasons for the things they do. Children spend far more time writing stories than they do on any other type of text, yet other types of genres often make interesting intellectual demands upon children (Hall). Other genres would include: invitations, thank you notes, notes to friends/teacher, reflections on books read in class, math and science logs, and self-evaluations.

Authorship is an intensely interactive event. As children "author" they discuss, support, criticize, encourage, comment and analyze. They collaborate in highly effective and responsible ways when creating stories. In their writing, it is not the quality of the final text which is the important feature, but the process that the children go through. Practices which offer children the opportunity to take responsibility for their writing facilitate authorship and that authorship can only develop with experiences of authorship (Hall).

They may be inexperienced authors but nevertheless when generating texts they think about what they are doing, why they are doing it, and what they are going to do with it.

Calkins suggests that we must see writing in a new way. Learning to read children's writing in a new way means seeing the printed words as the tip of an iceberg and speculating what might lie under the surface, always looking for what it reveals about the writer.

Sloan (1991), and Livingston (1990), believe in the potential of the child as poet. Children can speak naturally in a form that adults are accustomed to call poetry. In children's talk and writing, abstractions are visualized and personalized. Logic and sequence are subordinated to the insights of metaphor and simile. Figures of speech are seen for what they are, direct means of expression, rather than ornaments of language (Sloan).

Child as Poet

The child, like the poet, works with sensory experience rather than abstractions: a child with a stomach ache complains that his stomach is "broken."

Other poetic devices--rhythm, alliteration, onomatopoeia are also natural elements of the child's own expression. An example of onomatopoeia would be the bike fell over into a big, muddy puddle--KSHHH!

Like poets, children are fascinated by all the marvelous things that words can do: how sounds mimic what is being described, how puns are possible, how language can be made to "natter, patter, chatter and prate" (Merriam, 1974, p. 4). A child's conversation with a bug might be:

"Hello bug wug, buggy, wuggy, bug, wug, glug."

Somehow we have to try, with the help of children, to read the world as it presents itself to them. Maxine Greene suggests that to live is to experience a situation in terms of meanings; and the best we can do is try to uncover, to come clear. Coming clear, disclosing, we can only refer to meanings we share and a language we share.

CHAPTER III

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

Introduction

In this chapter the researcher presents a description of the research. The components consist of: the theory and methodology that guided the study; the setting for the study, the source of the data, the procedures for collecting the data, the interpretation and reporting of the data, and a statement of professional integrity.

Theory and Methodology

Qualitative research produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. It refers to research about persons' lives, stories, and behaviors. There are many valid reasons for doing qualitative research. One reason is the nature of the research problem. Some areas of study naturally lend themselves more to qualitative types of research, for instance, research that attempts to uncover the nature of personal experience. These methods can give intricate details of phenomena that are difficult to convey with quantitative methods.

One form of qualitative research is ethnography. This descriptive form of field work has the following basic elements: (a) an initially exploratory and open-ended

approach to the research problem; (b) intensive involvement of the researcher in the social setting being studied; (c) the use of multiple research techniques; (d) an explicit attempt to understand events in terms of meanings held by those in the social setting; (e) an interpretive framework which emphasizes the important role of context in determining behavior and events (Knapp, 1985).

Researchers who do ethnography rely principally on observation, participant observation, and interview (Short, 1991). For the purposes of this research, two types of observation were utilized:

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION: The researcher focuses on a particular part of the day, setting, or social interaction and describes in detail exactly what is going on with the participants of the study.

SELECTIVE OBSERVATIONS: Used by the researcher to pinpoint exactly what needs to be documented regarding some component of the social setting. (Janesick, 1991)

A factor to keep in mind is that the researcher in this study will be in the role of participant observer. In participant observation, the observer actually becomes a part of, a participant in, the situation to be observed. There are, of course, degrees of participation, and observation may be overt or covert. In this research, the observation will be overt, the subjects will be aware of the study.

For this study, the researcher attempted to blend ethnography with another form of inquiry. Connelly and Clandinin (1991) speak of Narrative Inquiry: storied experience; "People lead storied lives and tell stories about those lives, while narrative researchers describe such lives, collect stories of them, and write narratives of experience" (p. 121).

Applebee's work (1978) is a resource on children's storytelling and children's expectations of story from teachers, texts, and others.

Hogan (1988) addresses several important issues in the research relationship: the equality between the participants, the caring situation and the feelings of connectedness between those being studied and the researcher. Noddings writes in a similar fashion stressing the importance of the teacher/learner relationship which equally applies to the researcher/participant relationship:

... we approach our goal by living with those whom we teach in a caring community through modeling, dialogue, practice and confirmation (p. 502).

The relationship must be one where the researcher and the participants both have voice.

Voice is meaning that resides in the individual and enables that individual to participate in a community...the struggle for voice begins when a person attempts to communicate meaning to someone else. Finding the words, speaking for oneself, and feeling heard by others are all a part of this process...voice suggests relationship: the individual's relationship to the meaning of her/his experience and hence, to language, and the individual's relationship to the other, since understanding is a social process (Britzman, 1989, p. 102).

Research Site

The research site for this study was an urban, independent, elementary school (K-5) with an enrollment of approximately 359 students. This particular site was chosen due to the fact that the researcher is employed to teach first grade at this location. This fact provided a natural entry for the researcher and also helped in the development of a close and caring relationship between the researcher and the participants (children in the class). The students felt comfortable and more secure dealing with a person that they live with

each and every day that they would with someone entering the classroom on a more limited basis. A community of learners evolved so that the researcher and the participants both had voice and true dialogue took place.

The community of learners selected for the study were students randomly assigned to the teacher/researcher's first grade classroom.

Data Source

The source of data for this research came from the children in the classroom. Their words, interpretations and world views constitute the framework of this study. Samples of the writing journeys were collected throughout the school year. These writing journeys consist of: (a) daily personal diary entries; both autobiographical and fictional, (b) assigned writing topics such as My Happiest or Saddest experience, I'm afraid when, My wish for the world, etc. (c) Journal entries where the student critiques literature read in the classroom, (d) Self-evaluation, and (e) Author's Chair where the student shares his/her literary and artistic creations with the class and the other students respond with questions or comments and suggestions.

A description of the environment, social setting and milieu of the classroom is included.

Data Collection

Observation and data collection began early in the school year and continued throughout the year. Emphasis was placed on the actual writings of the children and samples were copied.

I began by modeling my own writing or storytelling on the very first day of school. We gathered in a large circle and sat down on the carpeted floor. I simply started talking to the children about a personal experience that had happened to me one evening as I was walking along the path at Riverside Park. A mother duck was taking her 5 ducklings for a walk, but she was on the wrong side of a very busy four lane street. She was looking for a way to get across that busy street and back to the river. The traffic was moving rapidly and the drivers could not see the ducks. The only thing I could think of to do was to attempt to stop the cars and help the ducks across the street (one of the children interrupted at that point and said, "That's just like in Make Way For Ducklings")! So there I was standing in the middle of Riverside Drive, getting the cars to stop. Then I went over and shooed the little family across. They waddled across, then down the bank, and the last I saw of them they were swimming across the river in a straight line. I felt very good about having helped them.

I asked if anyone else had a story to tell and each child had a story to share. There were stories about pets, vacations, playing at the park, etc. Michael told me about finding a snake in his back yard:

"It scared me, it was under a board in our backyard. I ran to tell my dad. He came out with a gun and shot the snake. Dad said it was a bad snake."

After we had all shared our stories, we wrote our stories down in our diaries. Each morning there after, the students wrote in their personal journals or diaries for approximately 20 to 25 minutes. The journals were spiral notebooks labeled "My Diary." The children used pencils and crayons as their writing and drawing tools. Topics for journal writing were not assigned.

Students were allowed, even encouraged, to talk while writing in their journals and I circulated around the room in order to talk with the children about their writing. The students were encouraged to write without concern for corrections. I never made marks or wrote on their pages. the important thing was to get their thoughts or ideas down on paper. Each entry was dated.

Following writing time, I would announce sharing time, and small groups of children would share their journal entries with the class. An Authors' Chair served as the place for students to share their journals. At the conclusion of each author's sharing, the students were encouraged to ask questions or make comments about the entries. On occasion, I would also ask questions or make comments.

All participants were treated equally, there were no control groups. The work studied was the normal assignments. The curriculum followed was the same whether the research was being conducted or not. There was no comparison of students. No quantitative data was gathered; such as test scores or grading. There were no questionnaires or other written instruments. The researcher took field notes on some classroom activities.

Data Analysis

An inductive analysis approach was used in reporting the data. Inductive analysis means that the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data; they emerge out of the data rather than being decided prior to data collection and analysis.

The objective of analysis is to determine the categories, relationship and assumptions that informs the respondent's view of the world. Movement is from the

particular to the general (McCracken, 1980). As the investigator works through the data, certain avenues will emerge. The parts of the data should be marked as such, but the investigator must resist the temptation to follow them and neglect other possibilities. The investigator must be prepared to postpone generalities for later stages of the analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1965). Movement is from the particular to the general. How does one recognize patterns in qualitative data and turn those patterns into meaningful categories? Guba (1978) suggests that in focusing the analysis of qualitative data an evaluator must deal first with the problem of convergence. The problem of convergence is figuring out what things fit together. This leads to a classification system for the data. This was accomplished by reading and re-reading the writings of the children several times. Each time I made comments in the margins concerning the content of the entries. These observations from each transcript were then compared to the other transcripts or writing of the children. I looked for intertheme consistency and the following themes emerged: sadness, happiness, anger, fear, personal satisfaction, being hurt, expectations, family, relatives, friends, birth, death, sickness, and pets.

The evaluator must also deal with the problem of divergence; how to flesh out the categories. This is accomplished by the processes of extension (building on items of information already known, bridging (making connections among different items), and surfacing (proposing new information that ought to fit and then verifying its existence).

The process of data analysis is to a major extent intuitive. This effort at uncovering patterns, themes, and categories is a creative process that requires making carefully considered judgements about what is really significant and meaningful in the data. Since qualitative analysis does not involve statistical tests, the analyst must rely on his/her

own intelligence, experience and judgement. Data analysis may be defined as a process of "making sense" of field data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Limitations of the Study

Qualitative research requires the collecting of a large quantity of data. It is time consuming, not only to collect the data but to sift through the material to determine what is important. As a participant/observer/teacher, I discovered that it was difficult to find the time to make copies of the students' work (this was accomplished after school or with the help of a teacher assistant). Storage of the data was another problem. I used a file for each student with a cover sheet showing when the data was collected. This system helped assure that each student was represented in the research.

The attitude of the teacher is also an important factor in this research. The teacher must be willing to spend a good portion of class time on the writing and sharing process. The teacher must believe in the importance of writing and in the autonomy of the children.

I strongly believe that all children have stories to tell, but I would not suggest that the themes discovered in this study be generalized to a larger population.

Statement of Professional Integrity

This study was undertaken with the full knowledge that all researchers and their research are biased. By the very questions we ask, we are predetermining what is to be looked for. I attempted to be sensitive to this fact throughout the research. I tried to allow the data to guide me in the formulation of outcomes.

Another important factor that must be taken into consideration is the fact that I am dealing with young children, ages 6-7, in the research. Written parental permission was obtained for using not only the actual work of the children but also the name of each child. A copy of the form used is enclosed. I also held individual conferences with the parents to explain the scope and sequence of the study.

Qualitative research brings one into close and prolonged proximity with the people studied. An important area of concern is the question of confidentiality which is magnified in qualitative research because of the position of trust which the researcher aims to develop, and because research on a small scale makes individuals much more easily identifiable (Finch 1985).

Factors to keep in mind for this research are:

All participants were treated equally, there were no control group.

The work studied was the "normal" classroom assignments. The curriculum followed was the same whether the research was done or not. The researcher was an overt participant observer; the children knew that notes and samples were being taken.

The "raw" data collected was for the eyes of the researcher only, nothing that is embarrassing or threatening, the data evolved from normal class activities.

There were no comparisons made of students or quantitative data taken such as test scores or grading, etc.

One area of potentially sensitive material might be the daily journal entries when the children may write about personal experiences at home or elsewhere. The children were told that if they write about something they wish to keep private (confidences, trusted or privileged information, secrets, etc.) they were to turn down the corner of that page and it would not be used and/or shared with the class. Even with this precaution, the names of the children were changed to protect their anonymity.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Landscapes of the Mind: Process/Emerging

Meanings

Outfields

I went out to see the Indian grave
my grandfather told me about
at the edge of the woods
near the burning field.

I picked off the leaves and stones
that covered the mound
and dug all afternoon
until the woods grew dark
and the kitchen light of the house
behind me came on.

I expected to find jewels,
pots and arrows or an Indian headdress
with feathers in it.

Except for the dirt
that filtered through my hands,
the grave was empty.
(Heard, 1993, p. 116)

This poem is an appropriate metaphor for the need to dig through layers to search for meaning or truth. In this chapter, the intent is to dig through layer to search for the emerging meanings as discovered by children.

Environment

I will begin by describing the environment and atmosphere of the classroom where this study takes place. It is a classroom filled with the fascinations of the world.

A parent said, "The room makes me think of my grandmother's attic or a comfortable bedroom filled with treasures yet to be discovered." In the room there is an Indian Totem Pole made by the students, a sofa where they can curl up with a good book, an area where they can write down wonderings and questions they have about their lives, the world, anything they want to know and also tell the daily news of their own personal lives.

There is a framed part of a window where the children can look outside, daydream, observe the world outside and write down what they saw--maybe a splash of red when the resident cardinals feed at our birdfeeder, or a deer leaping across the playground area or even a curious fox coming to feed close to the building.

There is a discovery center filled with milkweed pods, shells, birds' nests, cow skulls, feathers, seeds, bamboo shoots, magnets, weighing scales, and items that the children bring in that they are free to explore and to write observations about.

A listening center is set up where the children can listen to their favorite stories on tape or make their own recordings, a writing and illustrating center where the children create their own stories to publish as books.

The classroom is also filled with a richness of print! Posters adorn the ceiling and walls that contain words and phrases that bring the world of language to life for the children: such as "The Sand Diego Zoo Is A Swinging Place To Be" (with the picture of a

monkey swinging through the trees), "Be A Readasaurus" (with the picture of a mother dinosaur holding her baby on her lap while reading a book), "Everything I need to Know About Life I learned From My Teddy Bear", and examples of "Save the Earth" and endangered species posters to name just a few.

In one corner of the classroom an eight foot long fishing net is suspended from the ceiling which contains a variety of stuffed animals which pertain to different themes studied throughout the year; anything from a crab to an orangutan can be found in that net.

Bookshelves are filled, not only with children's literature, but also with a collection of Teddy Bears that over the years each class has added to. The bears must number 50 or more by now.

There is also a collection of hand puppets which I have collected and use when reading stories to the class or when we act out plays or skits.

On one counter, by the sink, there is a grow light so that we are able to grow plants in the classroom, have a terrarium or have Hermit Crab come to call, even lizards and snakes.

We are lucky in the fact that our room is fully carpeted and at any time during the day students may be stretched out on the floor reading to a partner or working a puzzle or just looking at one of the posters on the ceiling.

Another important thing that a person notices upon entering this room is that there are table lamps arranged around the room. One is a "Winnie-the-Pooh" lamp and there is

also a red dinosaur lamp and one made out of a tin with a "Ringling Brother's Circus" scene on it. These lamps soften the atmosphere and make it truly comforting and relaxing.

Within this rich, abundant environment, the words and meanings or understandings of the children evolve.

Contextual Worlds of Childhood

The contextual world of childhood/children's knowledge is not available for the asking. We do not know how they think about the world. We can only make tentative interpretations based on our observations of children as they go about their daily lives (Taylor, 1993)

Whether it is an apartment building on a busy street or a farmhouse on a country dirt road, the contextual worlds of childhood begin wherever the young child lives. A very small place is home. It is a place filled with an abundance of objects, images, and impressions, where nothing is trivial and details are not so much irrationally irrelevant as irrationally significant. In this place the child experiences a sense of wonder at the freakiness of 'ordinary' events and an intense interest in the magic of plain and simple things. From these experiences of the intimate detail in a very small place, each child (that is afforded the opportunity) creates an authentic foundation for his or her own existence (Coe, 1984, p. 15).

Taylor encourages teachers to save all the little scraps each child writes, pictures and letters they do at home to give to the teacher, signs or lists made during class or play time along with the more formal examples of writing such as journals and stories. Put together, these provide an indispensable glimpse into each child's understanding of the world around them.

Emphasis will be placed on the journal writing of the children. Journal writing is a journey, a journey from one moment to the next, from one entry to the next. This journey of telling our own stories is a way to impose form upon our often chaotic experiences (Grumet, 1988) and in the process to develop our own voice.

Listening to our own stories is a way for us to nourish, encourage, and sustain ourselves (Howe, 1984), to enter into a caring relationship with all the parts of ourself (Noddings, 1984).

Telling our stories through journal writing becomes a quest for understanding and integration, a bridging of the inner mindscape and the outer landscape (Cooper, 1993, p. 99).

Journals allow us to examine our own experiences, to gain a fresh perspective, and by that means begin to transform the experiences themselves.

Inner and Outer Mindscapes

The quest for understanding and integration or the bridging of the inner mindscape and the outer landscape will begin with the writing of Angela. I have chosen to follow the writings of each child as they evolved during the journey from one moment to the next, from one entry to the next.

Angela

October 5. I was happy when I found out my uncle was coming he lives in Syria his name is Shahoud hes never saw me before hes only saw my picture when I was little he is nice And he knows MY Name.

October 7. I saw eight goats up on our mountain. I saw one calf. But I havent saw the pigs on our mountain but I want to see the pigs.

October 8. We rented some more movies. One is called Jungle Book and Where The red fern grows.

October 20. I am going to call Kimberly today I might spind the night with her I will ask my mom and she will her mom I like Kimberly She is nice I will play with her She gos to my school it is call Chouteau

October 21. The pumpkin looked liked it was aten some more by something I saw cracks on the pumpkin the cracks were a peach color I like pumkin I like pumpkin pie.

October 26. One day my big sister went to my next door neighbors house and she came back and told me and my family what they told her they told her that they wher garthbrooks uncle and aunt I was happy when she told me my sister is nice and my family is nice and my baby sister is cute my brother is mean.

October 27. along time ago I was happy when my mom came home from the hospital she had a Baby girl she named her Charm because three for a charm is what my mom said She is two months old now her Birthday is October second she is cute when she was little and she is still cute she likes to resel with me but shes not very hard.

October 28. I liked going to my grand pas family reunion My brother played in the water fountain whil I was eating oreo cookies I went out in the feild and I watched my big sister Dream she ran in a race she won They said she would get a surprise when

she went to the girl who had the surprise but it was really a handshake The End.

October 29. I like everybody in the Whole Wide World.

November 2. when i was down stairs my sister was looking in her drary (diary) box It dumped over and she put her hand on the bookcase and bended over to pick it up and I was sitting on the floor and fell on my head I cried and it hert a lot

November 3. I went to vote today my mom voted for Bill Clinton My mom had to fil out some aroes (arrows) in the middle I watched her al day when we left she got a sticker.

November 4. my Birthday is tomorrow I will be seven years old It will be November fifth I am happy and I Am Not going to have a Party the end

November 5. Along time ago I went to Stillwater it was far away from my house I went to see my uncle Kenny on the way there I rode in my moms car and on the way back I rode in my uncl'es car I love my uncle

November 6. A long time ago my grandpa watched me and my little sister.

November 9. I was out side waveing to my sisters friend I didn't have shoes on and around the trash can there was glass I cut my foot I (It) was a Big Piece of green glass I ran in to the house I went to the hospital It was nt fun I got stiches I (It) stung when they put stickey stuff on my Big toe The end

November 11. she hops up to the top and makes a noise and moves this I want to call him Thumper that would be a good name sense we dont know the name Mrs Frie named him he has brown eyes around his eye it looks like some body punched him she

eats alot And I hope she can come out of the cage She has Black ears And on her back there is Black Spots he scraches his fur alot She drinks alot to She wiggles

November 18. I like Mrs. Timmons She tells us stories in the classroom. I like the stories Mrs. Timmons reads us. The end

December 2. I put my Christmas Tree up it was fun My mom wraped a christmas present my brother went in my moms room and opened it it was anintendo it has a tape and a gun for the Duck hunt I like Mario Better then duck hunt it is fun to play with I have played anintendo Before at my sisters friends house The end

December 3. My grandmas is coming from Syria I like my grandma alot

December 4. my Mom entered me in two coloring contests. One was with a soldier and a Christmas tree The other one was a Bear hanging from a Christmas Tree I havent colored the Bear on the Christmas Tree But I will when I get to my house The end

December 7. My sister is in the hospital I am sad I like my sister She is in Saint Johns hospital They took her apendix out My sister Threw up 3 times yesterday I went to see my sister me and my little sister made cards for my Big sister

December 10. I like Mrs. Smith She is pretty She is my teacher You make the number fourty with four tens and zero ones.

December 21. My mom got hit by a car. She dropped my sister. My mom hurt her ankle. While me and my Dad and sister was at home. I didnt like it. She didnt have to go to the hospital.

December 22. Today is our Party. Me my mom and sister made Santa Claus Bags. I put candy in them. Mrs. Smith opened presents. She got a Bell from Whitney I like Mrs. Smith.

January 4. My grandma and my uncle were coming from Syria to see my family.

April 1. today my mom is inrolling me in modeling. it will be fun. I might get on a comertial. my sister is going to model to. we half to model in bathing suits and Bakines. We get payed. i don't know how much we get payed.

April 2. we watched ninga turtles three it was funny

April 3. at the end a man got electrequeted his hair flew up it was funny that day was her Birthday she got 37 dollars we hade a chocolate cake at the park But the icing melted the icing was vanilla i hate icing icing isn't good I like chocolate cake chocolate is my favorite

April 14. Once upon a time there was a easter bunny her name is thumper she paints easter eggs she is nice

May 4. In the summer my mom is taking me to Sanantonio texas i am going to Buy Eric Carle Books i like Eric Carle he is my favorite author Mrs. Smith went there last week she said it was a pretty city i like Books and sanantonio texas eric carle published a lot of Books i like all of them i am going to get a lot of eric carle Books eric carle draws good he is nice he will sign some of the Books i get my favorite eric carle book is the Very Quiet Cricket and all the rest of them.

May 5. today we are cooking stone soup we are going to eat it when it is finished cooking it has carrots, potatoes, celery, salt, pepper, apple juice, meat balls, onions. it will be good Dr. Burk might come and eat with us Mrs. heavener and Mrs Smith are cooking it NOW! Michael K. burnt his right arm it hurt him he burnt it on the pot the soup smells good and it will be good i want to eat it right now i brought a patote for the stone soup i like smelly stone soup it is good we are eating it in the classroom

May 6. Today the fire fighting clowns are coming they are funny i dont know what the fire fighting clowns names are i like clowns i saw them at the circus with my sister and other people that are in clas at my church

May 11. Once upon a time there was a clock and a neetle they were Best friends they had fun together and then they werent best friends anymore

May 18. In two days we are going to the zoo we are going to have fun i am going with my class we half to bring sack lunches i like the zoo we are going to put money in a machine to save the rain forest and we are going to look at a lot of amamials at the zoo a lot of parents are coming with thier kids The end

May 19. Saturday my uncle came he is a police officer his name is Billy he tied me up to a pole he locked one handcuff to one hand and put the chane around the pole and locked the other hand cuff to the other hand they were real hand cuffs my uncle is nice The end

May 21. yesterday we went to the zoo i saw lots of anamials called elephants, turtles, fishes, giraffes, zebras, polar bear, Deer, Tocan, sloth, camel, horse, Donkey and i

might be on the sunday newspaper petting a horse on its nose the horses name is goldie i like the zoo it is FUN i rode the train with Kim and her sister and her mom

May 24. friday my sister won the math fest She won aginsed 55 elementary schools She won 3 red 2nd place ribbons and she won a purple Ribbon and a black and a real gold metal and a first place Blue ribbon and i think she got 1 3rd place ribbon she did good she won the black and the purple ribbon and metal for winning the math fest the end

Researcher: several categories or themes emerged in Angela's writing. Family must be important to her because the topic appears frequently. She writes about her uncle and grandmother coming to visit all the way from Syria (this led to a class discussion of where Syria was on the world map and Angela brought in some family heirlooms to share with the class).

Angela also wrote about pets, she liked our class rabbit even if she was a little frightened of Thumper.

On several occasions she wrote about getting hurt. She cut her foot on a piece of glass and her sister dropped something on her head. Angela was very concerned when her sister had to go to the hospital. I remember the day it happened, as soon as Angela walked into the classroom, it was all she could talk about.

Calvin

April 22. I like bassboll to play bassboll I rilley like bassboll its fon the boll herts somtimes but I stel like to play tho its rilley fon to play bassboll

We are playing the Bers I hop we wen brother then--the Bers bete us I dot thenk so We wer (wear) bluw sots (blue socks) and gray pants

We are predey god (good) thes yer I like bassBoll thes yer We are rilley God and we have better players thes yer and weve playd 2 temes (teams).

May 5. my Dad is seke (sick) He hase the same thing I had I fele sadrey (sorry) for Hem I rele relle do He thro up and I cotet (couldn't) stand it and I Has to slep down and my mom ded to and my Dad slep up sters Wen I woke up He was stel seke (sick) and He at one pess (piece) of tost and som 7 up and thats it my mom bot a 7 up Botel for my Dad and me

May 6. I like wen the Pless (police) came to ore scool Tha had a Mountorcycles (motorcycle) and Horses and a Pless car Pless officer Charlie let os get in the car and we got to see in a Pless officer cal it wos fon to do that it is fon to see officer Charlie He is niss to see

May 14. I like wen Im gowing to a Hotel tomorrow We are going in a car and we are gowing to spend the nite.

May 18. We playd a Bassboll Game we Wine We plad the Marktwan Tigers Caleb cote (caught) a flay (fly) boll so dod Mike too the boll never came to me

May 15. I lik wen I got to play Ball Amy Bowon has Never het a Homroon we felmley (finally) she het a Homroon I wos proud of her and She had my Bat She wos Prowd of her Self too and my Dad wos seding (sending) her Home No mater wot and She made it and made a home roon I got in She got in I wos relly Prowd of Her

I sole (saw) the hole thing I likt it it wos the best homeron Ive ever sen Her hole famley was proud of her So wos her Dad and mom was proud of her too and so wos I

May 26. I like wen Calab came over to play Bassboll tonit we have a game Dr. Berk and Mrs. Maslaka are coming to it and it wel be fun to come to it and to play it

Researcher: In Calvin's writings we can see that baseball is important to him. His father is coach of the team, in fact, the whole family is involved. I attended several of the games--the team thought that I was their good luck charm because they won when I was there. That put a great deal of pressure on me.

Calvin talks about his friends in relation to baseball, too. He was very excited for Amy when she hit her first home run and his best friend was on the team. There tended to be a little competition between them for certain positions.

Casandra

December 2. I wint to my grands grav all it wos a pil (pile) uv (of) dert I crid and their were flowers

December 3. I am gong to tak Machree home intil Christmas I mit pik her up to I lik dooing that Machree is hape too so am I Me and Machree like shering the sam books We play together Me and Machree like it

January 4. My Mon is olwas sick on christmas this Christmas my Mom had a sor tooth Last Christmas she had strep throt

January 5. My baby cousin spit (spent) the nit - his nam is Shanw He Crid. a lot But it ws still Fun. He ws cring because He did not git his milk evre 5 mimis. He ws Lawd.

January 12. I like win Kevin Kam back to School Because He had Chicinpokp I wuss Sad for Kevin He misst 2 weks I mist him so did uther ciss Kevin is happye too be bake

March 17. I am giting a rabbit today becuse the Latey (lady) that hade rabbits wus not home yet I wil be happy win I git it Befor I git the rabbit I wil go to Browneys Browneys is a gerl skowt (girl scout) But win I git home I wil git the rabbit the rabbit wil be grae

March 18. I have the rabbit now I am Happy that I hav the rabbit it is a gerl Ii is in my Dad's room in a kage Before I go to sleep I sa good night too her She is my Dad's rabbit. My Dad loves her she is koot We wit too a Latey's howe (lady's house) too git the rabbit She is a lot uf fun We wil always love her Her name is Cleo it is a lot of fun too play with Her

May 5. My Dad. My Dad is nice to Me He Loves ma. My Dad has blond here He has blue eyes His favorit culer is green He loves My Brother and my mom He loves everbutey in my famalee

May 19. Wer going to the zoo toomoro We will hav fun tomoro We hafto breing sack luchis. Mrs. Smith is macing us a paretur (partner) We will stae whit are paretur toomoroe it will be fun too go to the zoo My mom is not cuming to the zoo with me becuse she hast to disect sharecks (sharks) I like are class

Researcher: The themes of death, family, pets and expectations (getting a rabbit and going to the zoo) emerged in Casandra's writings. She brought the rabbit to school to show to the class. the rabbit was gray and Casandra had not decided on the name for the rabbit. The children made several suggestions and Cleo was chosen.

Jennifer

October 12. Yestrday I wint to the fair and I got to go on the Baosehaws (? house) and I got a Carnival Apl

October 14. One tim I got a Chameleon. And it trrd (turned) red. And I fowd the Chameleon livs in Wodr and Rocs. Win my dad was fishingd.

October 26. I likt having Bac to Scool Nit and being the Tehtrs (teachers) fr aar pares (for our parents)

October 26. im going to be a gost on halloween im going to be big and white i like halloween

October 27. My Mommy is going to Rusha (Russia) im sad I hop she is kaming bac sone (soon) I Love MY Mommy

October 28. I like to play Tether Bol Caleb hit me in the stamick (stomach).

November 5. I liked wen we hrd (heard) Angel C's name on the inrkom (intercom). it was fun it is Angl C. Brthday Im glad

Novemer 6. and now it is Michael B.s Brthday Michael B. r olmost twons with Angel C.

November 10. I wish my Mommy wold kum hom (home) she is kuming holm in five days I'm glad She is nis I like my dad to he is nis he pikcs me up fam (from) school I love my Mom She went to Rusha I'm Happy she is kuming hlom son I mist hr She mist me She Helps other pepl She mad (made) two fn (phone) kols a wek aftr she left

November 11. I like to go to school I wish my Mommy kod pick me up fam school because som time My dad is late wine she kums holm we will hav hre Brthday She will be faurd three (forty three)

November 17. I Love having my mom hom I was Happy she brot hom some peprmet cande

November 23. Last nite me and my dad mad two gint (giant) snow-bolls I chrid (tried) to lift it up I kod not I was cold My sister thro litle snow bolls We had fun My baby sister Nadeida She had fun to I mad a Angel

December 1. today my mom got a job it is Hipecy I'm sad i cryd in my bed last nit i dint wat my dad to peck me up Lori is going to peck me up

December 2. Whitney is tacks me to s School and bak it is fun Whitney is my Friend She is tacking me Hom intil christmas

December 9. I strtid (started) soing (sewing) my eilefinte (elephant) it is gray it is Fun it is hrde But I did it

December 10. I have nthing to rit a bowt. Thakyou were mache (much). Marre Christmas. 7 is a stopid numbr.

December 11. last Nit I had a stif nek it hrted I kod not mob my hed kod not mov I cryd I kod not wake my mom hellpd me wake this moning

December 15. We wocht Big Berk gos to China it mad me cindav (kind of) Sad and Happy to. I like the phoenix berd.

December 17. To day We r going to a program it is going to be Fun We r going to seinge Rodof the Red Nosed RanDer. I'm Happy.

December 18. I liked whine we whint to the Christmas Program My Mom and mys sister r kaming My Grandma is coming to It is fun I'm Happy.

December 21. Der Santa I want a Kitten for Christmas and a Dog how hav you ben Mrs. Santa.

January 8. Yesterday we let Thumper out of Her cag to play. it was fun. She let Caled Pet Her I was kind of skerd. The rabit olmost let Amber hold her at reding srkl (circle) She ran undr the table one.

January 14. toDay we let thumper owt of hre kag She let me pet hre. I felt Happy Thumper felt Happy to

Janaury 20. I hated being Apsint yesterday I was Sik. I Did Not lik bing sik.

Febraury 17. Yesterday I wint to my aunts house My Aunts Name is dian. I playd with my cousins My cousins names r dani and david and sosy and kerl

February 18. I playd chas and ples with my sousis I had fun playing with my Sousins My Mom can with me my mom is BabySiting my Cousins because ther Mom and dad wint on a trip

March 18. Yesterday my dad fownd a Baby Pigin it fel out of its nest My dad cod not find its nest My dad tok it hom He let Me hold it it fel a slep and wen I wok up this moring it did (died) but I fed it and I dont now why it did it was gray and yellow it

was kut (cute) win the baby Pigin was aliv My baby sister was crase abowt the baby Pigin
Im sad it did The End

April 1. today is April Fols day Im triing to thingk of a trik to play on Mrs. Smith
I mite say you hav a Bug in yor her (hair) it will be fen

May 1. yesterday my rel little sister got the chekin Pokes (chicken pox) She cryd
I was dad win I went to school She was crying My mom had to go to work and she cryd

May 25. today I got the Rain Forest Book it was Funny because it shod a
munkeys botim

Researcher: Jennifer had difficulty dealing with her mom going to Russia. She wrote several times in her diary about this topic. When her mom finally came home Jennifer was very happy--but then her mom took a job! This made Jennifer very sad. Now she would have to share her mom with other people again. Jennifer was able to deal with her feelings honestly in her writing. She wrote about being happy. She was happy being in the Christmas program and she was happy when Thumper let her pet her. There were sad times besides those having to do with her mom. Her little sister got chicken pox and then there was the entry about the death of the baby pigeon.

Ted

August 18. I almost reld (reeled) in a allgaeter gar

August 19. I cot (cought) a big drum

August 22. Me and my brother went in the back yard and theo (threw) around the
football

August 23. I have a dog his name is Lassie

August 24. Win I was on vaekaisin (vacation) the truckss will (wheel) fell off and the car ran down.

August 25. Wen we wnt on vacashen my Dad and Granpaw was going to camp owt but thae had to stay at the cabin and fix the car and truck

August 26. today win it was rainen in the front it was poring and in the back not a drop of rane and win I was going to chall (school) it pord on us

August 29. awaes (always) my Dad baroed the lonmoer (lawnmower) but senday he breod (broke) it. So he had to by my granpaw a new oen and it has whit and it has big back wils (wheels)

August 30. and win the lonmoer runs over grass grass gos evereewere and win grass gos evereewere it spred the yard

August 31. Wen my dad broke the oed (old) lonmoer it was red and it is in the front yard but the new lonmoer was good

September 1. but then wene we went to get the Lonmoer I got to carere (carry) the gassaleen (gasoline).

September 6. My brother has a football i have a nerf football i lost it a long time ago and my brother found it

September 7. and now i play with it a lot and it is brock (broke) some on the top and i can throe it far and i like it

September 8. wen my broth was 7 he went to go get a dreick (drink) of watter and he jumpt off his bed and the fan hit him and i was 2 i sed (said) to mom Micael hert his hed. and then wallct (walked) owae (away)

September 9. A few days ago my broter got him a peess (piece) of bred and he for got to clos it and a fly got in it so we gave it to Lassie and when i wasent out there michael hodit up a peess of bred and Lasie jumnd up and got it

September 12. yessterday my mom gave me some bread to feed to Lassie i toock out a peas of bread and he chargd after it

September 13. i went to florda (Florida) i toock my Winie and i like him and i make him do flips he is a fun ber.

September 14. My Winie is tuf he is a good firend he will nock you flat on the flor he is so good you will be soarre (sorry) that you mest with him

September 16. yesterday my grama cleened my room and it is sparcklly and she fownd my winees shirt and it is red and has no sleevs

September 19. evreday i play with my winie i like him and i can make him pareachout (parachute) with his shirt and win i flip him his shirt sometimes fols off and he is a fun bear

September 21. I had a fun time at back to school nite it was so much fun i liked it it was varee fun.

September 23. wen I wrot about my winie in my Diare I not onlee have one winie I have too winies I will write abowt my other winie to marow in my Diare

September 26. in the weekind my winie got lost and he is orange he hewss (used) to have a shirt icksept (except) I lost it to

September 27. I am going to the fare and I have a ride that I relie like and last yere I cold not ried it beecos thae had sins (signs) up beasas it was 4 feet hi.

September 28. yesterday I fownd my Winie he likess that I fond him so dos my other Winie so do I.

September 29. I love my winie I am taeking him to school I realey love him

September 30. I toock my winei to school he is a good Bear he is orange he is a vere good Bear.

October 3. I brot some Bird Feed to School and I brot buttins thay are for miss Smith so is the Bird Seed and I forgot wat store I got them at

October 4. I may haf to make my own costoom (costume) becos my mom will only by it if its 5 doler (dollars) or less

October 6. I am going to make my own cosstoom for Halloween and I have done some of it and ime going be a nigea (ninja)

October 7. and the part of it that I have finished is purpl it gose on my hed and it stase (stays) on my head

October 10. I desided not to be a ninga I forgot the person that I was going to be for halloween I will figer (figure) out wen I go home and I will write it in my Diare tomarow. and it has wepin equitmit (weapon equipment)

October 11. and the kind of wepin equitmit that is has is a boe 3 boe and aarows
 (bow and arrows) it has a gun and gun dartss and a nife a compis reil bonockalers
 (binoculars) and a band that tis on my head and the name of the kit is Avincher Hearo
 (Adventure Heor)

October 12-Columbus Day. my broth has a avencher heoro to and woe (one) day
 he shot woe of his boe and aarows in a tree he shot a nother won up therr to get it down
 put (but) it wint in our next or (door) nabers backyard he shot 2 gun darts won went in
 are nexter nabers back yard the nexternabers roof

October 14. I am bring my Aotobiography monday it will have pitcher's pitcher's
 pitcher's and riting riting riting you will love it

October 17. Saterdag I was on my swingset I donte no wot this swing is calld but
 I fell out of it and did a flip and ladid on my stomek it nockt the wind out of me it also
 cut my thum. I turned around that swing came at me and I fated (flattened) and the swing
 berlee mist me

October 18. I deesidid not to be a avintrer heroe I am going to be a cookie for
 halloween it will have a bit in it heas (here's) how it looks

October 19. I like mis smith becos she has hondrid (hundreds) of bear's my favrit
 won is brown bear thats wy I like her.

October 24. I have a frind his name is carmen he is a good frind I like him he is
 my frind

October 25. I panted (painted) a pumpkin at cub Scowts it had Black and red ies (eyes) blue iebrows black hare yellow ears and mouth and Blue pueples (pupils)

October 26. wonce agin I lost my winie my mom baby sets now she has to girls to baby set won tackses a nap on my bed she sleeps with my winie luckuly i found my winie

October 28. I like playing with my dog. I haf to feed him. oen day I was playing in the yard I was sher (sure) I was going to feed him but I forgot I had to go back outside and feed him

October 31. A long time ago I had a yellow house wen I was 4 months old I think we moved away from it the end.

November 7. I hate wen I forget to feed the dog becos at night wen its dark I haf to go out and feed him and I RELEY HATE IT!

November 8. my indian name is fire fox I like that name I picked that name out my self. thanck you

November 14. my mom makes deleshes (delicious) cookies thae are so good to eat I cood eat them in five seckods (seconds) THAE ARE SO GOOD they are cold (called) OET MEL COOKIS!

November 21. It was dark and night AND I forgot to feed the dog! and my Brother forgot to water the dog and tack out the trash We were scared outside we worcked together we both toock out the trash we both water the dog we both fed the dog then we ran in the house shut the dor to fast and he hert my finger

November 23. we are going to philbrook-museum (Philbrook) to see are (our) Generbred (Gingerbread) house and on the bus if 3 poipl (people) get to set by each other I hope my partners are carmen and Steven

November 28. wednesday we went to Philbrook-museum then Friday my mom took me back to Philbrood we saw all of the museum then we went in the back yard when we were leaving we saw Dr Burkel

November 30. I'm glad beacos Crismas is coming and I know wy we have crismas. becos it's Jesus's Birthday. that's wy we have crismas.

December 5. saturday I am going to my uncul (uncle) Bob's to go in the moutens to get some rocks and my own crismis tree and I got my own lights to put on my crimis tree

December 14. I want to go to Mexico so I can Speack spanish I know some spanish words are redeg like grawseis Bornistdeis bornistnochis bornist tawtis that is the spanish I now.

December 16. I know some more spanish words like uno dos tres cuatro cinco seis siete oche nueve diez amarillo

December 19. I like being line leader becos you get to carry the flag around and I like the Flag becos it is a teddy bear flag

December 20. I'm glad the Program is here Becos I like doing the Mexican hat dance That's wy I'm glad the Program is here

December 21. today mrs Hammin's read us this book and then after the other books she had a song on the Book and she playd that song on the peyano (piano) and we liked the song and she let some of us play the peyan.

Researcher: Topics that emerge in Ted's writing include family pets and expectations. Halloween was very important to him, what was he going to be? This was a major decision for him and he changed his mind several times about his costume. He wanted it to be just right. Ted took his school work very seriously, also. He wanted to do his best on everything and he would get upset if everything was not just right.

Another strong topic in his writing was fear of the dark. He would go to great lengths to be sure that if he did have to go outside when it was dark that his older brother would go along with him.

Bella

October 28. My dog soosey did (died) because she had and atak I ben kring (crying) because she did rit in my hens (hands) I love soosey shes my favet dog poor soosey I Love you soosey she wet (went) to Dog Heven

November 3. I went to visit my mom at the hospital. She came home my mom is feeling better. I help her by dooing the deshes for her I Love you mom I tod (told) you that I Love you mom I just wutt (want) you to no (know) that I love you

January 20. we are omost to 100 rit now we are on the 89 Day wen we are on the 100 day of school we well have a prde at School we dot (don't) wut (want) to stay home all dy log because I wut to have a prtey at school. Because my favret teshr (teacher) mess smeth and mess Hevnr gets the goodes and cedey (candy) pop and cookies.

April 6. today is the 136 I AM prod (proud) of my self because I am the letr (leader) at my tabl next Monday Kiven well be the letr at my tabl then Machree Good By.

Researcher: Death of a pet was a frequent theme found in the diaries of the children. Bella felt the loss of her dog deeply. Tears were in her eyes as she read the entry about "Soosey" to the class. She comforted herself by saying that Soosey was in Dog Heaven.

Diane

November 17. Katey cam to my house to stay the nit It was fun becus I stuck my ster (sister) in the trach can She sremd (screamed) her name is Trace My mom poost (pushed) her owt afer she wus mad yes she wus. I and Katey wus lafen (laughing) It wus a fun day yesterday

November 24. my snowman metid (melted) and I wert (worked) hard on the snowman It well snow agin I will mack one agin win it snows agin win I got home my snow man wus melld I wus mad

November 25. a Indian cam to ore class yesterday he told us uv (of) his lif (life) he had a fether fan! tomaro (tomorrow) is Thanksgiving I wot (want) a rill Thanksgiving with the pittgrums and the Indian tha cech (catch) dir (deer) for Thanksgiving tha hunt for dir I wot to hut on Thanksgiving I wot to be like a Indian

November 26. I got to pudlish (publish) my Book It is a good book It is about a JRagin (dragon) and a dog a cat to

November 29. I filly (finally) got to sow (sew) It is hart (hard). I like sowing my sowing is red

February 22. my dad went to Shokogo (Chicago) I mis him he lete (left) Sunday he is coming hom to maro

February 23. my bab (baby) is cuming hom to day I am happy

Researcher: The main theme found in Diane's writing was family. Diane really missed her father while he was away in Chicago. She came to school the morning after he came home very excited. She had to tell me all about it and to show me the little bear he brought her!

Diane also shared the birth of her baby brother with us. She was so excited when he finally got to come home from the hospital. Later in the year I saw Diane at one of the ball games and her little brother was with her. She was pushing him in a baby stroller and taking very good care of him. Her mom told me that Diane was just a "little mommy" and helped all the time.

James

August 18. I lik my Dog. I lik my skl (school). I love my mom

August 19. I haev a rabbits mi rabbits love me so moch (much)

August 23. I hav a pet cat His name is Flufe

August 25. I brnt (burnt) my hand one timm my mom toc (took) me to the hospital.

August 29. I broosd (bruised) my nee mi mom poot ice on it and it hrt

August 30. my Feiset (pheasant) did (died) I Whuis (was) S A D my dad whuse S

A D

August 31. I lice school it is grate I lice the lisning sintr (listening center)

September 12. I wit to Gingo (?) to get my pleset (police set) and it had handcuf in it and a gun and bolits (bullets) and a wisol (whistle) and kes (keys) to and a woke toke (walkie-talkie)

September 13. and I aretid (arrested) my bruther and sister my bruther broke it and me and hem got in fit (fight) I punch hem in the stumek and I handcuf my cuzin he did OK I love mu cuzin

September 14. I like grols (girls) be cuis I want to kiss them be cuis I liced grols a lot

September 19. I hert my fegr (finger) on a pes uv (piece of) wire and I shod (showed) it to mom It hrt and it blud (bled) it cam owt uv my fegr I had to go to the bathroom

September 20. I luv my mommy be kuis she ta (takes) me ow (out) to ees mecDonol to eet

September 21. I love my DaDy be kuis he les (lets) me play on the cinplooer (computer) 1 airplan game it is os os os os os fun my Dadys nam is -----

Septemer 22. I love my rabbit be kois he love me he nebols (nibbles) on me

September 23. I love my bruthr be kuis his brthdays toDay I have a brtha presnts for hem

October 13. I lik this school be kuis I lik the techer be kuis she is nis dis (just) lik my mom

October 12. Columbus Day one day my sester fell owt uv the car and I had to kech (catch) her

October 14. Im gonye (going) play T-ball thish yer (this year) be kuise im ode (old) a nufe Its gonve be fun be kuise Im gonve have lose (lots) and lose uv frinse !

October 17. I have a pokite nife (pocket knife) it is a little sharpe and it is red and it has tow nifes it looks lik thise it has red on it and it has to nis (knives).

October 18. my brother got kuts (cut) by my pokite nife be kuis he wun it to I had it on the tabl and he laft (laughed) thein i wuis (was) mad i spat (spanked) his Booty!

October 19. my sister goot stung by a bee the uther day win i wis at school Las nite we had to ta (take) her to the doter (doctor) to chek her arm my doters name is Mist WooUimse (?) my sisters arm wuis red

October 31. I have a vere bad cod (cold) I had to sta up on it with my mom She fiskt (fixed) me Hot Teh (tea) with hune and Shooger (sugar) and It wuis so so Good and my mom gav me sum uv my Daddys nois (nose) stuf

November 1. I wuis a vempier my sister wuis a wich my brother wuis a Grorf (giraffe) We wint to House to House this one grol (girl) my mom nois (knows) She gav us a fl (full) bag uv kandy my mom chek it to mak sher is wuis ok and evre pese wuis ok and evre pes wus Good my faveret wuis Milke Way

November 2. I have a Best Best Frind It is Zachary ----- me and hem play to Geter we play on the jugol Gem (Jungle gym) and it is so Fun

November 3. I am vere sad be kuis my cat bid (died) it Got smashed under a bord (board) under my Hous It wuis so so so kuoot (cute) with those Blue EeEs (eyes) It Hapind under my Houes

November 17. my brother and sister dris (drive) me craisy evre day I get home tha bug me and I crui (try) to hid (hide) but my brother holl (all) the Time He fins me I jist (just) won to be a Lon (alone) win I git Hom

November 18. my mom or Daddy Bunny did (died) and me and my buther and my sister took him awt (out) in the Bke (back) yrd and i had to bere (bury) hre or him owt Bak and We had to sa (say) speshol preair (special prayers) And me and my bruth and my sister Holl uv (all of) us wuis so so sad

November 23. I kant wat in Toel (until) I go to Philbrook I am Going to hav fun It is going to be so so so so so so fun And I hop (hope) I git **ZACK!** for my prtner (partner)

November 30. Im going to woch (watch) Fostey The Snow Man I git to woch ine (any) Crismis sho evre Cris mis and my favit show is Roodoff The Red Nois Randr a Frosty The Snow Man

December 5. me and my DaD We got a Bunny Kag (cage) And We had to pot (put) Ha (hay) under the Bunny Kag for Hem or Her to Do Do on

December 6. I wat (want) Sage for cris mis I wot Moto KomBatk (Mortal Combat) and Sonic 2 Gamboy I wotid that for crismis

December 8. I lost my Bak Pak (backpack) and win I go the the Bathroom Im going to go the the migige (thing-um-a-jig) wer (where) all the kots (coats) ar and Im going to look in thr (there) and if I cant find it I Haf to Bi a nuther Bak Pak Good Bi

December 12. Zack Thanks (thinks) Im Funy? out sid be kuis I do Funy Tangs (things). but sum Times We git agre (angry) but We tok (talk) it out Tin (then) we go play

December 16. my Brother pooht (pushed) me off the couch And I bumt my hed and it hred (hurt) my Hed and it stol (still) Hairteds (hurts) and it fiols (feels) lik pan (pain) Good Bi See you munday

December 20. Im going to Were (wear) my Daddys Blue tiy (tie) and im going to poot (put) it over my Poncho and im going to be in Berest (embarressed).

December 21. Las Nit I wuis in Berist (embarressed) frn uv (front of) my Famle and tha thot (thought) i wuis Good thn (than) evre Kid And it Wuis a Good Time

January 6. Last ere (year) my mommy wuis griving (driving) to school and we wr going to tok (talk) to Mrs Wundris win we Grov (drove) by my Granes Houes and win we got to the stop sin (sign) we slid in to the Dich (ditch) and it scairt (scared) me! To

DETH!

Researcher: James is a very interesting writer. Several of the same themes emerged in his writing. He wrote about family (his brother and sister are very important to him), pets, getting hurt, and death. He commented that his brother and sister drive him crazy everyday when he gets home and yet anytime I saw him with his brother at school he was always very protective of him. He would bring his brother to our classroom quite often, after school, to show him everything that was going on in our room.

Literature Response Logs

Literature response logs are further transition to a more collaborative response to literature, which encourages more student ownership and participation. A literature response log is a journal for recording reactions to literature. It is an excellent tool for connecting reading to writing, for expanding the meaning of the text, and for giving readers ownership of their literary experience (Routman, 1991).

Three strategies were employed when using the response logs: open-ended questions, personal reactions while reading and illustrating a part of the story.

For personal reactions the following prompts were useful:

Were you reminded of something in your own life as you were reading?
How were you feeling, what thoughts were going through your head?

It is important to allow time for artistic interpretation as another way to respond to text (Routman). Some response prompts include:

Draw a favorite part of the story.

Based on the author's description, draw a particular character.

Design another cover for the book or another title page.

For each entry, the children were also asked to tell if they liked the story or book and to tell why or why not.

Mike

DINOSAURS by Brian and Jillian Cutting. I hat (hate) win the Dinosaurs at the uver (other) Dinosaurs.

YOUR FRIEND, LITTLE BEAR by Else Holmelund Minarik. I like win He said let it rain My brother moved to mi step dads moms Houes (my insert-in the story Little Bear is very sad when he says "let it rain." His best friend is moving away and tears are falling from his eyes).

THE BEAR'S TOOTHACHE by David McPhail. I lik win the tooth poppt out and the boy put the Big! tooth under his palow (pillow). I was happe win my tooth fual (falled) out I cerid (cried) a little bit I got 1.00

Casandra

DINOSAURS by Brian and Jilliam Cutting. I dot (don') like the book becuse he kild the uther dinosuar

THE SNOWY DAY by Ezra Jack Keats. I loved the book beckuse I had a snow ball fite with Travis

DON'T YOU LAUGH AT ME ! story by Joy Cowley. I like the story becuse he got the hikups (hiccups) and wus (once) I got the hikups to my brother laft (laughed) Hik Hik

RATTY-TATTY by Joy Cowley. I loved the story becuse she was clever and it remims me win I stuk my toe in my frins mose (mouse) trap

THE LITTLE YELLOW CHICKEN by Joy Cowley. I do not like the story because they wud not help him. My brother wud not help me klen (clean) the living room.

THE BEAR'S TOOTHACHE by David McPhail. I like the book because the tooth popt out I lost mi tooth I was playing in the spreckulser (sprinklers) and my tooth was vere loos and I wipt (wiped) my fase and it fel out I did not nodis it I fon (found) it on the grownd and I poot it under my pilo and I got a \$1.00 bil

Janie

THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR by Eric Carle. I like it becos I like win he ate all that food and he got fat

CHICKA-CHICKA BOOM BOOM by Bill Martin Jr. I like win tha all fell down asept (except) J

HIPPO MAKES A WISH. I like moky (monkey) becos he reminds me of my self hanging of the moky bars I made a wish but it did not come tru

Jennifer

IN A DARK DARK WOOD a Traditional Rhyme. I didet like the story because I dot like Ghosts

A RAINBOW FOR SARA by Jane Mechling. I liked the story because I like birds

POLAR BEAR LEAPS by Derek Hall. I liked the story because moma bear savd baby bear Moma Bear is my favorite character because my Mom is like Moma Bear

DINOSAURS by Brian and Jillian Cutting. I did not like the book because there was som killing.

MELISSA'S FRIEND by Christel Kleitsch. I loved the story because Melissas has a pretend friend like min (mine)

YOUR FRIEND LITTLE BEAR by Mauice. I did not like the story because one time i had to mov from my friend his name is Devin

THE THREE WISHES. I liked the story because I like wishes if I had a wish I wuld wish for a Barbie Car because its like a ril car you can rid in

Jan

MELISSA'S FRIEND by Christel Kleitsch. I love the story because my name is in it I have in Imaginary Friend it is Ba Ba

THE SNOWY DAY by Ezra Jack Keats. I like the book because I like snowy days. I make snow angel's it is fun I beltt (built) a snow man it is fun my hand get cold

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE? story by Joy Cowley. I like the story because I like peanut butter sandwich. my mom made me a peanut butter Sand Wich for Lunch.

RATTY-TATTY by Joy Cowley. I like the story because it wemas (reminds) me of wen my cat mr Kittey trid to get a mouse but it went theru (through) the wall. but my cat wan (ran) a way it was sad we wer creing my sister was welle (really) sad so was i my mom and dad where Happy because they did not like mr. Kitty

THE RAIN FOREST by Helen Cowcher. I like the book because I like Howler Monkey I want the Rain Forest to stay so we can have lots and lots of chocolate

Diane

POLAR BEAR LEAPS by Derek Hall. I like the story because I like Bears Polar Bear is my favorite because he reminds me (reminds) about (about) my self when I got lost

TIME FOR BROTHER JOHN. I like the story because I like to sleep

FIX IT by David McPhail. The story is make-believe (make believe) I like the story because I like bears and I like to read

YOUR FRIEND LITTLE BEAR by Else Holmelund Minarik. I like the story because I like Bears I wrote a letter to my Grandma and Grandpa because they live in Florida

THE BEARS TOOTHACHE by David McPhail. I like the story because the Bear was very tricky in it got a lot of steak I lost my tooth Oct. 4 when I was blowing my nose and my tooth fell out of my mouth it was very bloody (bloody) and hurt a lot and fell in my cake I was very happy that I lost a tooth it was very upsetting (upsetting) for me I got the pieces (piece) with my tooth in it I stuck my hand in the cake and it got all messy and so did the tooth too. the tooth fairy came and gave me 2 dollars

Assigned Topics

Tuck Everlasting

The story, Tuck Everlasting, was read out loud to the class. It is a story about a

family called Tuck, who quite by accident drink water from a magical spring. They discover that they cannot die, that they will live forever at the age they were when they drank. A young girl stumbles across their secret and the story revolves around whether she will choose to drink the water.

The children, in class, were asked to make their own choice whether they would drink from the spring or not, whether they would like to live forever. The following responses were given:

I wouldn't drink the spring water becas I want to grow up jist lick my MoM and I want to have a baby jist lick my Mom

no I wouldnt drink from the spreng becuz I hate being a migit becuz I wont to be a gronup (my insert--this comment was made by a boy in class who just happened to be the shortest child in the class)

I wouldn't drink from the spring because I don't hardly like water. I don't want to live forever because if everybody died I will be the only persen in the hole intire world

I wouldnt drink from the spring because I wont to see Heveon and my frends and famoly that dide (died)

I wouldn't becus ther wel not be enee room for the animels. also we would be squoosht. and I have anuther resen. becus ol the trees wel be cut down. I have a nuther resen we can't driv becus the rod (road) wel have pepul.

I would drink from the spring....because i want to live forever. and i'd Hope my freinds woul drink

I wouldn't drink from the spring becos I wouldn't be aeble to drive a car I would not be aeble to gragerwate (graduate).

I wouldn't drink from the Spring becos I woute (want) to live withe God becos he is Good!!!!

Do you want to live forever NO!!!

I wouldn't drink from the Spring because I wot too live with God

I would drink from the spring because I Do Not Wut to di

I would drink from the spring because I wont to lev (live)

I would drink from the spring because I would be 8

Happy Time

The next assigned topic was to write about a HAPPY TIME in their lives. The following statements were the result:

Happy Time. when my cat had babies I was very happy she had some more

My Happy Time. When I had a pup I played with him and I pet him I made sum up his dog house I love My dog

My Happy Time. I had a baby sister and she sed DaDa then she sed No No

My Happy Time. I like win it is by birthday I can get some cake and some dollse (dollars) That is the end!

My Very Happy Time. I was happy when I saw my Grandma again and when I played with her dog

My Happy time. I went to the Fair. I rode Zengo it was Fun Vary Fun I rode the Bolit (Bullit) in went upside down. the door almost came open We had to skoot over it was vary vary vary vary fun The End

My Happy Time. I went to the fair I rode the wild cat and I was very scared The End.

My Happy Time. When we got at swimming pool I was happy. But when we got at swimming pool we still had to poot water in it

Sad Time

The children were also asked to respond to a sad time in their lives:

My Very Sad Time. My Great Grand-father was Sick for a long long long long long long long time and he died (died) at night

My sad time's. My great grandpa died when I was not even a year. It was sad when he died.

My god died it was sad. I don't know how old I was when he died. The end

A sad Time. We had a mom dog and we had 5 puppies and we sold 5 puppies and we had 1 and the mom dog didn't feed the puppy so the puppy died and we buried the puppy and we had zero. The End

Saddest times of My Life. Once my great grandpa died before I got to meet him he died of a heart attack

My cat got sick she died she was black and her name was Pamela the end

My Sad Day. I lost my dog I was sad some dog chases him

Sad Times. My dog got run over. his name was Druppie I was very sad he was a weenie dog we buried him in my backyard I miss him

Sad time's For Me. One time I had a Cat its name was Fluffy. My Gramma hit it with a car I was very, very sad. We buried it I still now it's 10 years. I'm still sad. the end

Sad Times. my Hamster's (hamster's) head got stuck in the door I felt bad very bad

My Sad Time. My great grandpa (grandpa) had a heart attack (heart attack) and I was sad and when they brought him to the hospital he was dead but they didn't know (didn't know) but when they found out We went to the funeral (funeral) and went home then my great-grandmother (grandma) went to another place and I never saw (saw) her again and I miss (miss) her and I was sad and I was crying (crying) and my Dad was sad and my Mother was sad too and my great-grandmother was sad and we miss her

A Sad Time. a long time ago I had a kitty we couldn't take care of the cat. So we gave it to my Grandma. My Grandma put the kitty in the backyard. The kitty

jump the fence. She wet in the road (road) a car ran over the cat it was sad. I cried
(cried) hard. everybody cried in my family. so my Grandma. The End

Wish for the World

After the bombing in Oklahoma City, I asked the children to write a wish for the
world:

My wish for the world is that all people live in PEACE!

My wish for the world is to take care of homeless people that need help on the
streets

If I had a wish for the world my wish would be no violence and no guns people
not hurt or threatening other people I wish we had Peace in our World

My wish for the world...that all children have clothes and shoes.

My wish for the world is that I hope every body do NOT get hurt like other people
is hurt.

My wish for the world I hope the American people save cans for the homeless
people and the Polar Bears to find a home for the homeless people and the Polar
Bears (my insert--a class project was to raise money to help with the Polar Bear
habitat at the Tulsa Zoo)

My wish for the world No More Crime and Drugs!

My wish for the world that all people have food.

My wish for the world would be that people would stop cutting down the trees in
the Rain Forests and stop polluting the ocean.

My wish for the world nobody fighting

My wish for the world...I wish that people would not kill animals and cut down
trees.

I wish that the world would be clean because there is trash in my country

Self Evaluation

The foremost goal of evaluation is self-evaluation, that is, the analysis of our own attitudes and processes so that we can use the information to promote continued growth and learning (Routman, 1991, p. 342).

The purpose of self-evaluation is to enable an individual to function independently, intelligently, and productively.

The students were asked to write a short narrative on how they see their progress, during the year, in certain subject areas. These narratives were sent home with the report cards and the parents were asked to sign and return them with comments. The parents were very supportive and felt that they gained insights into their childrens' progress. The students took ownership of the process as can be seen in their narratives:

Mary writes: I think I am doing good in reading.
I like Eric Carle books and Jan Bret I read at home. I think I do good in writing I write about my friends I do terrific in my math I do not get non wrong in math I do terrific work at school and home

Michael writes: I can read a little I am tring at writing I and tryin Im better at math

Carl writes: I think im dooing good in reading
It is fun. Reading is easy. I like the book Gray Whales. It is good that all i got to say.

Linda writes: Im doing good! at Reading. I love reading.
it is fun. I love looking at the picters to. My favorite ather is Eric Carle.

Mary (later in the year): I like reading. I am very good at it.
It is easy. It is easier than before we new how to read.
But some words are hard to figer out. I write a lot in my diary.
it is fun. I write about my friends. my family. cusins and all that

I get a lot of my math rite but sometimes I get it wrong I know a lot of math I practice sometimes I rilly like it

I like art and science it is fun. I also like publishing books. I am almost don with my book. I hav illustrated all the pages. I just hav to bring a pitcher of myself. The reason I like publishing books is because I like writeing. I am learning a lot. I am also learning to spell a lot of words. Thru the year we study a lot.

Donna writes: Im lirning to read beter now Im reading chapter bookes and Decheneres (dictionaries).

Im writing good I Love it!!! I publosh books a lot.

Im grat at math!! I like it it is easy sometimes

Ray writes: I learnd how to read good. No I am so good at reading that I can read a ansiclupeadeeue (encyclodedia).

I learnd how to write good. I am so good at writing that I am beter than you mom

I am so good at math I beet Steven one time YA!

Rose writes: I learned how to read loger (longer) woerd's in loger book's lick Chapter books

Im good at writing and publishing books thay are FUN!

I learned how to go faster on math on adding

James writes: Im beter at reading Im reading loge (long) books I do not haff to sond (sound)

I rot (wrote) a lot of books Im beter at writing at the ferst of the year I rot slope

I do my best on math I only get 1 or 2 rog (wrong) now.

Ted writes: I am reading chalingeinger (challenging) books they're a piece of cake like What is good for a crab?

I'm faster at neatness writing and I write books in my diare then put it on a book

I'm better at - (minus) now then I was at the first of the year

Barbra writes: I am geting beter at reading I no much mor werds than last time

Im good at writing but sometimes I mes up

I am good at math so much it is eze to do

Gail writes: I lerned how to read some esey words and hrde words and I ken read beter than last time

Now I'm a beter writer! win I was 5 I wosn (wasn't)

I'm a relle beter math prsn (person)

Authors' Chair

An important component of each day was Authors' Chair. Following writing time, small groups of children would share their journal entries with the class. A special chair served as the place for students to share their journals. At the conclusion of each author's sharing, the students were encouraged to ask questions or make comments about the entries. The following notes were taken during sharing time:

December 1

Don: I can't wait until Christmas. I hope I get lots of presents. We have our Christmas tree up already, it's Big.

Mary: I liked that story. It reminds me of when we put up our tree and our cat got in it.

- Jan: Our dog ate the candy cane off our tree
- Barry: We put our Christmas tree up and we put a plastic Santa on it. We pretend he puts our presents under the tree.
- Bob: One Christmas we gave socks to my cousin. He didn't like them. He threw them at us! (whole class laughs)

December 2

- Mary: I like Eric Carle books. Because they are fun to read. I like the book Draw Me a Star. It gets a page that has a rainbow. My teacher Mrs. Smith likes Eric Carle books. She wishes she had every Eric Carle book. They are so fun to read. I wish I had all of the Eric Carle books. I have a shelf full of a lot of books.
- Rose: I know why you wrote about Eric Carle, because you borrowed my book this morning.
- Gary: I'm getting an Eric Carle book, The Very Hungry Caterpillar.
- Carl: I really like that story. For Christmas I'm asking for an Eric Carle book.
- Mary: I'm asking for ALL OF THEM!

December 3

- Cindy: My Grandma is going to pick me up in a blue car. It is pretty. I like riding in her car.
- Bonnie: Do you like your Grandma?
- Cindy: Yes
- Bonnie: Well...my Grandma died of cancer

Cindy: My mom's mom died of cancer. I never knew my Daddy's dad. He didn't even know me. He used to call my sister "Curtain Climber."

Ramond: My Grandma lives out in the country in Bristow. I don't get to see her much. My Great Great Grandma Bess lives in Oklahoma City. I don't get to see her except when we go to Grandpa's house.

January 1

Cindy had written about a big fire that was reported on the news the night before:

Barry: Last night I heard about it My mom was coming back from TJC She had to go another way

Cindy: Why?

Rachel: They (the police) made them go that way (pointed with her finger) That was a major fire!

Bonnie: I wrote about the news, too (the whole class was very involved with this_story)

March 14

Jan: I miss Mat. I wish he didn't move away. He was my best friend. I saw him at the movies. I drew a picture of him. Here we are at the movies. (shows the class her drawing)

Gary: They're Kissing (laughter from the class)

Bonnie: I saw my friend at the movie. My friend was sitting on his knees-- to see better.

Rachel: I raise the seat up and sit on it. It's kind of hard.

Bob: Ramond told me he likes wrestling movies Hulk Hogan movies. (Raymond is sitting with his hands over his eyes--peeking through his fingers)

Ramond: Yeah, Hulk Hogan has taught me some moves.

Several themes emerged over the duration of the school year. These themes can be listed under two main categories or headings: intrapersonal interpretation and interpersonal interpretations (Gardner, 1991). Intrapersonal interpretation have to do with personal feeling (within the individual) such as sadness, happiness, anger, fear, personal satisfaction, personal injury and expectations.

Interpersonal interpretations have to do with the individual in relationship to others as in the themes of family--divorce, relatives, friends, birth, death, sickness, and pets.

CHAPTER V

POSSIBILITIES FOR CHANGE

... we write and read in order to know each other's responses, to connect ourselves more fully with the human world, and to strengthen the habit of truth-telling in our midst. No national resource is more precious--more essential to our promise and our true security than that habit. And no knowledge is more essential to the preservation of the ideal community than the knowledge of common feeling and common longing (DeMott, 1990, p. 31).

My own personal journey of self discovery began with graduate classes in curriculum. Undergraduate work had consisted mainly of taking classes that told "how to" teach, never the "why" of teaching (Apple, 1975). Why do we do the thing we do?

Metaphor in Education

Children have been viewed as passive recipients of knowledge and the teacher has been seen as the conduit of information (Elkins, 1988). The metaphors found in most of the literature reflect this attitude (Eisner, 1985).

The dominant image of schooling in America has been the factory and the dominant image of teaching and learning is the assembly line. A child could be placed on the assembly line and be moved through the business of education in a controlled, predictable manner. But children are not inert material to be manipulated or molded.

Some children run ahead, some move backward and some children even jump off the conveyor belt.

Another metaphor of schooling is that of a garden. The child is viewed as a plant to be nurtured and watered. Again, the emphasis is placed on "Doing" to or for the child.

Yet another metaphor is the child as a lump of clay to be molded or formed. Again, the child is acted upon from the outside. The teacher is the source of change.

Child as Philosopher/Poet

The metaphor of the child as philosopher / poet shows the child in a different light. The child is not acted upon from the outside but is seen as a dynamic, unique, individual who deals with paradox and discovers meaning for himself. Learning is meaning making. The role of the teacher is learner alongside the child rather than a conduit of information.

The children in this study dealt with paradox as seen in the writings of James, Casandra, Kaitlyn, and Jennifer. James said he loves his brother and sister but at times they drive him crazy and he just wants to be alone.

Casandra had a difficult time dealing with the death of her grandmother. She could not understand the dirt and ugliness of the grave when compared to the beauty of the flowers all around.

Jennifer finally got her mom home from Russia--only to have her mom take a job. Now Jennifer would have to share her mom with other people. Her mom would not have as much time to spend with her. She was not happy about that.

Kaitlyn dealt with divorce in her writing. More than once she talked about how her father was supposed to pick her up and she hoped he would not be late or forget. It was a

very insecure time for her. She had fun once she and her brother were with their father but she was never really sure if he would remember to pick them up.

The child as poet is illustrated through the simplicity of the language used by the children. They write with beauty and imaginative expression when viewing life.

"Ode To Soosey"

My dog soosey died because she had
 an attack
 I been crying
 She died right in my hands
 I love soosey
 Shes my favorite dog
 Poor soosey
 She went to Dog Heaven

Ted conveys his fear of the dark quite simply:

It was dark and night AND I forgot to feed the dog!

After completing this research, I hold even more strongly to the belief that narrative (storying, story making, storytelling) should be more fully explored in all subjects of the curriculum. Bruner (1986), Cazden (1988), Hymes (1980), Mikkelson (1990), and Wells (1986), among others, have cited the importance of narrative as a source of knowledge for children. Meaning is built into stories; children use narrative to construct "mental models" of their experience to make the world they inhabit sensible through the spoken or written word.

We all tell stories about our lives to point out or show something that has consequence for us. In some cases, the degree of consequence is greater than others, and those narratives display that Hymes calls "a weighted quality of incident" (p. 134). Children often perceive that "weighted quality" in the incidents of their lives, and they

continuously use it to form personal narratives that explain and order their worlds.

Children's narratives, if "uncovered" and honored in the context of the classroom, can be powerful vehicles for thinking and learning.

Results and Discussion

Unlike research conducted by Clark & Florio (1981) where (a) diary writing became an academic task initiated by the teacher, (b) school related topics were common, and (c) students continually were concerned about evaluation, the results of this study show that these children wrote about their personal lives, about things of consequence when provided the time, support and understanding of a caring community of learners. The pieces of writing included as data in this research demonstrate that the students were indeed trying to make their personal experiences real through storytelling, speculating, and remembering. While watching the students, I was struck by the intensity of their concentration and the spark of their interest. Through writing, they explored the real concerns and activities of their lives.

Intrapersonal Interpretations

Several categories of interpretations emerged over the duration of the year. These categories can be listed under two main headings: intrapersonal and interpersonal. Intrapersonal interpretations which emerged include personal feelings (sadness, happiness, anger, fear, personal satisfaction, being hurt and expectation). Interpersonal interpretations which emerged include: family--divorce, relatives, friends, birth of siblings, sickness, death, and pets.

Angela wrote about being sad when her sister was in the hospital. Casandra dealt with sadness the day she visited her grandmother's grave at the cemetery: "I went to my grands gran all it was a pile of dirt I cried."

After reading this entry in Casandra's diary, I asked her if it would be OK if I talked to her mother about it. Casandra said it would be OK. Her mother had no idea that her daughter was so upset about visiting the grave site. She had taken Casandra in hopes that she, herself, could get through the ordeal without breaking down. The mom promised to talk to her daughter and explain why Grands grav was just dirt (the funeral had been the day before) and why all the other graves had pretty flowers on them.

Happiness emerged in many of the writings, Jennifer was very happy when her mother came home after being gone so long to Russia: "I love having my mom home I was Happy she brought home some peppermint candy."

Happiness for Ted was when he found his "Winnie" bear (I love my winnie I am taking him to school I really love him.)

James dealt with the emotion of anger when his brother broke his set of handcuffs: "my brother broke it and me and him got in a fit I punched him in the stomach." Later Jimmy writes about his brother cutting himself with Jimmy's pocket knife: "my brother got cut by my pocket knife then he left thin and was mad I spanked his Booty!"

Several of the children discuss being afraid, what things they fear, such as ghosts and getting lost. Jennifer's entry concerned our classroom pet rabbit: "Yesterday we let Thumper out of her cage to play. It was fun. She let Caleb pet her. I was kind of scared. The rabbit almost let Amber hold her at reading time."

Ted wrote: "I hate wen I forget to feed the dog becos at night wen its dark I haf to go out and feed him and I RELEY HATE IT!" (he confided in me that he is scared of the dark).

The topic of being hurt or injured showed up frequently in the children's writings.

James told about how he burned his hand and his mom took him to the hospital.

Angela relates an event in her life, too, about being hurt: "when I was down stairs my sister was looking in her diary box It dumped over and she put her hand on the bookcase and bended over to pick it up and I was sitting on the floor and it fell on my head I cried and it hert a lot."

Childhood is a time filled with expectations! "I'm going to play T-ball this year be kuise I'm old a nufe Its gonve be fun be kuise I'm gonve have lots and lots uv frinse!" "I was happy when I found out my uncle is coming to he lives in Syria his name is Shahoud hes never saw me before hes only saw my picture when I was little he is nice and he knows MY Name." Calvin wrote about going to a hotel: "I like wen Im going to a Hotel tomorrow We are going in a car and we are gowing to spend the nite." Ted's expectation about a field trip came through clearly: "we are going to Philbrook to see our Gengerbred House and on the bus if 3 poipl get to set by each other hope my partners are carmen and steven."

Interpersonal Interpretations

Many more examples could be given that illustrate the intrapersonal interpretations made by the children in their writings. But now I will move on to the interpersonal interpretations.

There is a strong sense of "family" in all of the children's work. Mothers, fathers, siblings, extended families, and grandparents are discussed frequently. I was deeply touched when Kaitlyn wrote about waiting for her father to pick her up for a weekend visit. How she hoped he wouldn't be late this time. I could see her, standing by the fire hydrant, worrying if he could come on time and what she and her brother would do if he was late again.

Cassandra wrote: "My baby cousin spent the nit. He crid. a lot But it was still Fun. He was cring because He did not git his milk evre 5 minis." On another occasion, she wrote about her father: "My dad is nice to Me He loves me. My dad has blond here. He has blue eyes His favorite culer is green He loves my Brother and my mom He loves everbutey in my famalee."

Death of loved ones or of pets were also frequent topics in the children's writings. Bella wrote: "My dog soosey did because she had an atak I ben kring because she did rit in my hens I love soosey shes my favet dog poor soosey I Love You soosey she went to Dog Heven."

A lot seems to happen to James! He wrote about the death of his bunny: "my mom or daddy bunny did and me and my buther and my sister took him awt in the bke yrd and i had to bere her or him owt bak and We had to say spechol preair And me and my bruth and my sister Holl uv us wuis so so sad." Then he turns right around and makes this entry: "My brother and sister drive me craisy evre day I get home tha bug me and I try to hid but my brother all the time he fins me I jist want to be alone win I git home."

The children were also concerned about family members getting sick. For example: "yesterday my little sister got the chekin pokes She cryd I was sad win I went to school

She was crying My mom had to go to work and she cryd." Or this entry: "my mom is olwas sick on christmas this Christmas my Mom had a sor tooth Last Christmas she had strep throt."

Calvin wrote: "my Dad is seke He has the same theing I had I fele sadrey for hem I rile relle do He thro up and I cotet stand it and I has to slep down and my mom ded to and my Dad slep up sters Wen I woke up He was stel seke and He at one pess of tost and som 7 up and thats it my mom bot a 7 up for my Dad and me (Seven-Up must be the universal cure for the flu--my insert)."

FRIENDS are a central factor in the writings of the children. Many examples were available: "I like win Kevin cam back to school because he had chicinpokp I wuss Sad for Kevin He misst 2 weks I mist him so did uther ciss Kevin is happye too be bake." "Whitney is tacks me to school and bak it is fun Whitney is my friend." "I have a friend named carmen he is a good friend I like him he is my friend." "Katey cam to my house to stay the nit It was fun becus I stuck my sister in the trach can She sremd My mom pushed her owt after she wus mad yes she wus I and Katey wus lafen It wus a fun day yesterday."

Another child writes: "I have a best Frind It is Zachary Me and him play to geter we play on the jugol gem and it is so so fun. Zack thanks im funy out sid be kuis i do Funy thangs. But sum times we git agre but we talk it out then we go play."

Pets play an important part in the lives of children. They were mentioned frequently in the diaries:

"I am getting a rabbit today. I will be happy win I get it the rabbit will be grae."

"Dear Santa I want a Kitten for Christmas and a Dog how have you been Mrs. Santa."

"today we let thumper out of her kag She let me pet her. I felt Happy thumper felt Happy to." Another child wrote: "I have rabbits mi rabbits love me so much I hav a pet cat His name is flufe."

The quintessential writing activity in any class is the translation of personal feelings, experiences, and knowledge into texts. Whether it is the business of dealing with sibling brothers and sisters that drive one crazy or sorting out the reason for a fight with a friend, writing must be essentially a telling of experience. Story making is the way we "read" ourselves into understanding the world, as well as a way to "write" a new version of the world we are trying to see (Mikkelson).

This research shows children as seekers, children struggling to orient themselves in an uncertain world. They certainly deal with the "BIG" questions in life: birth, death, love, fear, anger, sadness and happiness. The children struggled, and continue to struggle, to find personal meaning in their lives. We, the children and myself, talked and wrote and wrote and laughed, and read, and laughed and wrote.

An added benefit to having the child as the center of the educational process with an emphasis on her or her own narrative, is that the teacher gains a better understanding of the culture of each child and gets to know each child at a deeper level by gaining insights into their lives. We must recognize the fact that, we as teachers, have no grasp on the reality brought with children to school--their story as it were--if we listen and watch, if we give the children the opportunity to narrate their own lives, then the classroom will be a place that welcomes and does not send away.

The power of the stories told and the community of listeners that the stories created have become a part of the fabric of our classroom. Next year, many of these children will

return to my classroom in a Multi-age program (6, 7 and 8 year olds). I am very excited about continuing THE NEVER ENDING STORY!

Challenge for the Future

The findings of this research support the implications for education that Combs discusses in The Schools We need-New Assumptions for Educational Reform (1991). One implication is that we can never again hope to design a curriculum to be required of everyone. With the information explosion, change is so rapid that the future needs of students are unknown. The new educational system must concentrate its efforts on encouraging persons to be effective problem solvers. Learning how to learn is more important than learning any given subject matter. To cope with rapid change, education for the future must be lifelong. To meet this objective, students must have a positive attitude toward listening and school. Exploration of human relationships is another key factor. As shown here in their writings, children are constantly engaged in relationships and the problems that entails. All students can utilize their own interrelationships as material for wider understanding of human beings. Personal identity and fulfillment are key factors to be taken into consideration as well as education for social interaction and responsibility. Sensitivity and caring for others can be learned from student's interactions with one another during the school years. What is required is a shift in priorities from a preoccupation with subject matter to an increased concern for students as people.

This is the question that emerges--if we are truly in this factory metaphor in education, how do we break out of it and adopt a new metaphor whether it is the metaphor I have suggested of philosopher / poet or another? How will the system have to

change to adapt to a new vision? Should we begin with the suggestions offered by Arthur Combs mentioned in the previous paragraph?

Teacher Research

I would like to address the topic of teacher research. A great deal has been written about teachers carrying out research in their own classrooms. The questions we ask and the answers we find in our classrooms not only help us become better teachers but also help us make important contributions to knowledge about teaching and learning (Kutz, 1991). We can begin our teacher research with any informal question that arises from our own daily classroom experience. It does not need to begin with a BIG question derived from other people's research. We can use informal means of inquiry (taking notes, keeping a journal, making tapes of conversations, and saving artifacts of student's literacy). Communities of researchers can be created, not only through formal networks with teachers and other colleagues (I would have been lost without the help of my teacher assistant during my research), but in our own classrooms with our students.

This past year was a journey of self-discovery for the students in the classroom and it was most certainly a journey of self-discovery for the researcher! I would recommend that other studies similar to this one be carried out with other children in other environments, across the country. I would be interested in seeing if similar themes might emerge.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO PARENTS

The purpose of this study is to examine a possible alternative to the current dominant curriculum paradigm. Instead of viewing the student as one who absorbs knowledge directly can the student be viewed as a unique being who constructs meaning and can engage in interpretive modes of knowing. Emphasis will be placed on listening to and looking at the words of the students as they constitute their worlds. The environment, social setting, and milieu will be examined.

Subjects for this study will be first grade students, randomly assigned by the principal, to the researcher's classroom. The students will be informed about the research and asked to contribute classwork. I will explain to them that I will be writing a paper and would like to use examples of their work in my paper. From past experience, in teaching first grade, I have found that children are very willing to share their stories and other work with classmates and adults in the school.

All participants will be treated equally, there will be no control groups. The work studied will be the normal classroom assignments. The curriculum followed will be the same whether the research was being conducted or not. There will be no comparisons of students.

No quantitative data will be gathered; such as test scores or grading. There will be no questionnaires or other written instruments. The researcher will take field notes on classroom activities.

One area of potentially sensitive material might be the daily journal entries when the children may write about personal experiences at home or elsewhere. The children will be told that if they write about something they wish to keep private (confidences, trusted

or privileged information, secrets, etc.) they are to turn down the corner of that page and that material will not be used and/or shared with the class. Even with this precaution, the names of the children will be changed in the research in order to protect their anonymity.

Hopefully, the students will be excited about having their work included in the research. A strong feeling of ownership and empowerment on the part of the students can evolve through their knowing that their ideas and interpretations are important and valued.

Hopefully, for the educational community, the research will show the child in a new light: as a unique, dynamic, active participant in the educational process. One who can name and constitute his own world. One who is constantly searching for personal meaning, to make sense of their experience. Learning is the discovery of personal meaning.

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION FORM

To Whom It May Concern:

I give my permission for my son's/daughter's class work to be used as data for the Doctoral Dissertation currently being researched by Janet Smith. The dissertation is concerned with curriculum in the first grade with special emphasis on the writing process.

Signature

Date

My child's name may be used in the dissertation _____

I would rather my child's name not be used _____

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

APPROVAL FORM

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 12-21-93

IRB#: ED-94-032

Proposal Title: THE EMERGING CURRICULUM PARADIGM IN A FIRST
GRADE CLASSROOM: THE CHILD AS PHILOSOPHER/POET

Principal Investigator(s): William Reynolds, Janet Smith

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
AT NEXT MEETING.

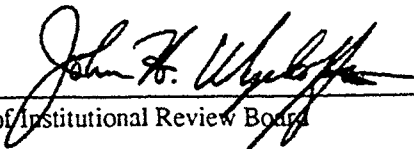
APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A
CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD
APPROVAL.

ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR
APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for Deferral or Disapproval
are as follows:

Provisions received and approved.

Signature:


Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: December 22, 1993

VITA

Janet Smith

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: THE EMERGING CURRICULUM PARADIGM IN A FIRST GRADE
CLASSROOM: THE CHILD AS PHILOSOPHER / POET

Major field: Curriculum and Instruction

Biographical:

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Professional Organizations: International Reading Association, Oklahoma Reading Association, Tulsa Classroom Teachers Reading Association, Tulsa Classroom Teachers Applying Whole Language, National Umbrella Whole Language Association; Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; National Education Association; Oklahoma Education Association; and Tulsa Classroom Teacher's Association.