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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE OF THE EFFECTIVENESS

OF THE SHURLEY METHOD OF LANGUAGE ARTS INSTRUCTION

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

LYNDA J. THOMPSON

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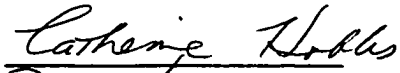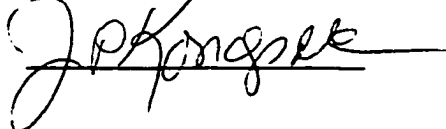
A Teacher's Perspective of the Effectiveness
Of The Shurley Method of Language Arts Instruction

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND
ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

BY

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complete this degree. They have constantly encouraged me and made many sacrifices so that I could devote time to my studies and research. And finally, I wish to pay a special tribute to my late husband, George. He was the impetus behind this endeavor. His confidence in my abilities and his admiration and respect for those who have advanced degrees inspired me to obtain my Ph.D.

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Abstract

Educators have long debated pedagogy concerning language arts: reading, writing, speaking, listening. Many educators adhere to a pedagogical theory favoring a skills approach with heavy emphasis on grammar instruction. Other educators favor student-centered classrooms using integrated approaches that have students actively involved. The Shurley Method of Language Arts Instruction is an example of grammar instruction using a teacher-centered skills approach. The purpose of the ethnographic research reported here was to explore one teacher's perspective of the Shurley Method of Language Arts Instruction using a sociocultural theoretical approach.

To determine the teacher's perspective using the sociocultural theory involved in-depth analysis of the teacher's world, which included her historical background; her educational background; her theories, approaches, and beliefs concerning teaching in general and specifically the Shurley Method of Language Arts Instruction; community and school contexts; school administrators; and other outside factors that influence pedagogical practices.

Research methods included observations of the language arts teacher in fifth-grade classrooms, interviews, and stimulated recall interviews. Administrators were also interviewed to assist in determining the context of the teaching situation.

Findings suggest that the context of the community, the school, outside factors concerning school assessment, and the teacher's background do seem to influence the resulting pedagogy, including what and how to teach. From the teacher's perspective the

Shurely Method helped the school meet the constraints, in the form of assessment, mostly norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests, imposed by outside sources. Also, the Shurley Method was compatible with the pedagogical ideology of community members, the school administrators, the teachers, and the students.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In 1992, while supervising a first-year teacher as her higher education supervisor for a state university, I was introduced to the Shurley Method of Language Arts Instruction. The Shurley Method immediately interested me because it seemed to follow teaching procedures that were contrary to what current research suggests concerning effective language arts pedagogy. Often, university and public schools seem to place themselves at opposite ends of the spectrum concerning pedagogy. Many refer to the polarization as the difference between theory, represented by research-based universities, and practice, represented by public schools (Beach, R. 1994; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Grossman, 1990). Some critics say the university world is overly theoretical and impractical (Britzman, 1994) and they criticize college education departments claiming that professors are not in touch with the "real" world of teaching in public schools (Clift, 1994; Jackson, 1986; Lanier & Little, 1986; Marshall, 1994). Frequently, classroom teachers complain and charge that college teachers are not "down in the trenches" and consequently do not adequately prepare future teachers for the classroom. The research I conducted addresses the current debate among educators concerning the differences in theory and practice.

Background of the Study

My research resulted from the apparent disparity between research/theory and practice concerning the language arts curriculum used in many schools in rural Oklahoma and in many other Midwestern states. Specifically this research focuses on one language arts curriculum, the Shurley Method of Language Arts Instruction, as used in one rural

Oklahoma school and as taught by one teacher. The Shurley Method emphasizes grammar instruction. References to grammar instruction reported here refer to the practice of teaching the parts of speech in isolated pieces using a skills approach. My interests and intent were to provide a view of the teacher as nearly as possible from her lens (Heath, 1983) and to understand the work she does, the way she plans her instruction, and her decision-making processes both inside and outside the classroom.

Research from the 1930s to the present indicates that teaching grammar in isolated pieces is ineffective in improving writing (Baron, 1989; Hillocks, 1986; Noguchi, 1991; Weaver, 1979). Yet, some teachers and administrators continue to hold fast to the opinion that learning grammar is good for the students (Baron, 1990; Lindemann, 1987; Tompkins & Hoskisson, 1995) and that students can learn grammar. While observing first-year teachers and student teachers in my job as their higher education supervisor, I have witnessed many schools using the Shurley Method of Language Arts Instruction, a traditional, teacher-centered, skills approach. The Shurley Method heavily emphasizes grammar instruction through drill and repetition. Administrators and teachers in many schools I visit extoll the Shurley Method for its ability to teach students grammar. A definition of grammar may clarify the focus of the research reported here. "Traditional grammar instruction" refers to teaching the parts of speech in isolation and independent of the social uses of language. According to Smagorinsky (1996) "traditional grammar instruction is among the most widely practiced methods of teaching both language usage and writing in American schools" (p. 127).

The purpose of the research was to explore (using a sociocultural theoretical

approach) one teacher's perspective of the influence of curriculum selection on her pedagogical practices. More specifically, I explored the teacher's perception of the Shurley Method of Language Arts Instruction and investigated her perception of factors that influence her as a teacher. Several questions guided the research: What are the teacher's beliefs regarding teaching/learning language arts, and what is her perception of what has shaped her beliefs regarding teaching? How are the pedagogical beliefs of the teacher reflected in her classroom and to what extent does the teacher's instruction reflect her belief system concerning pedagogy? What part does her educational background as a student play in her teaching philosophy or ideology and pedagogical practices? In what ways are her teaching practices a consequence of her teaching environment and the selected curriculum within that environment?

Using the sociocultural theory necessitates considering the cultural background of the teacher and the cultural context of the school as well. Many researchers have pointed out the importance of considering the school environment when conducting teacher research (Beach, S., 1994; Britzman, 1991; Grossman, 1990; Heath, 1983; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Rogoff, 1990; Shulman, 1983). Cazden (1988) reminds educators that classrooms are "nested" in the school, the school system is "nested" in the community, and so on (p. 198). Evertson and Green (1986) similarly point out that each class is embedded in the school; the school in the district; the district in the community; and so forth. Evertson and Green further point out that schools have histories and they argue that researchers should consider these histories to understand better the expectations, the traditions, and the lines of communication in observed events.

The community and the school setting were important to the exploration. The cultural context of the school added an important dimension to the pedagogical practices I observed. Communities help shape knowledge and meaning for their members (Cohen, 1985). Our understanding of the world depends on the meanings we attach to our experiences as members of a particular culture or community (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Wertsch, 1991). The social framework of communities includes religious and economic systems and forms of language (Brandt, 1990; Gee, 1990; Geertz, 1973; Hymes, 1974).

Language Arts include reading, writing, listening, speaking, and visually responding (NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts, 1996); these subjects overlap nearly all other subjects taught in school. School administrators and teachers recognize the importance of the language arts curriculum to the life of the school and consider its importance when selecting language arts materials (Lawson, 1996, personal communication). Many educators acknowledge the important role of language in the school setting (Barton, 1994; Cazden, 1988; Delpit, 1988; Heath, 1983; Moll, 1992). Language is vital to the communication system of the entire school because it is the medium of much of the teaching. Cazden argues that "spoken language is an important part of the identities of all the participants,. . .[and] it is essential to consider the classroom communication system as a problematic medium that cannot be ignored as transparent by anyone interested in teaching and learning" (p. 3). Bloome and Bailey (1992) argue that language is important to test-taking in school as well. Language has a significant place in the area of assessment. Standardized tests used to assess the effectiveness of school districts require the ability to read and write (Gardner, 1983; Lawson, 1997, personal

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communication). Language as it is used and taught influences the school community and to some degree through assessment reflects the effectiveness of the school.

A teacher's perspective of the influences involved in what and how to teach language arts and her perspective of a school's selected language arts curriculum on that teacher's pedagogy may contribute beneficial information to educators.

Theoretical Framework

I based the research on several assumptions using the sociocultural approach. The first assumption considers the relationship between individuals and their communities and the influence of this relationship on the individual's world view. The second assumption is based on the theory versus practice dichotomy concerning grammar instruction. The third assumption is that the setting of a school, in this case a rural setting, is important to the educational practices within that setting.

The first assumption in the sociocultural approach considers the relationship between individuals and their communities (Wertsch, 1991). Building on Vygotsky's (1986) concept of "internalization" which asserts that societal and cultural forces mediate mental functions, Wertsch posits that through interaction in their communities individuals attach meaning to signs, symbols, and gestures. When communities reinforce these meanings, individuals internalize them and begin to use them in the form of written and spoken communication. Mental functioning in an individual begins in a social process or through historically-rooted communication. Wertsch argues that a speaker's perspective, conceptual horizon, intention, and world view influence his or her written and spoken communication.

My research assumes that the world view of teachers influences their beliefs about teaching, including what and how to teach. Cultural experiences shape a teacher's values and beliefs and these in turn influence the pedagogy and the expectations of the teacher for students (Elbaz, 1983; Ruddell & Unrau, 1994). Information from observations of the teacher in the classroom and from follow-up interviews to clarify the observed actions should reflect the teacher's beliefs, cultural background, and pedagogical perspective.

The second assumption points to the existence of competing theories between the "ideal" world of research and the "real" or practical world of public education; these competing theories are frequently referred to as theory/research versus practice. On one side, current research suggests that learning is enhanced when students are actively involved when working with others in a collaborative effort (Bruner, 1975; Cazden, 1988), and research for several years indicates or suggests that teaching grammar in isolation is ineffective in improving writing (Baron, 1989; Hillocks, 1986; Noguchi, 1991; Weaver, 1979). However, competing theorists (Davis, 1984; Holt, 1982; Kolln, 1981; Neuleib, 1977; Neuleib & Brosnahan, 1987) hold fast to the idea that teaching grammar is necessary (Elbaz, 1983). Many people believe they do not know grammar because they were not taught enough of it in school; therefore, they believe that students need more of what they feel they did not get enough of--grammar (Mayer & Brause, 1986). Noguchi argues that there might be several reasons to explain why teachers continue to teach grammar. He suggests that "the three most plausible" reasons are the following:

1. Teachers are unaware of current research.

2. Teachers are aware of current research but don't really believe it.

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3. Teachers are aware of current research and believe it but have nothing

better to offer in place of formal grammar instruction. (p. 119)

Consequently, many schools continue to teach grammar using a teacher-centered, traditional skills approach.

The third assumption concerns the importance of the rural setting to the educational practices within that setting. Presently, mandates from outside the school setting greatly influence the teaching in public schools. The prevailing philosophy of many who establish curriculum and pedagogical criteria for public schools, mostly state departments of education, assumes that all schools are basically the same, regardless of cultural influences, size, location, homogeneity or heterogeneity, and economics. Those involved in establishing educational policies adopt a one-size-fits-all philosophy. Educational policy makers also adopt the philosophy that bigger is better and assume that policies that work in large schools will also work in small schools. These policy makers ignore the many varieties of schools within our nation (Nachtigal, 1982; Parks, Ross, & Just, 1982; Powers & Moe, 1982; Sher, 1977). Powers and Moe also argue that methods of organization for large schools are neither efficient nor appropriate for smaller schools in areas of sparse population. They claim that national policies are insensitive to rural areas and work to the disadvantage of rural communities. The school plays a critical role in the survival of many rural communities. Maintaining the school by standards established by outsiders through top-down mandates places an added burden on already tight school budgets. Outside mandates in the form of methods of assessment, mostly tests, that may result in closing or consolidating (annexing) the school, influence the curriculum and

pedagogical practices within each school.

Significance of the Study

This ethnographic, exploratory study shares characteristics of case studies of

teachers; the research tells a teacher's story or, as Schubert (1992) calls it, "teacher lore."

Bullough (1989) argues that even though each teacher has unique characteristics, each

also has facets that are typical, and that learning about the real experiences of teachers

helps other teachers gain a better understanding of education and teaching. The research

reported here may help other teachers, and in particular beginning teachers and teachers of

future teachers, as these future teachers explore their own values, theories, and methods of

teaching. Bullough further notes that teacher stories provide the following questions for

teachers to consider as they read about or observe the experiences of others:

What if I were in a similar situation?

What would I do and why would I do it?

How are my values and understandings the same as, or different from,

those presented . . .[here]?

Are my understandings any better?

Are my values likely to get me into some kind of difficulty? (xii)

This study provides a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973, p. 6) of the teacher while

in the act of teaching and provides insight into one teacher's perspective, beliefs, feelings,

reflections, approaches, deliberations, and recommendations for educators concerning

teaching in general and more specifically teaching language arts. Schubert (1992) argues

that dialogue among teachers willing to share their stories will add to our knowledge of

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teaching. Thought processes of teachers provide a window to view their underlying beliefs concerning pedagogy. Shulman (1986) posits that,

> to understand . . . choices teachers make in classrooms, the grounds
> for their decisions and judgments about pupils, and the cognitive
> processes through which they select and sequence the actions they
> have learned to take while teaching, we must study their thought
> processes before, during, and after teaching (p. 23).

Teacher research traditionally was conceived of and done by outside researchers. Allowing teachers to pursue their own questions as practitioners who know the cultural, historical, and social influences that contribute to their pedagogical choices and approaches may benefit other teachers (Schubert, 1992). Encouraging reflection and inquiry while teaching may add understanding to what it means to teach (Koerner, 1992). Who better to tell their stories than the teachers themselves, or, as in this case, one teacher working closely with one researcher in telling the teacher's story?

Information gained from the research reported here seems to apply to three groups of educators: classroom teachers, university teachers and researchers, and future teachers. Each group may benefit by understanding the importance of the school context: to understand the influence of the school context requires more than just knowing the location, size, and the number of students/teachers (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). A view from within the context, an emic view, provides a clearer picture of the complexities at work within the school context than an outsider's etic view. I became aware of the importance and value of looking through the lenses of the participants as the research

progressed. I tried to maintain an awareness that although researchers may try to remove themselves and be truly objective, their values and life experiences do affect their interpretations.

Considering the viewpoints of participants and situating them within the school context gave me greater insight into the dynamics at work within a school. Understanding why a school selects a particular curriculum and why teachers teach one method as opposed to another contributes to my ability to prepare future teachers. The findings from my research were enlightening and somewhat unexpected. I have a much greater appreciation for the complexities involved in public school teaching, for rural administrators, and for the difficult tasks they have in operating their schools.

The research presented indicates the difficulty of finding answers or solutions to narrow the gap between theory and practice and for selecting a particular curriculum. For one, the context within each community varies, as does the context of each classroom (Bloome & Bailey, 1992; Denzin, 1994); procedures that work in one classroom may not be successful in another. Even when using a "teacher proof curriculum" (Brophy & Good, 1986, p. 330) teachers vary in the method of presentation, in the way they organize the classrooms, in what they emphasize, in their expectations, and in how they communicate with students.

Teacher educators face a difficult and challenging task of informing students of pedagogy of the many factors involved in the act of teaching: the teacher's cultural background, the influence of years spent as a student, the school context, the school administration, the selected curriculum, and the students, to name a few (Lortie, 1975).

Future teachers should also understand that teaching means reflecting and thinking while in the act of teaching and making changes or adapting to situations quickly (Brophy & Good, 1986). By reflecting on why and what they are doing and on the outcome of their actions in the classroom, teachers will become better teachers and have better understanding of their pedagogical practices (Beach & Marshall, 1990; Goswami & Stillman, 1987; Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995).

Overview of the Research

The research reported here took place during the 1996-97 school year in a rural school. The focus of the study was one teacher teaching the Shurley Method of Language Arts Instruction to fifth graders. Chapter two provides an overview of literature related to the theoretical assumptions of the research. Chapter three details the research procedures, including the methods of research used, the selection of participants, data collection, analysis and data interpretation. The findings from the research follow in Chapter four and the final chapter explains the implications of the research for those interested in the study of language arts pedagogy.

CHAPTER 2: RELATED LITERATURE

To understand the teacher's perspective on the effectiveness of the selected language arts curriculum using a sociocultural approach necessitates considering related research concerning the importance of the school community, outside influences on the school, theories concerning teaching language arts, the pedagogical theory of the Shurley Method of Language Arts Instruction, the influence of the teacher's cultural background on her pedagogy, the teacher's pedagogical beliefs, and the teacher's thought processes while teaching.

Rural Community

This study took place in a rural community and a clear perception of the rural setting seems imperative to understanding the research reported here. Rural communities vary greatly, so much so that even arriving at a clear definition of *rural* proves problematic (Sher, 1977). Sher believes it is easier to explain what is not rural. He points out that the Census Bureau defines *urban* and classifies all outside the urban definition as *rural*. Sher further explains that statisticians put data into two categories, metropolitan and nonmetropolitan.

Speaking for the National Rural Education Association, Pauline Hodges (personal communication) reports that there are presently three definitions of rural schools:

A school district more than 50 miles outside a metropolitan area.

A school district in an isolated area [no definition for isolation was provided].

A school district with a population of under 20,000.

Betty Rose D. Rios, Director of ERIC/CRESS, (1988) compiled from various government

agencies and from organizations in several states 21 definitions of *rural*. Rios argues that

with approximately 10 million students in rural schools efforts to find an accurate

definition for rural districts and for rural schools proves difficult. Perhaps the difficulty of

defining *rural* results from diversity. A rural and isolated area in the Oklahoma panhandle

is not the same as a rural area near a larger city in Oklahoma, just as a rural and isolated

school district in Appalachia is vastly different from a rural and isolated school district in

New Mexico or Arizona. To say that any school district that is nonmetropolitan is rural is

much too broad (Dillman & Hobbs, 1982). A town with a population of 18,000 is rural by

definition, but it differs greatly from a rural town of under 1,000 people. The difficulty of

determining a clear definition of rural may help explain the problem in creating an

educational curriculum suitable for all schools.

Clearly the needs of a small, remote rural school differ considerably from those of

a large, urban school (Miller, 1992). While there are many types of rural communities,

often within a particular rural area a predominant characteristic is homogeneity (Nachtigal,

1982). With few exceptions, community members are more similar than different in

matters of race, economics, religion, and values. The school district in such communities

reflects their homogeneous nature. The values important to community members impact

the curriculum selection and the resulting pedagogical practices. To consider a selected

curriculum without its situatedness in a homogeneous community would distort the

findings.

The rural communities in my part of the state (the southeast, central area) and the

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community I researched are for the most part homogeneous. Communities in the surrounding area seem to cluster according to their sameness. For example, one community is made up predominantly of lower socioeconomic protestant Native Americans. Not far from my area is an Amish community that strongly adheres to maintaining its uniqueness. Many rural districts in this area have nearly all Anglo American students. The school districts for each of these communities reflect the characteristic of sameness also. Most of the rural schools in this area of the state have no African American students, teachers, or administrators. Rural communities vary greatly from one another, but within the confines of each community there is frequently homogeneity. Obviously, it is difficult to define "a rural school district" and to create a "one best curriculum" for all school districts.

One reason for the homogeneity of a rural community is the fact that families made up of several generations reside there (Barton, 1994). Many of the teachers and administrators have grown up in the area as well. With generation after generation staying in the community, there is little opportunity for change. Rogoff (1990) says that each generation inherits products of the culture. These products include tools for dealing with information which is included in the language system of the culture (Scollon & Scollon, 1981). Rogoff also states that the system of handling information passes from one generation to another. For the rural school district, these long established practices are reflected throughout the curriculum and are slow to change (Barton, 1994; Rogoff, 1990). Tulviste's (1991) principle of heterogeneity illuminates the nature of some rural communities. Tulviste maintains that heterogeneous environments offer learners a variety

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of types of problems to solve and allows them to develop a number of frameworks for thinking. According to Tulviste's principle, a lack of heterogeneity in some communities may lead isolated rural communities to continue to do things the way they have always been done (cf. Lortie, 1975).

The variety of rural school districts and the different needs of those in remote and isolated locations compared to those that are on the fringes of large cities indicate some of the difficulties some schools face in meeting standards established for all schools. Understanding the rural setting compared to an urban setting concerns those involved in rural education (Bohrson, 1982; Dillman & Hobbs, 1982; Nachtigal, 1982; Parks, Ross, & Just, 1982; Powers & Moe, 1982; Sher, 1977).

Federal and state policy makers seem to assume that schools come in one size (Nachtigal, 1982). Nachtigal argues that in any given era rural schools have had to be carbon copies of larger schools systems; in a sense, they have had to become small versions of large urban schools. The established educational standards from course offerings, teacher certification, the criteria set for the number of volumes in the library, and so on are based on those of large schools. The per pupil cost of operating a school system with only 100 or 200 students places a hardship on small school budgets. To assume that all schools and their students have the same needs is to do the students an injustice.

Others have called attention to the fact that rural schools have had to accept and adapt to policies designed for urban models of education (Parks, Ross, & Just, 1982). Adhering to the "one best system" remains a prominent practice in education, even

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though many question the effectiveness of having the same requirements for all schools regardless of size (Bohrson, 1982; Dillman & Hobbs, 1982). The problem with state mandates applicable to all state schools is that they are based on the philosophy that "bigger is better." The idea that what is good for large schools must be good for all has been prevalent for many years (Tyack, 1974).

Meeting the required standards set by others outside the school system, usually the State Department of Education, places a great hardship on many schools, particularly rural schools. When the assessment of schools involves funding, the problem becomes more critical. Economics place many Oklahoma school districts in jeopardy. Schools face threats of losing accreditation, of being closed, of being labeled "low performance/high challenge," or of consolidation with other schools based on State Department assessment (Oklahoma State Department of Education , 1996). For rural schools the problem is particularly critical; in many regions, community life revolves around the school. Often in a rural community, the school is the heart of the community: if the school were not there, the community would not be there. Studies on rural communities verify this point. Jonathan Sher's (1981) research on rural education found that the traditional rural school was an "extension" of the community, so much a part of the community that it was "indistinguishable" from it (p. 85). Peshkin (1978) states that the school is the unifying factor in the rural community; he argues that it is important to stress the importance of schools to their communities. Nachtigal (1982) also points out that the function of a rural school goes beyond educating students; the school is the key to maintaining the community. According to Miller (1995) rural schools do not just provide classroom

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instruction but they are the center of community activity as well. The role that many rural

schools play in maintaining their communities sheds light on the pressures on these schools

to meet standards required by outside scources.

Research using the sociocultural approach must consider the context of the school

in the community. The characteristics of the school's cultural context provide valuable and

necessary information. The school's setting plays an important part in decisions concerning

curriculum, teacher qualifications, extracurricular activities, and a number of other issues.

Outside Influences

Outside sources influence curriculum selection and pedagogical practices in public

schools. Miller (1992) argues that a disparity in power relationships prevalent in most

schools plays a part in determining what is practiced. Political, social, and economic

factors from outside the school may determine what goes on in the classroom (Bullough,

1989; Miller, 1992). Funding for schools depends on assessment, mostly in the form of

standardized tests scores (Good & Brophy, 1986; Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1996).

Jackson (1986) states that test scores are also used to measure teaching effectiveness and

the quality of the school. Assessment through test scores plays a significant role for small

rural schools. Schools with test scores lower than the acceptable standard established by

outside sources (state mandates) are labeled low performance/high challenge. Repeated

placement (third time) on these lists may result in the schools' being either closed or

annexed with another school (State Department of Education, 1997, personal

communication). Because a rural school plays a vital role in its community, the loss of the

school would devastate the community. No community wants to lose its school. As one

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superintendent said when I asked about consolidation, "Those are fighting words." The effects of the assessment dilemma have huge consequences for small rural communities. School officials (administrators and school boards) feel pressured by state mandates to produce adequate test scores. The pressure often results in schools' teaching to the mandated tests (Smith, 1995). Many schools select curriculum materials and adopt pedagogical practices designed to meet the needs created by assessment and evaluation; they select curriculum materials based on deficiencies of students rather than on students' strengths and interests (Beach & Marshall, 1991; Bullough, 1989).

A common practice for state departments of education is to mandate a set curriculum for all schools, regardless of size or location (urban or rural). The Oklahoma State Department of Education established the "Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS)" for grades one through twelve in various subject areas. (See Appendix A for PASS requirements for language arts.) The State Department of Education expects students in the state of Oklahoma to master the PASS skills. All Oklahoma schools must teach the priority skills and students in grades five, eight, and eleven must take criterion-referenced tests to determine their proficiency in these skills. Hudson (1989) explains that,

> Criterion-referenced test scores are reported and interpreted with reference
>
> to a specific content domain or criterion of performance. They thus provide
>
> information about an individual's mastery of a given content domain, or
>
> level of performance. One requirement of criterion-referenced test develop-
>
> ment and interpretation is the specification of a content or ability domain.
>
> Because the domain specification is frequently made in terms of instructional

objectives, criterion-referenced tests are sometimes also referred to as

'"objectives-based"' tests. (p. 248)

All students in these grades must take tests in mathematics, English language arts (reading, writing, and language), science, social studies, and geography. Tests covering culture and the arts will be added in 1998. To meet the culture and the arts requirement of PASS, many schools must employ a certified art teacher. Paying an additional teacher will further stretch tight school budgets.

In addition to the State Department of Education mandated PASS tests, Oklahoma schools must also administer legislatively mandated, norm-referenced achievement tests (Iowa Test of Basic Skills, ITBS) to students in the third and seventh grades and criterion-referenced tests (Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test developed by Harcourt Brace) to students in the fifth, eighth, and eleventh grades. According to Hudson (1989) norm-referenced tests, often called "standardized," have "two distinguishing characteristics: 1. [They are] administered in a standard way under uniform conditions and 2. [They have] been tried out with large groups of individuals, whose scores provide standard 'norms' or reference points for interpreting scores" (p. 248).

The Oklahoma State Department of Education then assesses the schools according to the scores on the ITBS norm-referenced tests. The Oklahoma State Department of Education designates schools that are "high challenge and low performing" according to the ITBS norm-referenced tests scores. (Students in the eighth and eleventh grades also take the Oklahoma Core Curriculum Writing Test.) Schools scoring below 25% of the state average and below 49% of the national average are designated "first-year low

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performing schools" or as "school sites identified as low-performing for the second consecutive year" (Richardson, State Department of Education, personal communication). Schools labeled low-performance have two years to improve the norm-referenced tests scores. If these scores remain below the required average after two years, the school is then classified "high-challenge." Schools designated high-challenge must bring tests scores up within three years. The State Department has several options for schools who remain on the high-challenge list for three years. It may annex the high-challenge school with another school district. The State Department may reconstitute the entire teaching and administrative staff of the school. Other options include placing the school under the jurisdiction of a college or university with a School of Education or putting in a team of educators to run the school (Richardson, State Department of Education, 1997, personal communication). Any of these consequences causes concern for rural school districts.

Another mandate for Oklahoma schools was House Bill 1017, which was an effort toward improving the education of Oklahoma students. The changes mandated by 1017 were for the benefit of all schools, regardless of size, and for all students. Yet according to many area school principals, implementing these changes was difficult for some of the smaller rural schools (Johnson, 1996; Lawson, 1997). Often mandates such as those in PASS and in House Bill 1017 place difficult demands on small, remote, and isolated schools that lack many of the resources necessary for implementation. For example, several area administrators reported that they will have to hire additional teachers to meet the culture and arts criteria of PASS; for some school districts hiring additional teachers places a great strain on the limited funds.

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Many researchers argue that standardized tests fail to test what students actually know (Barton, 1994; Hudson, 1989; Kintgen, Kroll, & Rose, 1988; Lambert, 1991; Newcomb, 1991). The information taken from these tests is often misused by those who assess schools: Students are often inappropriately placed in remedial programs or they are unjustifiably tracked according to the tests' results (Rose, 1989). In their study of the uses of standardized tests, Hall and Kleine (1992) found that even though measurement experts caution that these tests have limitations and can be misused, the public and other governing bodies rely on test scores to provide proof that students are receiving quality education. Schubert (1992) argues that much of teaching cannot be reduced to checklists or printouts of students' achievement tests scores. Howard Gardner (1983) adds that methods of assessment should not be restricted to such a limited set of competencies as those found on standardized tests. The State Department's reliance on testing as the method for assessing the success of schools places pressure on the school administrators to select teaching methods and material geared to the tests (Petrosky, 1990).

Erickson (1984) offers evidence that reveals the mismatch between the tests used in Western schools and actual cognitive ability. Erickson argues that "schools are increasingly places in which one individual (the teacher) sets absolute task parameters for others. Practice in such situations of performance no doubt improves student performance on standardized tests. It does not improve overall reasoning ability. . ." (p. 215). Some schools, in efforts to achieve success on the standardized tests, have adopted curriculum programs that teach the skills found on these tests. Erickson further argues that in some schools neither the student nor the teacher has "rights to shape the learning task" (p. 215).

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Language Arts Curriculum

Developing a satisfactory curriculum is a difficult and ongoing process (Applebee, 1993; Barton, 1994; Hawisher & Soter, 1990). Applebee explains that in the past three traditions have sought dominance in the teaching of English language arts: "One was student-centered, emphasizing personal growth; one was content-centered, emphasizing the preservation of a cultural heritage; and one was skill-centered, emphasizing the development of language competencies" (p. 5).

Those involved in English education remain divided. According to Applebee (1993), the National Council of Teachers of English, the Modern Language Association, and five other organizations formed an English Coalition to consider the three conflicting traditions. The Coalition agreed that students are active learners and that learning combines skills and content through practice and assimilation, but the Coalition's report could not resolve the conflict in teaching the skills and content students need using the student-centered process-oriented approaches. In essence, their findings left the English curriculum dilemma unresolved. Recently the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association published Standards for the English Language Arts (1996), which establishes twelve standards. The goal of these standards is to define what students should learn in the areas of language arts. In the introduction to the publication, the writers emphasize that the standards are merely guidelines and are not intended to dictate curriculum or instruction. Not one of the twelve standards specifically addresses grammar. The sixth standard, which states that "students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques,

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figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts" (p. 3), touches on the issue, but the publication stresses that the twelve standards should be treated as a whole and not as separate and distinct abilities. But even these suggested standards have received criticism causing NCTE/IRA to publish Speak Up for the Standards in response. The language arts curriculum debate concerning what to teach and how to teach it continues. Part of the debate involves the disparity in what research suggests for teaching language arts and the actual practice of teaching in many schools which continue to focus on teaching grammar.

Many researchers argue that teaching grammar in isolated pieces is ineffective in improving writing (Hillocks, 1986). The ineffectiveness of instruction in grammar in improving writing has been verified for decades (Noguchi, 1991). Weaver (1979; 1996a; 1996b) points out that decades of research have demonstrated that teaching grammar is not effective in developing thinking skills. Hillocks (1987) also argues that studying grammar does not improve students' writing skills. He further says that students do not learn to write by memorizing parts of speech that have been removed from the context of the students' written work.

Despite the evidence of Hillocks (1986), Noguchi (1991), and Weaver (1979), some teachers and administrators continue to hold fast to the opinion that teaching grammar is necessary (Baron, 1990; Lindeman, 1987) and believe that students can learn grammar and thereby improve their writing skills. Why the insistence on teaching grammar? Many educators agree with Mayer and Brause (1986) that the curriculum used is the result of mandated standardized tests. Mayer and Brause explain that schools,

especially rural schools, feel pressured to increase scores on state mandated tests. The

pressure results in the necessity of drilling students on exercises similar to those found on

these tests. Petrosky's (1990) research in the Mississippi Delta substantiates the argument

that drilling students on test-like exercises may improve tests scores, but does little to

develop critical thinking in students. Weaver (1979) explains that teachers seem caught

between two views. On one side, volumes of research and the testimony of many students

suggest that studying grammar does not help individuals improve their reading or writing.

On the opposite side, much of the public in general and many English and language arts

teachers believe that studying grammar does help students read and write. Teaching

grammar continues to be problematic for educators. The NCTE publication English

Journal in November, 1996, devoted the entire issue to the teaching of grammar. Lelia

Christenbury, the Journal's editor, acknowledges that the debate concerning teaching

grammar continues and remains unresolved, but she suggests that almost all the writers of

the twenty articles appearing in the publication agree that grammar

> cannot be taught effectively in discrete, unconnected units;

> cannot be taught effectively in massive doses;

> cannot be taught divorced from student writing; and

> cannot be taught effectively if students see no real need for it and if

>> teachers cannot persuade them to see a need. (p. 12)

In 1983 according to Michael Apple the trend was for schools to get back to

basics using a skills approach to pedagogy, which is found in many "prepackaged"

curriculum programs similar to the Shurley Method (discussed below), one method of

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teaching language arts that adheres to the skill-centered approach. Evidently the trend continues. It is quite common to enter a classroom and find any number of prepackaged, boxed sets in several subjects. These prepackaged programs, which include everything necessary to present a lesson, are "defined as precisely as possible and by people who are external to the situation" (Apple, p. 151). Apple asserts that teachers are being "deskilled" (p. 151) by these curriculum materials and that teachers are merely presenting another's material (even the planning is done by the curriculum producer). During the deskilling process, curriculum producers are reskilling teachers in methods of controlling students. Apple argues that teachers are becoming anonymous in classroom situations with little interactions between teachers and their students. Teachers present the prescribed or programmed information and students supply the answers. This form of pedagogy takes place throughout elementary schools.

Apple (1983) argues that political forces reinforce these prepackaged programs and he poses a pertinent question yet to be answered, "What impact does it [using prepackaged programs] have on teachers and students?" (p. 156). Arriving at a consensus for a language arts curriculum continues to be a difficult and debatable issue with many calling for the student-centered approach and others insisting on the back-to-basics approach with emphasis on skills (Applebee, 1993; Baron, 1990; Britzman, 1991; Elbaz, 1983; Grossman, 1990; Weaver, 1979).

Shurley Method

The school in the research reported here uses the Shurley Method of Language Arts Instruction, and one teacher's perspective of the effectiveness of the Shurley Method

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was the major focus of the research. In 1981 Brenda Shurley, an eighth-grade English classroom teacher, developed the Shurley Method, a skills-based approach that she argues does three things: 1) teaches grammar through drill, recitation, and repetition, 2) improves writing, and 3) builds self-esteem. To explain the rationale for her method, Shurley states that she was frustrated because her eighth grade students did not retain and understand the material covered in English classes. She argues that students were expected to learn and use skills taught in isolation with only sporadic practice throughout the year. Shurley explains that she wanted to determine a better way to teach language arts skills. Shurley further argues that she was unable to find an English program that she thought would meet the needs of her students. Therefore, she decided to develop her own method that would "give students a solid skill foundation from which to build advanced writing and speaking skills" (Shurley & Wetsell, n.d., c, p. 2). She explains: "Over the years I perfected the Shurley Method while using it with my students" (Shurley & Wetsell, n.d., a, p. 2). In further explaining the development of her language arts program, Shurley adds that when other teachers in her school began to show interest in her method, she decided "to write a complete language program for several levels" (a., p. 2). Shurley solicited the help of colleague Ruth Wetsell, and together they wrote the Shurley Method. Presently, the Shurley Method of Language Arts Instruction is used in over 1,000 schools in 25 states (Shurley, personal communiction, 1996). It is on the state-adopted text book list in many states, including Oklahoma. The Shurley Method is a highly structured teacher-centered skills-approach based on the classroom practices and experiences of Shurley and Wetsell. There are no references in Shurley materials to research or to theory by others

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concerning language arts instruction. The Shurley Method Workshop Booklet and Information Packet have letters from classroom teachers and parents endorsing the Shurley Method as a successful method of teaching language arts.

According to the Shurley Method Resource Booklet the Shurley Method "connects self- esteem, grammar, and writing" (p. 5). The Resource Booklet states that

the success that students experience in the Shurley Method and their new sense of competence in English influence their total attitude about learning and school. They become very positive and excited about their accomplishments. Their writing skills improve very quickly because the students really understand the parts of a sentence. (p. 5)

Shurley argues that grammar skills are necessary for working with sentences and for writing. The Shurley Method Resource Booklet lists the following points concerning grammar:

1. Grammar provides the basics of sentence composition.

2. Grammar is the vocabulary of writing.

3. Grammar gives teachers and students a common language that they both understand and use while working with sentences and writing.

4. Understanding grammar gives students more confidence in their writing ability.

5. Understanding grammar eliminates students' fear and dread of English and and develops happy, positive, and successful English students. (p. 6)

To explain the writing aspect of the Shurley Method, the Resource Booklet states that

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students learn "how to write a sentence, how to improve a sentence, how to expand a sentence, and then how to combine sentences into paragraphs" (p. 7). The Resource Booklet further states that

> while students continue to learn about sentence patterns and the mechanics
>
> of writing, **the Shurley Method writing program provides five important**
>
> **writing areas** to give students the writing practice they need. These areas of
>
> writing are creative writing, journal writing, 2-Point and 3-Point paragraph
>
> writing, formal writing, and letter writing. (p. 7)

The Shurley Method maintains that "effective instruction in English must be founded upon an understanding of how the eight parts of speech work together in a sentence" (Shurley & Wetsell, 1988, p. vii). Shurley material further states that students need daily practice of skills taught. The teacher's book states that "daily practice reinforces and promotes permanent retention of previously developed skills and prepares students to handle new material more successfully" (p. vii). Students learn jingles for each of the parts of speech, and they chant or sing the jingles in unison throughout the school year. (See Appendix B for the Shurely Method jingles.) The teaching materials state,

> The Shurley Method has four basic ingredients that make it successful in meeting
>
> students' needs:
>
> 1. Skills are presented in a logical learning order.
>
> 2. There is a step-by-step method for teaching concepts that
>
> reaches the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning
>
> styles of students.

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3. There is enough repetition to master each concept taught.

4. The final success of any program depends on the teacher. A

teacher's enthusiasm, involvement, and commitment will make

this program a success. (Shurley & Wetsell, 1988, p. viii)

Shurley Method lessons are extremely detailed and methodical. Precise

instructions that tell teachers exactly how to teach and how to grade everything covered

accompany every lesson. There is little need for prior planning: teachers merely move

students from one lesson to the next. Each page in the book is a new and separate lesson.

The material leaves little room for flexibility.

The textbooks have a workbook format. Each student records answers in the

textbook. Shurley lessons for the fifth grade (the focus of the research reported here)

consist of nine units. Unit 1A has 8 lessons pertaining to study skills and handwriting tips,

titled Get Organized, Listen, Plan Your Time, Do Your Homework, Following Written

Directions, [and] Test Taking Tips (Shurley & Wetsell, 1989, p. iii). One page in this unit,

"Student Guide For Handwriting Standards," has examples of handwriting for students,

with written instructions telling and showing how letters are formed in cursive. For

example, the letters b, h, k, and l all rest on the baseline and have a tall thin loop that

touches the top line.

Units 1 through 5 cover "Sentences." The five units take up 74 pages of the 170-

page book. The top part of each page (lesson) has between four and six sentences for the

class as a whole to work together orally. A major focus in the material is called the

question-answer flow. In the question-answer flow students identify the part of speech for

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each word in a sentence. Students recite in unison the Shurley Method question-answer flow for the sentences in Units 1 through 5. (See Appendix B for instructions for doing the question-answer flow.) According to Shurley, materials, concepts, and rules are not just introduced and dropped. They are repeated over and over in all of the lessons. Sixty-two pages in the "Sentences" section conclude with a statement instructing students to write a sentence using a new concept they have learned. The Shurley Method recommends that teachers follow a "3-Day Rotation Schedule" while students are learning new grammar concepts. Lessons cover the same set of sentences for three days during the three-day rotation. The material tells teachers to continue the 3-day rotation until "students are strong enough to work well independently" (Shurley & Wetsell, 1988, p. x). (See Appendix B for an explanation of the 3-Day Rotation Schedule.)

Unit 6 on pages 75-92 covers verb tenses and contractions. Unit 7 on pages 93-125 addresses reading, editing, and writing paragraphs. Students are introduced to explanatory, informational, creative, descriptive, and narrative paragraphs in this unit. In some of these lessons students are provided topics, brainstroming lists, and word banks. In other writing lessons a rough draft is provided for students to edit. In five of the lessons students write their own paragraphs. One or two topics are provided for the independent writing lessons and students are told that they may select a topic of their choice. Unit 8 on pages 126-133 teaches friendly and business letter writing and addressing envelopes. Unit 9 on pages 134-137 teaches procedures for using a table of contents and dictionary skills. (See Appendix B for a sample of each Shurley Method lesson.)

"Definitions and References Pages" make up the concluding 30 pages of the text.

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Information in this section includes definitions for all parts of speech, jingles, samples of the question-answer flow, rules for capitalization and punctuation, verb tense charts, regular and irregular verb charts, and a contraction chart. Appendix B provides examples of these. Students refer to the pages in the reference section that correspond to particular units throughout the text.

The Shurley Method teacher's manual has a page labeled "General Techniques For using The Shurley Method." This page states, for example,

Study the steps in each lesson,

Be totally familiar with the method for classifying each sentence to keep

your presentation flowing smoothly, and

It is VERY IMPORTANT that you keep class recitation in unison (p. vi).

Shurley Method materials anticipate problems teachers may encounter. A few examples from a page labeled "What To Say to 'I'm Bored!'" include,

Due to the large amount of oral and written practice, students who have had

the Shurley Method in previous years may complain "I've already had this" or

"I'm bored." Teachers, do not tolerate comments such as these from students.

Anyone who wants to be the best at what they [sic] are doing spends the

necessary time practicing. Athletes, musicians, dancers, and typists are examples

of people who spend time practicing the basics over and over until they can do

them without careless mistakes.

Explain to your students that the practice they receive day after day in English

is no different from the practice an athlete receives day after day in his sport.

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An athlete's training is just plain hard work with no frills, but it is necessary if

the athlete is going to do well. He must practice the basics so often that they are

second nature and can be done without thinking. Then he is free to concentrate

all his energy toward learning more difficult skills. (p. vii)

Other examples of instruction for teachers throughout the teacher's manual include,

Teachers, your students need to have an English folder with pockets

and brads to keep all definitions, rules and other reference sheets throughout

the entire year. Keep only reference sheets in this folder. (You will need

to hole punch these for your students.) (p. 6)

Teachers, the Shurley Definition Time will be the key to learning,

retaining, and keeping enthusiastic about the definitions.

Spend the time it takes to develop an ENTHUSIASTIC ATTITUDE toward

the definitions, but do not let your students get loud or yell their definitions.

Their enthusiasm must be controlled. Do not tolerate loud yelling or silliness

from your students during this time.

BE SURE TO STAY TOGETHER!!! Stop and start them as often as needed

to KEEP them together. (p. 15)

Close the door! Definition Time for 2-5 minutes. Alternate definitions, snap

and tap! They may use their Definition Sheet. KEEP TOGETHER!!

Say: In this set of sentences, there will be more information added to the

question and answer flow. You will classify the sentence with me until we get to

to the new part, and then I will teach you what to say. (p. 27)

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Give Group 1 Sentences back to the students. Have them exchange papers

and look on the board to find and mark errors. Walk around the classroom

to make sure papers are being checked correctly. Give help when needed.

Have students use teeny-tiny checks to mark each answer that is right

and circle the answer if it is wrong.

Have students exchange back. Each student is now to look at the answers

on the board and check his own paper to make sure it is checked correctly.

If you decide to grade papers yourself, a handy way to mark errors is by using

a yellow marker and drawing a yellow line through the error. This is fast, easy,

and looks good. (p. 35)

Suggestions for students making a C, D, or F on the textbook format sentences:

Have students write the whole test (INCLUDING the directions) on their note-

book paper and rework every sentence. This will help slow them down and make

them pay attention to what they are doing. It will only take a minute to see if they

are doing their redo paper correctly. Hopefully, next time they will take their time

so that they will get good grades for their efforts. (p. 87).

The Shurley Method includes every detail. All lessons and tests are planned and

graded. For teachers who adhere to the SM teacher's manual there is no need for planning

and preparation. Teachers may merely read from the text. Barton (1994) argues that

understanding how people use texts, such as textbooks and instruction manuals, cannot be

isolated from practice; the text and the practice of using the text should be studied

together.

Influence of Cultural Background

The social context of schools influences the values enacted in the schools within the particular culture and also influences selection of the curriculum (Britzman, 1986; Elbaz, 1983; Nespor, 1987; Ruddell & Unrau, 1994). Understanding the cultural background of a particular teacher within the context of a school setting seems necessary to explore the effectiveness of a particular curriculum from the perspective of the teacher.

As previously mentioned, the cultural background of individuals contributes to the their beliefs and world view (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Wertsch, 1991). The sociocultural approach seeks to "understand how mental action is situated in cultural, historical, and institutional settings" (Wertsch, 1991, p. 15). Wertsch argues that "mental [mediated] functioning in an individual originates in social, communication processes" (p. 13) and allows for the consideration of an individual's beliefs. Wertsch defines *mind* in terms of its "social and mediational properties" (p. 15). He explains that individuals use social tools such as language or number systems even if they act in isolation. To understand the pedagogical perspective and practices of teachers necessitates first understanding the influence of their cultural background on their beliefs in general and how these beliefs in turn impact their pedagogy (Nespor, 1987).

Teacher Beliefs

Some researchers argue that beliefs of teachers should be an area of consideration in educational research because of their influence on teachers' behavior in the classroom (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Pajares, 1992). Those studying to become teachers bring with them considerable experience from their educational background as students (Elbaz, 1983;

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Grossman, 1990; Jackson, 1986; Lortie, 1983). Teachers know from experience what teachers do; they know the structure of schools and of the school curriculum (Lortie, 1975; Nespor, 1987). Experience in the classroom as students provides them with information concerning teaching and teachers. Lortie refers to the years students spend in classrooms as the "apprenticeship of observation" (p. 65). Others suggest that teachers are affected by their many years as students and they say that teachers' beliefs are established and difficult to change (Bullough, 1989; Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Jackson, 1986; Lortie, 1983). Some researchers say that preexisting beliefs are resistant to change even when evidence concerning pedagogy is in conflict or contradictory (Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992). Teachers' values influence not only subject-matter selection but also the teaching materials they use and their teaching strategies as well (Barton, 1994; Jackson, 1986; Lortie, 1975; Miller, 1992). Teachers educated by a teacher-centered, skills approach follow that approach: teacher is the expert who dishes out information (Dewey, 1916; Jackson, 1986). The method matches their idea of teaching based on their years as students (Elbaz, 1983; Lortie, 1975). Lortie argues that many people attracted to teaching, those who live out early identifications with teachers, seem to be more conservative and favor the status quo. They are more likely to approve of existing pedagogical arrangements and less likely to press for change. He further argues that counter identifiers are more innovative and show a greater readiness to change. Lortie explains that the organization of the teaching task favors conservatism and fosters a continuation of established practices. According to Lortie, those who have a strong interest in new, untried, and innovative teaching methods often become discouraged and leave the

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profession. Many of those who remain in the profession for an extended period of time are more conservative and favor doing things as usual in the classroom. For them the process of change is slow and difficult.

Several factors may influence those who continue to hold fast to the idea that teaching grammar is effective and that grammar is something students need to know. Many suggest that teachers' beliefs contribute to decisions concerning what and how to teach (Britzman, 1991; Elbaz, 1991; Jackson, 1986; Kagan, 1992; Lortie, 1975; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992). Britzman (1986) reminds us of the general population's familiarity with the teaching profession because of compulsory education. Future teachers know from experience the structure of schools and of school curriculum. Years spent as students provide prospective teachers with clear ideas and expectations of just how teachers act. Many may remember playing school with one person acting as "teacher" telling others what to do. These remembrances of pedagogical behavior are difficult to transcend. Teacher's thought processes while teaching provide insightful information concerning the influence of beliefs on pedagogy.

Teachers' Thought Processes

Clark and Peterson (1986) argue that an important area of educational research concerns teachers' thought processes. They developed a model of teachers' thoughts and teachers' actions. Teachers' thoughts incorporate 1. teachers' planning, 2. teachers' interactive thoughts and decisions, and 3. teachers' theories and beliefs. These thoughts and actions work in a cyclical manner and influence the observable actions of teachers. Clark and Peterson make a distinction between the thinking teachers do when they are

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teaching and when they are not. They further argue that included in teacher planning is teacher thinking before and after teaching and teacher thinking while engaged in the act of teaching. The researchers argue that curriculum materials influence planning and also influence the teaching in process.

The research of Clark and Peterson (1986) also considers teachers' beliefs as compared to their actual classroom behavior. They comment that there is a complex relationship between teachers' theory and their classroom practices or behavior and at times these do not match. Roehler, Duffy, Herrmann, Conley and Johnson (1988) also argue that in some cases teacher beliefs are not reflected in their practices. Roehler et al. further assert that theories and beliefs appear in teachers' discussions, but their theories and beliefs may not necessarily appear while actively engaged in teaching. Roehler et al. explain that the "knowledge" teachers consciously organize, rather than knowledge they are unaware of, is the key in their decision making. They argue that this conscious knowledge depends on context and is more likely to change than theories and beliefs.

In considering why many educators continue to place emphasis on grammar, Gundlach (1992) addresses the contradiction in teacher attitudes. He states that often teachers are using teaching methods and materials that conflict with their personal beliefs and with their educational background (cf Hawisher & Soter, 1990). Gundlach explains that many teach according to the values of those who employ them.

Summary

The rural school is often the center or focal point of its community. Activities in the community revolve around the school. School administrators understand the

importance of the school to the community. The practice of assessing schools according to norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests increases the pressure placed on rural schools. Because of low tests scores the Oklahoma State Department of Education may annex, close, or take over schools. Any such action could have serious consequences for many rural schools and, consequently, could influence the school curriculum, including what is taught and how it is taught. Other influences include the teachers' cultural backgrounds, educational backgrounds, and beliefs concerning pedagogy.

The study was guided by the information provided by prior research. Based on the theoretical assumptions of the study, the research explored one teacher's perspective of the selected curriculum. Factors included in the study were the context of the school within the community, the teacher's cultural background which included her years in public school as a student, her university course work, her teaching experience, the selected language arts curriculum of the school, and other pertinent points that directly or indirectly influenced her pedagogy. I worked jointly with her to help her probe and consider her perspective on the issues relevant to the research. The attempt was to tell her story from the inside looking out (Cohen, 1985).

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Conducting this research involved selecting the participants, deciding on the methods of investigation, and then determining the procedures for recording, analyzing, and interpreting the data collected. Prior to my study, I contacted the superintendent of Miller school to inquire about the possibility of doing research on the Shurley Method with one of his teachers. (The names of participants, the school, and the communities are pseudonyms.) I had worked with the school on a number of occasions in my job as the higher education supervisor for student teachers and first year teachers. I particularly wanted to conduct my research at Miller for several reasons. The size and the location of the town of Miller made the school there of central and major importance to the survival of the town (Peshkin, 1978; Sher, 1977). Miller was more isolated than many rural towns (Peshkin). It was not a suburb of a larger metropolis, and it had no interstate highways near. The school year of my research was the fifth year for Miller to use the Shurley Method. Miller used the Shurley Method exclusively, at the request of the superintendent, in the elementary grades. Miller school did not use it in conjunction with other methods, as many schools do.

The research questions and consideration of those involved in the research should be of prime importance in determining the best method or methods of research. Because the purpose of my study was to explore a teacher's perspective of the effectiveness of the Shurley Method of Language Arts Instruction and her perception of factors that influenced her as a teacher, the methods for investigation had to provide a means of looking through her lens and gaining insight from her perspective. Several other questions

guided the selection of research methods: What are the teacher's beliefs regarding teaching/learning language arts, and what is her perception of what has shaped her beliefs regarding teaching? How are the pedagogical beliefs of the teacher reflected in her classroom and to what extent does the teacher's instruction reflect her belief system concerning pedagogy? What part does her educational background as a student play in her teaching philosophy or ideology and pedagogical practices? In what ways are her teaching practices a consequence of her teaching environment and the selected curriculum within that environment.

I was introduced to the Shurley Method at Miller in 1992 when the school first adopted it as the school's elementary language arts curriculum. Teachers and students were very enthusiastic and eager for me to observe Shurley Method lessons. Through my contacts with Miller faculty each school year, I knew that the school continued to use the SM. I felt that by conducting research in a school that had used the SM since 1992, I might be better able to determine a teacher's perspective of the effectiveness of the material. I contacted the school and delivered the informed consent forms to the superintendent, the elementary principal, and the elementary language arts teacher. After the research committee at the University of Oklahoma granted me permission, my research began.

Several factors influenced my research such as the selection of the school, the teacher, the administrators, and the types of research procedures that would best match the research questions. Because the study intended to use the selected teacher's perspective and as much as possible to present her story, I selected methods to gain an

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insider's view. Observations of the teacher while teaching, interviews, and stimulated recall interviews seemed the best methods for gaining this insider's view. The combined research methods helped to illuminate the importance of the school context as well.

Selection of the Sample

Participants

The primary participant of the study, Ms. Mary Davenport, taught the fifth through the eighth grade language arts classes for the Miller School District. Ms. Davenport had a Bachelor of Science degree, a Bachelor of Education degree, a Master of Science in Human Resources degree, and a Master of Education degree, all from a nearby state university. The 1996-97 school year marked her fifth year of teaching, all at Miller. I selected Ms. Davenport for several reasons. I served as her higher education supervisor during her first teaching year and during that time we established a professional yet congenial and friendly rapport. She seemed comfortable in my presence and indicated an interest in being a part of my research. Ms. Davenport taught grades five and six in the elementary school and grades seven and eight in the junior high. She taught the Shurley Method in the two elementary grades and she taught from Scott Foresman texts in the two junior high grades. Ms. Davenport's teaching assignment has been the same her entire teaching tenure. Thus, fortunately for my research, Ms. Davenport had experience teaching two grades using the Shurley Method and two using another curriculum (Scott Foresman). Teaching the Shurley Method and the Scott Foresman texts provided her a means of comparison and gave her a perspective based on the experience of using two methods. Ms. Davenport's teaching experience seemed appropriate for my research also.

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As a fifth-year teacher she was experienced but not so far removed from her college career as to have forgotten her course work and her academic preparation for teaching. Her first-year-teacher memories provided insight into the changes in her pedagogy during these five years.

I interviewed the superintendent, Mr. Lawson, and the elementary school principal, Mr. Blake, because of their influence on the school environment, including the school curriculum (Good & Brophy, 1986; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Mr. Lawson became superintendent in 1991; he also taught a high school algebra class. Mr. Blake, with the school district for eight years, served the school district as the principal for grades kindergarten through eight and he was also the baseball coach.

The administrators were both from rural areas near Miller and the extended family of each still lived in the area. They were educated in public rural schools. Mr. Blake attended a junior college in a nearby small town and then completed his education at the university in Skyview. Mr. Blake had a degree in Physical Education with a Business Education minor and a Master's in Administration, all from the university in Skyview. Previously he had taught high school business and social studies, and he had been the baseball coach in another nearby rural school before coming to Miller.

Mr. Lawson also attended the university in Skyview for most of his undergraduate work. Mr. Lawson had a Bachelor's degree in Math Education with a minor in Physics and a Master of Education degree with concentrations in Math and Psychology. He said that he had a few undergraduate hours and his Principal's Certification from one of the state's larger universities. He received his Superintendent's Certification from another of

the state's larger universities. Mr. Lawson had worked for two rural school districts about the size of Miller. At the time of my research Mr. Lawson was in his 25th year as an educator, 16 of those years as a superintendent and the remainder as a principal. Mr. Lawson always taught some classes, but in his words he "had never been just a teacher."

The Community

The rural context of the school and in particular its small size played a critical role in understanding the educational philosophy and practices enacted there. For the Miller community, the school system was vital. In 1997 the town of Miller had two cafes, one quick stop grocery and gasoline station, one drive-in cafe, two grocery stores, one beauty shop, two auto mechanic shops, a bank, a post office, no traffic lights, and a city hall but no jail. Miller had one Methodist church, two Church of Christ churches, an Assembly of God church, and three Baptist churches. Major employers other than the school were two sand production businesses. One employed about 25 people and the other around 20 people. Most of the people employed in these businesses lived in Miller or in the surrounding area.

Skyview, a town of approximately 15,000 people, was about 20 miles northeast of Miller. Miller's close proximity to Skyview was important because Skyview served as the hub of the area. People in Miller depended on Skyview for many services. There were several small rural school districts in the area surrounding Skyview. These school districts pooled their resources and worked together to meet some of the mandated requirements. The newspaper in Skyview reported the news for many of these areas, in particular school-related news. The Skyview phone directory included seventeen of the surrounding

areas. The only movie theater in the area was located in Skyview. Skyview had a regional hospital and a state university with approximately 4500 students. No interstate highways led to either town. The nearest interstate highway was 40 miles west of the area. Most of the Miller students who went to college attended the state university in Skyview.

Until about 10 years ago, all southwest and northeast traffic to and from Skyview passed through Miller. The through traffic helped Miller economically because people stopped for gas, meals, snacks, and such. The opening of a new highway, about 10 years ago, by-passing Miller left the community virtually isolated. The isolation caused great concern among Miller residents. Miller was struggling to survive and the school played a crucial part in that economic struggle.

The School Context

In 1996-97 Miller school district had a total of 311 students, 30 certified teachers, about 15 support personnel, an elementary school, a junior high, and a high school. The student-teacher ratio was 12.76 to 1 (The Sunday Oklahoman, 1996). School offficials reported that 78% of the students at Miller were on the free lunch program. The elementary school had 1 class per grade with the exception of the fifth grade which was divided into a boys' class and a girls' class. Mr. Lawson and Mr. Blake decided the fifth grade was too large for one class and divided the class by gender; according to the administrators, they often divided large classes by gender and they felt this was the best procedure. The principal explained that often boys like to show off for girls, and he added that when boys and girls are in the same class, he thought the students acted differently. In the elementary school, grades 1 through 4 were self contained and grades 5 and 6 were

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departmentalized. In grades 5 and 6 students remained in the same classroom and the teachers moved from room to room. Subjects covered were language arts, reading, science, social studies, math, and physical education. The teachers for the respective subjects moved to the classrooms at the time designated for their subjects. Ms. Davenport taught the boys' fifth grade language arts class at 8:30, the first class of the day, and the girls' fifth grade language arts class after lunch at 12:30.

All the school personnel were English-speaking whites. All administrators were male. School board members were white; the only female member, who unexpectedly died during the period of my research, had served on the board for 5 years. Students were predominantly white. A small percentage was Native American and Hispanic. The school reported its ethnic makeup as follows: White, 84 percent; American Indian, 13 percent; Hispanic, 3 percent (The Sunday Oklahoman, 1996). (See Appendix C for additional information about Miller.) Most of the teachers lived in Miller, in Skyview, or on farms and ranches in the surrounding area. All the schools in the area had agreed to allow students open transfer to any surrounding school district. A few Miller students transferred out to other schools each year and a few students from other school districts transferred in each year. In the 1996-97 school year 35 students transferred to Miller and 35 students transferred out of Miller. Basketball and baseball were the main extracurricular activities for the Miller school community.

Miller school was vital to the livelihood of the community because most of the people in the community were involved in the school in some way--as employee, student, or parent or guardian of a student. The total population of Miller, the town, according to

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the latest census figures, was 716. Many of the students did not live within the city limits of Miller. School officials did not have a definite figure for the number of students who actually lived within the city limits, but they reported that Miller school had three school buses that traveled within a 5 or 6 mile radius to transport students to and from school. The administrators and the teacher stated that much of the town was involved in some aspect of the school.

The Miller school main campus consisted of eight separate buildings: 1) high school, 2) junior high, 3) cafeteria, 4) library, 5) administration office, which included a large reception room for the secretary, a conference room, and the superintendent's office, 6) elementary school, 7) a building for kindergarten and first grade, and 8) gymnasium. The school bus barn was located about one block away from the main campus. The school had a second gymnasium and agriculture and shop classes in the town's old armory building, also located about one block away from the main campus. Miller school also had a preschool and a Head Start program located in a nearby community.

The elementary school building, site of the research, had one long hallway with classrooms down each side. A small auditorium was the first room on the west side of the hall, followed by rest rooms, and the third, fourth, and the boy's fifth grade classrooms. On the east side of the hall was the principal's office, followed by a computer lab, the sixth grade, the girl's fifth grade, the second, and first grade classrooms.The principal's office was small with two desks sitting side by side, one for the secretary and one for the principal.

The elementary school computer lab, new for the 1996-97 school year, was

equipped with 25 new computers. Students went to the computer lab 1 day a week for 1 class period. The fifth grade went to the computer lab on Wednesdays during their language arts period. During this time they worked on a computer program by Josten's. It consisted of language arts lessons or drills related to grammar skills (Davenport, personal communication).

I selected the fifth grade for this study because that group of students had used the Shurley Method since they started school as first graders. With the exception of the computer grammar program introduced in 1996-97, most of the students in the Miller fifth grade had only been taught language arts by the Shurley Method. The fifth grade class at Miller was the first class to date to have been taught the Shurley Method through all of their elementary grades. A follow-up longitudinal study of this group as they progress through high school should also produce interesting and informative information concerning the effectiveness of the Shurley Method and should also offer insight concerning the long-term influence of this curriculum material.

Classroom Contexts

Fifth Grade Classrooms

Eleven boys sat at individual desks in the boys' class. Nine boys were white and two were Native Americans. The teacher's desk faced the boys' desks. A podium and tall stool stood beside the teacher's desk. One Hispanic, nine white, and five Native American girls made up the girls' class. The girls' room, much like the boys', had sixteen desks in four rows of four facing the front of the room. A podium and a tall stool stood in the northeast corner.

<u>Classroom Climate</u>

The boys' class, first period, always started with the salute to the American flag followed by the salute to the State flag. Following the flag salutes, Ms. Davenport read the lunch menu and asked for a show of hands of all those who were eating in the lunch room. She also read other information on the school calendar pertaining to events that might be happening that day, such as a ball game or school pictures.

Ms. Davenport's demeanor reflected warmth and concern for students. She presented herself as caring, soft-spoken, calm, and professional. She seemed consistent in her classroom behavior, in the rules she enforced, and in her teaching methods. Ms. Davenport started lessons each day by telling students to open their Shurley books to a particular page. She followed the guides in the text and called on students to answer specific questions pertaining to the lesson. Observations suggested that Ms. Davenport felt a need to stay focused on the day's lesson. If she or the students became sidetracked and discussed things unrelated to the lesson, she patiently managed to move the students back to work. If students had questions about the lesson or if it took longer to explain something in the lesson than she had anticipated, Ms. Davenport took time to make sure the students understood, but she always tried to move students through the material. The teacher tried to keep both classes working on the same lesson each day.

Literacy Environment

The superintendent selected the Shurley Method for the elementary school and requested teachers discard previously used language arts books. The superintendent played a major role in selecting instructional materials in all subjects. Shurley Method

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lessons made up a large percentage of the literacy instruction in Ms. Davenport's classes. (Exceptions and deviations were extra writing assignments and computer work one day a week.) For the year of my research, Ms. Davenport did not deviate from the Shurley Method until after the Christmas break. During my observations, Ms. Davenport went through the text book in sequential order and for the most part followed the instructions in the teacher's edition of the text. Recording classroom discourse helped me determine the variety of literacy activities that took place. Daily literacy activities included either working a page in the Shurley Method workbook, writing a paragraph, revising a paragraph, studying for an SM test, or taking an SM test. The literacy environment is explained and discussed in greater detail in the findings chapter.

Researcher Role

My part in the study was that of observer and interviewer. In the 1996-97 school year I made a total of 24 observations: 17 of these were of Shurley Method grammar lessons; 1 was of a Shurley writing lesson; 4 were of non-Shurley Method writing lessons; and 2 were of students taking Shurley Method tests. I interviewed Ms. Davenport 6 times; 3 of these were stimulated recall interviews. I interviewed the superintendent twice and the elementary principal once. I also made many follow up phone calls to Ms. Davenport and to the administrators to clarify points or to seek additional information. When possible, interviews followed the observations at the end of the school day; I conducted 2 of the interviews a few days after observations because of conflicts in schedules.

My relationship with the school was most congenial. I had worked in the school on a number of occasions in connection with my job at the nearby state university as the

higher education supervisor for student teachers and first year teachers. I was the higher

education supervisor for one of the high school English teachers during the 1996-97

school year also, so I was in the school district frequently. I felt welcome in Ms.

Davenport's classroom and she seemed to be at ease and comfortable in my presence. Mr.

Blake and Mr. Lawson were also most helpful; they willingly agreed to my research, and

they made time for interviews, for addressing any questions I had throughout the research,

and for providing me with tests scores and other information I needed as the research

progressed. The students in the two fifth-grade classrooms considered me almost as a

special guest at the beginning of my research, but as time progressed, they became

accustomed to my presence and considered me as someone similar to other teachers in

their school. They usually greeted me as they entered the room and often talked to me or

showed me something interesting to them while waiting for class to begin. The few times I

observed students writing independently, Ms. Davenport announced that students could

ask me for help with their writing; many of the students did not hesitate to seek my

assistance.

I observed classes at least once for each type of lesson during the entire year,

including writing lessons and tests. After I became familiar to the students, I recorded the

lessons for use in stimulated recall interviews with the teacher. During the stimulated recall

interviews Ms. Davenport listened to the recordings and frequently she stopped them to

make comments.

Presenting the teacher's perspective of the language arts curriculum, the purpose of

the research, necessitated care as I recorded events in the classroom and conducted

interviews. I tried to maintain an objective lens throughout, but I realized that totally distancing myself was impossible (Fontana & Frey, 1986; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Schubert (1992) argues that a teacher's story or "teacher lore" can be presented in the words of teachers and through the interpretations of "experienced teacher/researchers who interview and observe teachers" (p. 9). My role was to help Ms. Davenport reflect upon and investigate her pedagogical theory and practices and to help her probe for the sources of these through historical, social, and cultural influences (Miller, 1992; Wertsch, 1991).

As an observer, I sat in the rear of the two fifth-grade language arts classes, taking notes throughout the observations. My goals were to observe the teacher in the act of teaching language arts and to record what I observed without making judgments. The main focus of the research was to tell the story from the classroom teacher's perspective, which necessitated removing myself, as much as possible, from the classroom interactions. I had to restrict and prevent my opinions and experiences as a teacher, researcher, and doctoral student from influencing what I interpreted from my observations (Peshkin, 1991). My bachelor and my master degrees in elementary education, my public school teaching experiences as an elementary teacher, and my doctoral work in English Education colored the lens of my observations and interpretations to some degree, although I consciously tried to prevent their influence (Heath, 1996, e-mail). While observing lessons and following along in a copy of the student text book, I recorded and described the lessons as objectively as possible. I exercised caution and I tried not to evaluate the teacher or the material as much as possible, but I realized that it was impossible to be

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totally objective.

My role as an observer and interpreter of the information gathered also required care when formulating interview questions and while conducting interviews. In preparing questions for the interviews, I had to remind myself that I was telling the teacher's story from her perspective, not from mine. My questions had to be formulated so that her answers reflected her thoughts and beliefs concerning the Shurley Method lessons and her methods for teaching these lessons. I took care to ask neutral questions that were not evaluative or judgmental (Grossman, 1990).

I asked questions that required reflection on the part of Ms. Davenport as she responded (Bullough, 1989; Britzman, 1991). I wanted to discover what she thought influenced and shaped her classroom practices. Ms. Davenport's previous life experiences and her cultural background played a part in shaping her as a teacher (Elbaz, 1983; Lortie, 1975). I phrased questions to determine where the teacher situated herself in the educational arena and to determine her perspective of the Shurley Method and of the debate concerning theory and practice in teaching language arts. Likewise, I formulated questions for the administrators to determine their pedagogical beliefs and to assess their impact on the school, the curriculum, and the teacher.

Throughout the study, I was mindful of the background information I brought to the research and I consciously tried to describe and not evaluate the teacher, the Shurley Method, the administrators, and the school. I tried to record what I saw and heard as objectively as possible. I particularly monitored the natural tendency to evaluate the Shurley Method according to my teaching experience and my educational philosophy. I

realized that my perspective would distort the findings of the research. Staying cognizant of the importance of objectively recording the classroom activities helped me maintain a detached view.

Data Sources and Collection Procedures

I observed classes throughout the 1996-97 school year. The boys' fifth grade class met at 8:30 for 45 minutes and the girls' fifth grade class met after lunch at 12:30 for 45 minutes. I tried to attend both classes each day I visited. Occasionally I could go to only one class but for most of the research I attended both classes each day I was in the school. Sometimes ball games, picture day, or other events prevented me from attending both classes. Ms. Davenport taught the same lesson to each class. When one class was ahead of the other, she made adjustments so that the classes would be working on the same lesson. I recorded observations with hand-written notes at first; later in the research I used a laptop computer. Ms. Davenport recorded lessons for the stimulated recall sessions by placing a small tape recorder on her podium. I tried to record and video the lessons from the back of the room, but I was not successful because Ms. Davenport's soft voice was inaudible. I recorded interviews for later transcription or I typed responses into a laptop computer at the time of the interview. I placed dated hard copies of all information gathered chronologically in a three-ring notebook.

Observations

Observations provide the researcher a view of the participants' world in their everyday activities (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). I recorded descriptions of the setting, the actions, and discourse to assist me in interpreting the data from the perspective lens of the

participants (Heath, e-mail, 1996). Classroom observations provided opportunities to record classroom discourse. Capturing language as used in the school setting played a central role in the research. To represent the discourse patterns required recording the language used by the teacher in the lessons, recording the students' responses, and recording the informal conversations between the teacher and the students (Cazden, 1988; Edwards & Westgate, 1994). Hymes (1974) states that "it is communication which must provide the frame of reference with which the place of language in culture and society is to be assessed" (p. 4). According to Hymes, the beginning point is the "communicative conduct of the community" (p. 9).

During each observation I sat at the back of the room at a table facing the same direction as the students. Usually the teacher was in the front of the room, seated on a tall stool behind a podium which held her text book. Occasionally, she moved to write things on the chalk board. While seated at the back table, I recorded contextual information, such as time, date, the number of students present, the page and unit number of the lesson for the day. I had a copy of the student text book, a workbook, so that I could keep up with each step of the lesson. I tried to record everything the teacher said that was not printed in the textbook as she was teaching and the actions, comments, and questions of students during the lesson (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). I recorded student discourse and the behavior of students throughout the research. After the first few observations and the first interview, I made seating charts to become familiar with the students. I found the seating charts helpful when Ms. Davenport discussed particular points or characteristics of students in interviews. The seating charts also helped me ask questions about the

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observations and eliminated confusion in our communication.

The first day I observed, I sat at a table placed at the back of the boys' room. The boys and I faced the teacher. Ms. Davenport explained that I would be observing their class to watch her teach the Shurley Method. My presence did not seem to disrupt the normal routine of the class. The students were busy working in their books and seemed focused on the lesson and the teacher. When the class ended, the boys left the classroom for a bathroom and drink break and Ms. Davenport moved to another classroom. After lunch, I met Ms. Davenport in the fifth-grade girls' class. As I had done that morning in the boys' class, I sat at the back of the room. Ms. Davenport explained my reasons for being there, as she had done with the boys. Many of girls seemed curious about my presence and occasionally looked back to see what I was doing. During all of my observations, I followed along with the class in a text book and I recorded notes in a notebook or in a laptop computer. I noted the arrangement of the room, teacher statements, and all comments or questions from the students. I also tried to record the behavior of the students and the teacher, such as attentiveness, distractions, diversions, and so on. In short, I tried to make note of all the classroom activities, including all the literate activities of the teacher and the students. I paid particular attention to recording the discourse used by the teacher and the students, including the teacher's methods of instruction, types of questions she asked students, the directives she gave, and the students' responses (Cazden, 1988; Edwards & Westgate, 1994).

My initial introduction to SM lessons indicated its similarity to the "prepackaged, teacher-proof" lessons discussed by Apple (p. 149, 1983). Apple argues that these

teacher-proof lessons deskill teachers and reduce teaching to classroom management. SM materials provide precise instructions for teachers and remove the need for planning for teachers who follow the directions in the book. I followed along in a student text book to determine how closely Ms. Davenport followed lessons in the book.

Interviews

Interviews may be a primary source of data collection and may be used in conjunction with other research procedures (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Chin (1994) explains that an interview is not an informal visit or conversation. Interviews are planned events with the researcher and respondent talking about specific topics as established by the researcher. The nature and success of an interview depends upon the person who conducts the interview, on the types of questions posed, and on the person being interviewed. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) recommend that questions be formulated after observations. In interviews, the researchers seek clarification of things seen in observations. In the interview the respondents provide their explanations, opinions, and attitudes. Interviews are valuable tools for the researcher; they allow the researcher to gain an understanding of things unseen and to discover alternative explanations of things seen.

After I had observed the fifth grade classes three times, I started my interviews with Ms. Davenport. The interviews took place after school on observation days, if at all possible. Occasionally, we had to do the interviews on a different day. I studied the notes from my observations to formulate the questions for the interviews. Interviews with Ms. Davenport indicated that the administrators could provide important information to the research. Interviews with each administrator were conducted in their respective offices. I

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recorded the interviews on a small tape recorder or on a laptop computer. All interviews typically lasted about an hour. I prepared questions for the interviews in advance. (See Appendix D for interview questions.) Throughout the research, I studied my notes to determine particular questions for interviews. Information gained in interviews also led to additional questions for subsequent interviews and provided insight into practices observed in the classroom (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). If the participants got sidetracked in their responses, I tried to get them back on track, but if they were providing insightful information, I encouraged them to elaborate. For the most part the interviews were structured but allowed room for flexibility.

Stimulated Recall

Stimulated recall is a method of playing back an audio or video tape of the participant, in this study a teacher, in the episode, allowing the participant to recall his or her thoughts and decisions during the episode (Clark & Peterson, 1986). Stimulated recall of classroom lessons provides researchers a better view of teachers' thought processes while teaching and enables teachers to be reflective as well (Elbaz, 1983). Stimulated recall sheds light on teachers' thoughts while teaching and on teaching beliefs and theories of teaching. I recorded Ms. Davenport's responses to the recorded classroom lesson during the stimulated recall sessions.

For the three stimulated recall sessions, I instructed Ms. Davenport to stop the recording any time she wanted to explain something about the taped lesson or to explain her thinking during the lesson. I took notes from her comments and did not interfere with or interrupt the procedure. I wanted her responses and comments to be as spontaneous as

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possible. I also hoped to gain insight into what she thought was significant and important enough for comments. I recorded her comments and read through them later that evening, writing out formal interview questions concerning her comments in the recall sessions.

Data Analysis

At the outset of the research, I selected a few broad categories for analysis during data collection. I based these broad categories on prior related research as they addressed the research question, which was to determine the teacher's perspective of the effectiveness of the Shurley Method of Language Arts Instruction. I formulated a beginning typology of 6 categories based on the theoretical assumptions of the study (Smagorinsky, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). (See Table 1.) Based on the theoretical assumption that societal and cultural forces mediate mental functions, initial categories included 1) school context (the cultural context of the classroom, the school, and the community) (Beach, R., 1994; Evertson & Green; 1986; Gee, 1990; Moll, 1994); 2) family background of the teacher; 3) educational background of the teacher (Rudell & Unrau, 1994; Wertsch, 1991); 4) pedagogical beliefs of the teacher (teacher's teaching philosophy and beliefs about teaching and learning) (Elbaz, 1991; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992). Based on the theoretical assumption that there is a disparity between research and practice concerning language arts instruction, I included a fifth category: discourse in the classroom (type of discourse used by teacher and students) and the method of teaching (Cazden, 1988; Edwards & Westgate, 1994; Hymes, 1974). Based on the theoretical assumption that the rural setting influences pedagogy, I included a sixth category: outside influences on school curriculum (outside factors that play a part in the language arts

curriculum selection and methods for teaching the curriculum) (Johnson, 1992; Smith, 1995).

Even though I used several methods to gather and to interpret data, an interconnectedness among the categories in the typology became clear throughout the analysis. Because of the interconnectedness among the three theoretical assumptions that became the six initial coding categories of the typology (see Table 1), in some cases it was difficult to separate the data into definite and distinct categories. Societal and cultural influences cut across all other categories. The world view of the participants was influenced by their cultural and societal backgrounds and these in turn influenced their beliefs concerning pedagogy. The rural setting also played a part in the language arts curriculum selected and in the resulting pedagogy.

Since my study was exploratory, I used the data to inform my research. Following the recommendations of experienced researchers, I analyzed the data throughout the research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). It was important to analyze the information throughout the research because as research progressed the volume of information increased rapidly and could have quickly become unmanageable and overwhelming. As I made observations, gathered field notes, and transcribed interviews, I studied the material repeatedly to check the initial typology and to make necessary changes. Even though initial categories were established, I had to consider the possibility of new categories emerging from the data. Because the research was exploratory, I tried to maintain an open mindedness as I analyzed the data. I used the theoretical assumptions and the initial

typology as a starting place, but I exercised caution in my analysis. I had to remain open to the possibility of new and unexpected categories emerging from the data.

To establish interrater reliability I solicited the help of three colleagues as I established the final typology. Each colleague reviewed different chunks of the data and offered input concerning the assigned codes and the final categories. I made a conscious effort to report what the data indicated, not what I expected. My colleagues helped me view the data as objectively as possible. While reading field notes, I looked for repeated and emerging themes or patterns and identified areas that needed clarification. The collected data facilitated, guided, and shaped the direction of the research. Continual analysis of the collected material helped determine the accuracy of the initial typology and/or the need for new categories and subcategories (Huberman & Miles, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Through all phases of the collection process, I attempted to gather in-depth data on the teacher's perspective and on those things that influenced her pedagogy (Grossman, 1990). Multiple methods of collecting and analyzing the information helped in obtaining an insider's view (Erickson, 1986; Silverman, 1993).

To organize and analyze the information collected, I followed the procedures suggested by Huberman and Miles (1994) who assert that data analysis occurs in "three linked subprocesses: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification" (p. 429). The process of data reduction and coding the information according to the typology was ongoing and continual. Some researchers posit that multiple readings and searches of the collected notes help the researcher find evidence that verifies or nullifies the research questions (Erickson, 1986; Silverman, 1993). In order to add validity, I made two

Table 1:

Summary of Coding Categories based on Theoretical Assumptions of the Study

Theoretical Assumption	Coding Category	Explanation
Societal and cultural influence (mediate mental functions)	1) School context	Teacher/administrator strengths, weaknesses of school setting, Administrative influence
	2) Family background	Teacher's perspective of family influence
	3) Educational background	Teacher's perspective of former teachers and classes on her pedagogy
	4) World view--values/ beliefs	Resulting pedagogy
Theory/research versus practice	5) Methods of teaching Classroom discourse	Working collaboratively Teacher-centered classroom Following selected text, skills approach
Importance of rural setting	6) Outside influences, location, size, economics, homogeneity, heterogeneity	State mandates, standardized tests, pressures to maintain school

additional copies of my notes and read, on three occasions, a clean, unmarked copy of the material. I color-coded categories on each clean, unmarked copy. Comparative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1994) of the multiple sets of coded material helped me determine consistencies and discrepancies in my analysis (Silverman, 1993). The comparative analysis provided evidence that helped to verify my findings. Erickson also points out that carefully reading data a number of times helps in finding the unexpected issues that merit further investigation. Grossman (1990) argues that the researcher will probably note that by thoroughly recording and carefully reading the collected information, even trivial data may become consequential. Erickson adds that often "computerized data retrieval" provides only a partial view of the findings and that repeated readings might shed light on unexpected and "unanticipated" issues (p. 168).

I transferred coded information to two data display sheets, one for the information from the interviews and stimulated recall sessions and one for the classroom observations. I then labeled the display sheets according to the typology that resulted from the theoretical assumptions and the collected material (Huberman & Miles, 1994). The color coding helped me determine overlapping areas, prevalent themes, and patterns as well as pieces of information that could be outliers or infrequent events (Erickson, 1986). I divided data display sheets according to the typology and recorded data corresponding to each category. For clarification purposes, I recorded information from Ms. Davenport, Mr. Lawson, and Mr. Blake using different colors of ink on the interview display sheets.

My notes from classroom observations and from the interviews indicated that many categories in the initial typology overlapped or were interconnected, while other

categories were exclusive to the particular activity. I created two coding rubrics to clarify the differences more clearly. One recorded information from the observations, the interviews, and the stimulated recall sessions. Another coding rubric identified activities exclusive to the classroom observations and to Shurley Method Lessons--the classroom discourse. The initial typology for the interview and recall information fell into main categories, labeled Level I; these categories broke down into several subcategories, labeled Level II, and in some instances these broke down into further subcategories, labeled Level III.

While a more thorough explanation of the categories follows in the discussion and findings section, a brief discussion of the procedure used for arriving at the final topology seems necessary. I selected final categories based on the information that emerged from the sociocultural theoretical framework. Level I categories included the major influences on the teacher's pedagogical beliefs as they were reflected in her interview statements and while teaching, the sociocultural influences that helped to shape her as a person and specifically as a teacher, the teacher's perspective of outside influences on her pedagogy, and the teacher's view of the school context (including the language arts curriculum) and its influence on her pedagogy. During the initial reading of the data collected, I labeled statements or observational episodes, the chunks of information, noting the content or the subject, such as Ms. Davenport's statements concerning her experiences as a student, statements about Ms. Davenport's previous teachers, Ms. Davenport's treatment of students, her statements concerning teaching grammar, statements concerning standardized tests, statements about the administrators' influence, and information about

the Miller community. I then transferred the coded information to data display sheets according to the broad categories in the typology.

I reread the data to determine subheadings in each category, labeled Level II. For instance, information listed under the teacher's pedagogical beliefs broke down into her beliefs about the Shurley Method, how students learn, how material is presented, and so on. In further analysis Level II subcategories often broke down into the Level III categories. During the subdividing, additional categories, not considered when assigning the preliminary typology, surfaced. A few examples of the emerging subcategories resulting from the societal and cultural influences on the teacher included the teacher's belief in practice and repetition, her emphasis on correctness, her views concerning student behavior, and her views on student differences. For example, each time the teacher asked students to repeat some part of a lesson, I labeled the statement Repeat. Any reference to repetition in interviews was also so labeled. Repetition became a subcategory of the theory versus practice category. The teacher's belief in practice and repetition indicated her pedagogical theory, and the evidence of repetition in her lessons added validity to including this category to the typology. I placed these statements under the repetition category on the data-display sheets. Often the data did not fit or fall into a clear, distinct category or perhaps the data fit in two categories. I tried to label information accurately; the repeated reading and multiple means of analysis helped to prevent inaccuracies as much as possible.

Categories not in the initial typology but that became evident as I read, reread, and coded the collected material included the self-esteem of students and teachers concerning

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the students' performance on SM lessons and deviations made by Ms. Davenport in SM lessons. Information gained throughout the research helped to drive the ongoing analysis and to make changes in the initial typology.

A second type of coding rubric for the classroom discourse indicated the teaching method used by the teacher. Classroom discourse was coded Teacher's Theory of Teaching. Examination of the discourse patterns indicated the teacher's method of instruction and her beliefs concerning instruction. I read observation notes and indicated the speaker of each statement. I then further coded each statement according to type such as Question, Direction, Information, Response and so on. I tallied the statements according to the speaker and the type of statement.

The typology for the classroom observations focused on the type of discourse. I divided statements into categories based on the speaker and then subdivided according to type of statement (Cazden, 1988; Edwards & Westgate, 1994). These codes helped me determine that the classroom was teacher centered and that Ms. Davenport believed in a skills approach. The results of the frequency counts of classroom discourse are discussed in the findings in Chapter 4.

After I coded the statements, patterns and themes emerged or evolved to cut across the categories of each typology. The resulting patterns and themes were used to address each of the original research questions and the theoretical assumptions. Several themes cutting across categories from both typologies became apparent through examination of the coded data. For example, repetition became a prevalent theme that cut across both types of analysis. Analysis of "classroom discourse" indicated the number of

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times the teacher asked students to repeat something in the lesson. Information from interviews and stimulated recall also indicated the teacher's belief in repetition.

Triangulation

Collecting data from multiple sources helped establish a typology and also helped to verify findings (Huberman & Miles, 1994). Several overall themes or categories emerged from the multiple research methods (Elbaz, 1983). The overlapping of evidence and the consistencies found both in the act of teaching and in the teacher's discourse during interviews and the stimulated recall sessions substantiated the findings (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Evidence of categories or themes that cut across methods of data collection (Grossman, 1990) or key linkages (Erickson, 1986) that unite data also suggested verification of the findings. Interviews with the principal and the superintendent provided information that contributed to the verification of the research (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Collecting data by multiple methods, coding the information several times, and using more than one type of analysis added to the validity of the categories (Evertson & Green, 1986; Huberman & Miles, 1994).

I conducted the research during the 1996-97 school year. I observed each type of SM lesson and each skill the material covered in order to gain an accurate view of the curriculum used at Miller. Observing the teacher while engaged in each aspect of the Shurley Method provided a comprehensive and representative sample of the curriculum (Evertson & Green, 1986).

Research Tools

I wrote field notes of the classroom observations by hand for the first few visits,

but soon I changed procedures and typed them into a laptop computer. I also tape recorded observations. The recordings provided information about the actual classroom activities and the discourse of the students and the teacher. Written notes and typed transcripts of interviews added to the information available for analysis. I labeled the collected material according to the typology and transferred the information to data display sheets according to the categories. Display sheets provided a visual picture of the prevalent themes and patterns (Huberman & Miles, 1994). I saved the material on computer diskettes, and I also made hard copies that I placed in a three-ring notebook.

Interpreting the Data and Drawing Conclusions

During each observation, I recorded the classroom discourse as objectively as possible and noted the behavior of the participants. Through several readings and rereadings of the field notes, I gained insight concerning the research questions. Often individuals are unaware of their world view or beliefs, but they reveal them in their everyday actions or, in this case, in the everyday routine of teaching (Heath, 1983). Observations which included the classroom discourse and the follow-up interviews helped in retrieving these beliefs and offered greater insight into the world view of the teacher (Hymes, 1974; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

I labeled notes from my observations according to who was speaking, either the teacher or students. On subsequent readings, I further noted the types of statements made by each speaker. For example, I noted whether the teacher was asking a question, giving a directive, or providing information. I noted the number of responses by students to the teacher. I then looked for follow-up comments by the teacher. Cazden (1988) identifies

this type of classroom discourse I-R-E: teacher initiation, student response, teacher evaluation. Other types of discourse noted included informal statements, student-initiated comments, student questions, and collaborative work--talking in small groups.

Cross-case analysis of the interviews and the classroom discourse assisted me in interpreting the research findings. For example, as I was transcribing interviews, the predominance of repetition resurfaced. I noted that Ms. Davenport made frequent references to the value of repetition in the Shurley Method lessons. Her frequent references prompted me to go back through my observations and count the times that she required students to repeat parts of lessons. I added Repeat to the typology based on the frequency counts of the coded data.

The teacher's perspective on classroom behavior provided yet another example of the value of the comparative analysis and of multiple research methods. In the interviews, Ms. Davenport discussed her belief that students should stay seated and wait either to be called on before speaking or to solicit a response from the teacher by raising a hand. Once again, my field notes indicated that the teacher operated her class in such a manner. I reread my notes, marked any references to behavior, and added Classroom Behavior to the typology. Each time I read the observation notes, new information surfaced which substantiated the value of multiple reading and coding and of cross-case analysis with other types of data. The material collected in classroom observations did lend itself quite well to frequency counts. Coding the classroom discourse and transferring this information to the data display sheets indicated the amount of teacher-talk versus student-talk (Cazden, 1988). More detail on classroom discourse follows in the discussion of findings.

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The coded data from the interviews and the stimulated recall sessions were not conducive to frequency counts. Many comments made by Ms. Davenport reflected her views and beliefs and provided insight into the research questions, but the structure of the interviews influenced the number of times certain topics appeared. Frequency counts on information obtained through structured interviews would be misleading and, I believe, would distort the validity of the findings. I followed a procedure, similar to that done by Grossman (1990) in her work with teachers, of recording the statements of participants for analysis on the data display sheets under each topic in the typology.

I recorded the coded transcribed notes on data display sheets that had columns for each category of the typology. I identified the speaker and wrote the pertinent remarks for each piece of coded data. My intent was to provide an in-depth view from the teacher's perspective using "thick description" (Geertz, 1973, p. 6). I incorporated the recorded statements when applicable to the discussion of the findings. The statements from the teacher provided helpful information necessary for me to tell "her" story.

I studied information provided by the administrators to verify, substantiate, or discredit the findings. I used a procedure similar to the cross-case analysis of Grossman (1990). Grossman's research with three teachers who had graduated from a five-year teacher education program and with three teachers without "formal professional preparation" (p. 151) analyzed information provided by interviews with each teacher. Grossman's analysis involved cross-case analysis of the interview information. Grossman explained that she looked for "confirming and disconfirming" (p. 157) evidence through cross-case analysis of her data. She transferred statements made by her participants onto

data charts. Grossman incorporated many of the teachers' remarks in her findings in order "to provide an in-depth portrait of each teacher" (p. 157). I transferred the coded information from the administrators to the teacher interview data display sheets using a different ink color for each person to help distinguish views of the participants. In some areas, I added new categories to the coding rubric. I searched for patterns or themes common to the administrators and the teacher, similar to the cross-case analysis done by Grossman (1990). I also used data analysis suggestions by Erickson (1986) to identify "key linkages" (p. 148). In the cross-case analysis of the information from the observations and interviews, I looked for consistences and inconsistencies or for confirming and disconfirming evidence (Erickson; Grossman) in beliefs, outside influences, background information and such. As in the case of Ms. Davenport, I added information from the administrators to the discussion of the findings to provide insight and understanding. The multiple methods of data collection and of data analysis enabled me to interpret the material collected and helped me arrive at the findings.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The methods of data collection and data interpretation should be compatible with and appropriate to the theoretical assumptions of the study. The first theoretical assumption considers the relationship between individuals and their communities and the influence of this relationship on the individual's world view. The second assumption is based on the theory versus practice dichotomy concerning grammar instruction, and the third assumption is that the setting of the rural school is important to the educational practices within that setting. These three assumptions gave rise to the categories in the typologies used to code the collected data. Research methods used in this study resulted in two typologies, one for the information from the interviews and the stimulated recall sessions (see Table 2) and one for the classroom observations (see Table 3). As explained in Chapter 3, analysis of the information represented on Table 2 did not lend itself to frequency counts; however, frequency counts were the most effective method of analysis for classroom practices and classroom discourse (see Tables 4, 5, and 6). In many cases classroom practices and classroom discourse substantiated the information collected in the interviews and stimulated recall sessions. The comparison of data according to each typology helped to contribute validity and robustness to the findings of the study.

As I conducted repeated analysis of the data, findings emerged which addressed the research questions concerning Ms. Davenport's perspective of the effectiveness of the Shurley Method of Language Arts Instruction. In some instances, one finding influenced others, and some of the findings seemed to be a result or consequence of another. Some findings overlapped others. Sociocultural influences which included the community, the

school, the school administrators, and the teacher's personal and family background played a large part in the study and seemed to permeate other findings.

Findings, as they addressed the research questions, resulted in a typology of five major categories: I. The Rural Community, II. The Teacher's Perspective of the Influences on Her Pedagogy, III. The Teacher's Pedagogy, Cognition, and Theory, IV. Outside Influences, and V. The Consequences and Influences of the Language Arts Curriculum. As Table 2 indicates, the five major categories have subcategories, and in many cases these break down into more specific subcategories.

Rural Community

The sociocultural approach emphasizes the influence of the social history of the community (Edwards & Westgate, 1994). Edwards and Westgate argue that researchers must look beyond the surface and the observable behavior to see what may be beneath it to "give it shape" (p. 74). Also, Hymes (1977) explains that language is a social action; observations and considerations must go beyond the observed setting in search of hidden circumstances that play vital roles in the lives of participants.

The Miller community cared about what was taught because the school was the economic engine of the town. Concerned citizens influenced school curricular issues through participation on the school board and through informal contact with school administrators and teachers. There was a complex of forces that may have played into the resulting curriculum. Maintaining the school was a complicating factor. According to the superintendent, the pragmatic fact was that the Miller community would probably die if

the school closed. The concerns of parents were directed toward keeping the school open. Low test scores could eventually lead to the closing of the school as was discussed in the review of related literature section in Chapter 2 (pages 17-20). The superintendent also thought that community commitment was more closely tied to economics than to any clearly defined philosophy of education. Maintaining the school because of its economic importance to the town was of primary interest to school personnel and to community members.

According to Ms. Davenport, most Miller community members had conservative views regarding school; they expected rigid classroom settings with students listening quietly to their teachers. She added that most of the people in the community shared common views concerning what should be taught. When I asked Mr. Lawson what parents expected from the school, he replied, "Parents don't really care how we do it as long as we teach students reading, writing, and arithmetic." In response to the same question, Ms. Davenport explained that parents believed that the school should teach "foundational subjects, like the 3Rs. They don't want anything new." She said, for example, "If I wanted to teach sex education I would probably get fired." Ms. Davenport thought that most parents also believed in a traditional method of grammar instruction. According to Ms. Davenport and the superintendent, he was hired to raise test scores, language arts test scores in particular. Mr. Lawson selected the Shurley Method of Language Arts Instruction to meet the requests of the community.

Mr. Lawson said that because he was from the area he felt that he knew the overall beliefs of parents concerning the school curriculum. He explained that parents (through

the local school board) made it clear that they expected the school to teach students the basics: math, reading, writing. According to Mr. Lawson, parents were pleased with the Shurley Method because it taught the basic skills of grammar. Both administrators explained that they and many parents did not think they knew grammar adequately. They felt that because they did not know grammar the school should emphasize it more. Mr. Lawson elaborated that he thought the Shurley Method taught what the parents believed was necessary.

The fact that language arts test scores had improved reinforced the administrators' beliefs in the SM. The superintendent stated that the administration and teachers believed that parents expected the school to teach the basics and to take care of academics at school. According to Mr. Lawson, many parents thought that if the school was performing its job, then the parents would not have to be concerned with the academic aspects of school. The superintendent added that many parents showed an absence of concern for pedagogy once the tests scores improved. Mr. Lawson interpreted parental complacency as approval. He believed that parents, if not verbalizing complaints, thought the school was doing its job satisfactorily. The superintendent added that before he took over the job, parents were frequently at school and at school board meetings complaining about the curriculum and teaching practices. He elaborated that the morale of the community was low concerning curriculum and teaching practices and that the school was operating under fear and threats of law suits. Mr. Lawson further added that after curriculum changes had been made they had very few complaints about the curriculum and pedagogy. The superintendent stated that parents were proud and satisfied, yet complacent and non-

interfering as long as they thought students were learning the basics; parents used the improved test scores as their barometer. Both administrators believed they knew the pulse of the community concerning the curriculum and teaching practices because of their numerous contacts with parents at frequent ball games throughout the year. Mr. Lawson reported that the numerous talks with parents at ball games helped him detect the satisfaction of parents. The superintendent drove the curriculum based on his interpretation of what the community wanted.

The unexamined assumption of the community was that getting back to basics would raise test scores. Because test scores improved after the introduction of the Shurley Method, the administrators, teachers, and parents saw no reason to question their assumption. Possibly many other pedagogical approaches could have produced the same results. Clearly, "with an average class size of 12.7 a good teacher would have fertile ground to facilitate learning" (Rodgers, e-mail communication, 1998).

Because of the school's vital role within the community, many decisions made by the administration and the school board involved maintaining the school or ensuring that the school be successful. For me to conduct research on the language arts curriculum of the school without consideration of the school context would have omitted a vital component (Barton, 1994; Beach, S., 1994; Evertson & Green, 1986; Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986).

Teacher's View of the Influence of the School Context

Analysis of the coding typology indicated the importance of the influence of the cultural and societal context to all areas of the study. Ms. Davenport's opinions concerning

the school context shed light on areas pertinent to the research. Her view of classroom behavior reflected her perception of the importance of the school context. Ms. Davenport stated that she did not allow students to leave their desks without permission, nor did she allow talking without permission. Ms. Davenport pointed out that other teachers at Miller, the administrators, and parents shared her view. Most community members seemed to favor strictness in the classroom. Ms. Davenport used the term "cultural" to describe Miller. She explained that by "cultural" she meant "traditional." Ms. Davenport's husband taught in another town, closer to a large city, 70 miles from Miller. According to Ms. Davenport, he taught in an "acultural" school. Ms. Davenport described "acultural" as a community with many diverse groups or factions and varying values. The teacher believed that Miller's 1997 values resembled closely the values of 20 or 30 years ago. According to Ms. Davenport, parents also remembered "the rules" when they were in school: sit quietly in class, pay attention to the teachers, and always be respectful. She said that in an "acultural" community, members were not concerned if students chewed gum, talked out of turn, or got out of their seats because "acultural" community members were more liberal and tolerant.

Ms. Davenport seemed aware of the importance of the cultural context of the community in shaping the school environment, and she recognized that the school and the curriculum fit her background knowledge of school (Elbaz, 1983). These points indicated the like-minded view of community members, including teachers and administrators, and helped explain the acceptance of doing things as they had always been done. Ms. Davenport's comments also provided insight into the heavy reliance on teacher-centered

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Table 2:

Summary of coding categories from interviews and stimulated recall sessions.

Level I -- Main Category
    Level II -- Subcategory
        Level III -- Subcategory

Theoretical assumption--Societal and cultural influences (mediate mental functions)
I. Influence of the Rural Community
    School Context
    Teacher's View of the School Context
        Strengths
        Weaknesses
    Administrators' Views of the School Context
        Strengths
        Weaknesses
    Administrators' Pedagogical Influence
        Background Influences
II. Teacher's Perspective of Background Influences on Her Pedagogy
    Personal and Family Background
    Educational Background
    Teaching Experience/Changes Made in Pedagogical Practices

Theoretical assumption--Theory/research versus practice concerning language arts instruction
III. Teacher's Pedagogy, Cognition, and Theory
    Classroom Discourse
    Teaching Theory and Practice--Teaching Shurley Method
        Students learn when they are actively involved
        Students learn by working collaboratively
        Students learn when they are motivated
        Students learn through practice and repetition
        Students learn when teachers monitor their work
        Students learn in teacher-centered classrooms
    Reflective Nature of Teacher

Theoretical Assumption--Importance of rural setting to educational practices
IV. Outside Influences
    Assessment
        Standardized Tests: Norm referenced
        Criterion referenced
    State Mandates: Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS)
    Administrators
        Expectations of principal/superintendent
        Evaluation by principal
    Parents/caregivers
        Communication with parents, community members
V. Consequences and Influences of the Language Arts Curriculum
    Success
    Pride
    Student Differences

Table 3:

Summary of Coding Categories for Classroom Observations

Classroom Discourse

Category	Subcategory	Definition/examples
Teacher centered activities/ I-R-E		
	Teacher gives directives	Instructing students, telling what to do
	Teacher provides information	Providing information
	Teacher asks restricted questions	Asking specific questions
	Teacher makes response	Teacher evaluates student responses: yes, no, repeat
Student activities	Responses to questions by teacher	One student, whole class, orally, and/or, marking in book
	Student questions	Needs clarification, knows answer, volunteer information
	Collaborative work	Working in groups, pairs
	Independent work	SM lesson, writing
Informal Talk	Talk not related to SM Teacher speaking Student speaking	Miscellaneous topics
Comments on behavior	Teacher Student	

Table 4:
Classroom Discourse--Total of all utterances in classroom observations.
Type of utterance--Teacher Initiation (I); Student Response (R); Teacher Evaluation (E).

	Directive	Informative	Restricted Question		Informal	Behavior	Total
Teacher Initiation	68	56	51		14	11	200
Student Response	Answers to specific questions		Asking questions		Student Initiates 16	Student Initiates 5	120
	85		14				
Teacher Evaluation	Yes	No	Repeat	Explains			67
	23	12	20	12			

Table 5:
Shurley Method Question and Answer Flow
Type of utterance: Teacher Initiation (I); Student Response (R); Teacher Evaluation (E)

Type of Sequence Teacher	Directive 21	Informative 17	Restricted Question 15	Total 53	I
Student Response	Question and answer flow	Question and answer flow	Asking question 7	45	R
Teacher Evaluation	Yes 19 / No 10	Repeat 12	Other 9	50	E

Table 6:
Writing Lessons -- Students write one sentence or a paragraph

	Directive	Question		Total
Teacher Initiation	25	6		31
Student Response	Student Reads Sentence or Paragrpah 25			25
Teacher Evaluation	Yes 9	No - Do Over 13	Other 2	24

teaching practices and programs that emphasized the teacher-centered skills approach. The teacher and the administrators believed that they knew their students well, that they knew the type of curriculum that best suited the students' needs, and that they knew what the parents expected from the school.

The Teacher's Perspective on Strengths and Weaknesses of the School Context

According to Ms. Davenport, the "smallness" of the school and the community had great advantages. She believed that most people in Miller would not agree with the metaphor "bigger is better" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The smaller classes with a student-teacher ratio of 12.76 to 1 (The Sunday Oklahoman, 1996) allowed teachers more time to help students, either in small groups or individually. Education was more personal. Students were not as likely to become just one among many because teachers knew their students well; they knew the strengths, weaknesses, likes, and dislikes of students. Teachers knew the families of students as well. Students and parents also knew the teachers and the administrators. Both administrators explained that they had many opportunities to see parents and to keep them informed concerning school matters. According to Mr. Lawson and Mr. Blake, Miller had approximately a thousand ballgames last year (fall baseball and spring baseball for junior high and high school boys; softball for junior high and high school girls; basketball for boys and girls in elementary school, junior high, and high school). These ballgames provided many occasions to talk with parents. The frequency of contact with parents at sporting events might explain the absence of a PTA/PTO and might indicate an apparent lack of parental concern for academics, a point that appears throughout the findings.

According to Peshkin (1978), knowing the students and their families well enables school personnel to assess accurately the strengths and weaknesses of students. As the research progressed, Ms. Davenport's knowledge of her students became salient. Ms. Davenport knew the scholastic abilities of her students and she knew about their personal lives as well. When Ms. Davenport listened to the recorded class sessions, she could tell which students were saying the question-answer flow incorrectly. She also knew the nature or degree of the difficulty. She knew which students had accidentally said something wrong and which students did not understand or needed more help.

The school context had a few drawbacks as well. Ms. Davenport explained that one of the merits of rural schools was also a detriment. She explained that knowing about the personal lives of students was not always comfortable for the teachers or the students. For example, she recounted an incident that concerned one of the Miller students. Evidently, the father of a high school student had been out late one night at the community drive-in quick stop in an intoxicated state and the next day everyone in the school knew about the incident, which was a great source of humiliation for his son. According to Ms. Davenport, people in the community had no secrets and no privacy; everyone knew just about everything about other community members.

Another disadvantage or weakness Ms. Davenport saw in the community related to the economic and educational background of community members. When I asked her about the family background of her students, she reported that about half were from single-parent families. She added that many families were on welfare. The teacher further explained that in many cases neither parent worked. The teacher reported that many

parents were not well educated and she admitted that this lack of education was often a problem. To elaborate, she noted that when she sent home grade reports many parents did not understand them. As the Report Card for Miller School states, 39 percent of the Miller population did not finish high school and only 11 percent had college degrees. She added that she usually had to explain the information on the grade reports to the few parents who were interested.

Ms. Davenport addressed another area that was problematic for Miller teachers. Because finances were so tight, the school often could not afford substitutes and teachers had to spend their planning periods "covering" for an absent teacher. Ms. Davenport explained that teachers counted on their planning periods to prepare for classes and to grade papers; she felt it was difficult for teachers to give up their planning periods. These points seemed relevant because they provided an indication of the complexities of teaching in a rural school. Ms. Davenport's views of events and factors that prevented her or constrained her from performing her duties added insight in my attempt to understand the importance of the school context. Ms. Davenport's views also indicated her perception of the contraints placed on rural school administrators and the decisions they made as a result of the constraints.

Administrators' Influence

A discussion of the school context within the theoretical framework would be incomplete without consideration of the administrators' influence. Collected data provided evidence that administrators influenced the teachers' pedagogical practices. While not the focus of the research conducted, the administrators' beliefs were an important

consideration to my research. Interviews with administrators indicated the repeated theme that societal and cultural forces mediate mental functions. Information gained through interviews with the administrators was coded according to the initial typology. For example, statements were coded Pedagogical Beliefs, Influence of the Community, Outside Constraints, Administrators' Educational Background, and so on. Once interviews were coded, I looked for themes and patterns that emerged. The prominent findings are reported. The administrators selected the curriculum materials that were used in the classroom. Also their beliefs influenced pedagogy through those they hired as teachers (Britzman, 1991). Because Mr. Lawson investigated language arts curricula and selected the Shurley Method, his beliefs seemed especially relevant. In short, the administrators set the tone of the school; they greatly influenced the pedagogy of teachers and the expectations placed on students. According to Ms. Davenport, Mr. Lawson had traditional beliefs and she described him as "authoritarian" in the way he operated the school. She stated that he made the decision to use the Shurley Method and that he expected teachers to teach this method exclusively. In one interview, Mr. Lawson stated that he wanted teachers to follow the Shurley Method materials exactly, but he admitted that he knew some teachers did not do so but instead used what he called a " blended" system.

As superintendent, Mr. Lawson believed that the most important task for schools was to make sure that students knew the basics. He added that to teach the basics schools should start at the base, the primary grades. He stressed that "if students do not know the basics, then they are unable to learn anything in the upper grades." Mr. Lawson believed that first-grade teachers had the most important job in the entire school because it was

their responsibility to teach students to read. According to him, if students did not learn to read in the first grade, then the school would have problems with them for eleven more years. For him, the school had failed if students did not learn to read in the first grade.

Mr. Lawson explained that he thought elementary schools should cover only reading, language arts, and math. He would not include social studies, history, geography, and science in the elementary grades, at least not in the primary grades. Mr. Lawson's ideal elementary school curriculum, at least in the primary grades, would include reading, language arts, and math two times a day (once in the morning and once in the afternoon) with an hour of "play" or physical activity during the middle of the day. According to the superintendent, schools try to cover too much too fast. He stated that students learn only a few facts in history, and he argued that students learned only slang terms in science. Mr. Lawson admitted that science and social studies teachers would argue against his plan, but he added that he thought his idea would work. The superintendent believed that elementary students needed to know the basics in reading, math, and language arts first. He further added that once students mastered the basic math, reading, and language skills, then they would be prepared for other subjects in the upper grades. The superintendent explained that language, along with reading and basic math, was critical for achieving success in school. As a high school algebra teacher, he pointed out that he could not test his students over formulas, equations, and so on unless they knew basic math--that had to come first. Mr. Lawson reported that before he taught his students algebra, he had to back up and cover basic math skills. He raised the question, "Why would I give them a test I know they can't do and that I know they will fail?"

Mr. Blake shared the belief that basic skills are important. When I asked for his assessment of the Shurley Method, he replied, "Students need to learn the basics of language and they get this in the Shurley Method." In response to my question concerning his thoughts about those who do not think teaching grammar in isolation is beneficial, he replied, "I think they are wrong." He elaborated: "Teaching grammar at Miller has worked." According to Mr. Blake, communication is one of the most important skills students need and he believed that the Shurley Method taught communication skills effectively. He stressed to me that the Shurley Method is good for their students because many of them do not learn correct grammar at home. He further stated,

> Parents like it, teachers like it, and the students like it. Writing has improved
>
> tremendously and that was our weakest area a few years ago. Now it is much
>
> better according to the norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests results.

Table 7 shows tests results from 1990-1994. Beginning in 1995 the school did not administer tests to each grade; only grades designated by the State Department of Education were tested.

Table 7 (Scores were provided by Miller School, see Appendix C.)
Test Scores--Total Language Scores--Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)

Grade	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
1st	19	52	67	63	49
2nd	42	59	88	95	84
3rd	63	57	74	91	86
4th	35	54	72	70	78
5th	35	50	56	67	54
6th	13	36	49	55	51
7th	28	45	64	60	56
8th	16	27	61	61	45

Table 8 (Scores are approximate and were taken from the Miller Report Cards; see Appendix C.)
Test Scores--Total Language Scores--Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)
Grades Tested--3 and 7

Grade	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997
3rd	65	65	61
7th	58	62	54

When I asked the superintendent how Miller school used the information from the tests scores, he explained that the administrators and the teachers met and they analyzed the results. He added that they looked first at what a grade did year by year. His main interest was in how students progressed through school. When I asked him about large changes in scores for one group of students from one year to the next, he answered that they tried to discover what had caused the change. He explained that they looked to see if perhaps three or four of the better students in that grade might have moved. For a small school, test scores may vary considerably if three or four students move in or out of a particular grade. The superintendent stated that they also looked at how each grade scored from year to year. If they saw some particular pattern for one grade that was not consistent with the other grades, they investigated the cause. To explain, he said perhaps if one grade consistently had considerably higher grades than the others, he tried to determine why. He said he looked to see if that teacher was teaching more to the test than others.

The principal believed that knowing "standard" communication was important for Miller students. He added that when students go out into the work force, they need to know how to communicate effectively. Commenting further, he stated that Miller teachers

and administrators made grammar important to their students. He believed that the Shurley Method helped students realize the importance of grammar and of knowing "proper" language. Mr. Blake admitted to me that sometimes he did not speak correctly nor did some others in the school. But he believed that he did know the difference between standard and non-standard English and he believed that for teaching language arts, the Shurley Method was best. The principal added that another good point about the Shurley Method was that students remembered it longer than other methods. Shurley states in the introduction to her material that students remember the rules and the jingles for the parts of speech when using her method (see Appendix B). Mr. Blake agreed and elaborated that he had had the opportunity to see the effective results of the Shurley Method: his own children attended Miller elementary school and they knew the Shurley Method well. He added that long after his children had learned the jingles in the classroom, he heard them recite the jingles at home occasionally.

Both administrators seemed to have traditional beliefs and values similar to those of Ms. Davenport and of the community in general. One clear example of their traditional beliefs was the decision to split the fifth-grade class by gender. The administrators made a decision to have a male class and a female class. Mr. Blake explained that when an elementary class had to be divided into two classes, the administrators frequently did so according to gender and this practice was accepted and unchallenged. Mr. Blake kept an article from a local newspaper on the bulletin board in his office that supported separating students by gender just in case anyone questioned the procedure.

Another example of the similar ideology among the school personnel was in the

method of evaluating teachers. In response to an interview question concerning the amount of influence the administrators had on teaching practices, Ms. Davenport responded that the principal knew what took place and frequently visited classrooms. Teachers turned in their lesson plans every Thursday for the following week. She further explained that Mr. Blake came to her classroom to observe once a month; during these observations he stayed about fifteen minutes and completed a Teacher Appraisal Form. (See Appendix E for form content.) For each category on the triplicate form, the principal noted either NO=not observed; S=satisfactory; NS=not satisfactory; or NI=needs improvement. The principal retained one copy of the form for his records and gave one copy to the superintendent and one copy to the teacher. Ms. Davenport noted that she never knew when Mr. Blake would visit; he always came in unannounced.

In discussion of the Teacher Appraisal Form, Mr. Blake indicated that its use as a method of teacher assessment was jointly decided upon by the administrators and the Miller teachers' organization. The principal further reported that "the teachers in the elementary grades received good appraisals." He elaborated that he felt very fortunate because Miller school had good people working for them and they all seemed to share the same priorities and concerns for students. According to the principal, Miller school usually had many applicants for job openings and the administrators could be very selective when they hired teachers. The administrators developed a group of questions to use when interviewing prospective teachers. (See Appendix E for job-applicant interview questions.) Mr. Lawson explained that pre-established questions helped to provide consistency and a means of comparing job candidates.

Both administrators stated that their main interests were to do what they believed was best for students, for the school, and for the community. The influence of the context of the community seemed evident in the school. Most casual observers would probably agree that the school environment was pleasant, congenial, and nonthreatening (Elbaz, 1983). The school had structure, discipline, and, as Ms. Davenport phrased it, the presence of "authority" figures. However, the overall atmosphere was one of warmth and mutual respect. For example, my interview with Mr. Blake took place in his office. As the interview began, he closed the door and stated that the closed door would indicate that he was busy and that we would not be disturbed or interrupted. Nevertheless, a total of six students knocked and entered to tell him something or to ask permission to use the phone, to ask about school pictures, or to ask about a ballgame. Each time he responded patiently and pleasantly. Students were not intimidated or afraid to enter his office. The administrators and staff were approachable, and as they said, "We are here for the students."

When asked what he considered the biggest problem for his teachers, Mr. Lawson reponded, "Their isolation and the lack of a support group." In his words, "They are it." Each grade had only one teacher, there was no one to compare notes with, to collaborate with, or to go to for advice. The problem of teachers' working in isolation is acknowledged by researchers (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Good & Brophy, 1986; Grossman, 1990).

Mr. Lawson and Mr. Blake determined the curriculum for Miller school; therefore, the administrators' views and opinions of Miller students and the Miller community were

important. Knowing the administrators' views concerning students, the school, and the community helped me understand the rationale behind their administrative decisions. The administrators knew students well. They demonstrated an understanding of what they believed were students' needs (mastering basic skills, learning to communicate effectively) and they worked to satisfy those needs. Both administrators acknowledged that most of the students at Miller were more average than exceptional intellectually. Mr. Lawson believed that some schools became too large and thus less effective. He added that in some areas larger schools "try to" or "have to" split into smaller schools in order to provide a better education for students. He further indicated that to him "small and more personal" was better for students than large and impersonal. The administrators believed that they did a good job with their students. Mr. Lawson indicated that "exceptional" students (those who aspired to attend universities other than the one in Skyview and those who had aspirations for advanced degrees) had to be self-motivated in a school like Miller because inadequate finances prohibited offering many of the advanced elective classes offered in larger schools. Mr. Lawson stated that in the elementary grades Miller students received an education comparable to any "top" school, but he added that competing with larger and more wealthy schools was more difficult to achieve in the high school because Miller could not offer many of the elective courses. Mr. Lawson explained that the state mandate to add the "Arts" (Visual Art and General Music) to Oklahoma's core curriculum by 1998 placed financial constraints on many small schools. The superintendent taught the high school algebra class in order to have the funds to hire an art teacher to meet the art and music mandate.

Each administrator explained that he believed that comparing the typical Miller student to students from schools such as Norman, Edmond, Putnam City, and Jenks, to name a few, was unfair. The report card prepared by the state department indicated that the Miller community had more adults with less than a 12th grade education (39%) than the state average (24%) and fewer adults with a college degree (11%) than the state average (17%). (See Appendix C for Report Card.) Mr. Blake reported that the socioeconomic makeup of Miller put its students at a disadvantage. He further explained that in the 1996-97 school year 78% of their students were on the free lunch program. The principal stated that most Miller students had different responsibilities from students in more affluent school districts. Many Miller students had to help support parents and siblings. Often children as young as 10 to 12 walked along the highway to collect aluminum cans to sell and in the fall they gathered pecans to sell. To emphasize his point, he cited the information provided by the State Department of Education that says, "Research has shown there is a strong correlation between the educational attainment of parents and the educational success of their children." Mr. Blake and Mr. Lawson knew that most of their students were at a disadvantage when being compared to students whose parents had more than a high school diploma.

Administrators' Teaching Theory

Statements made by the administrators that addressed pedagogy were coded Teaching Theory. These statements broke down into the following subcategories in the typology--students should know basic skills (coded Skills Approach), teachers learn by experience (coded Teacher Education), pedagogy must consider the family (coded Family

Influence).

Skills Approach

Earlier in the discussion I indicated that the superintendent adhered to the skills approach. His influence pervaded every aspect of the Miller School System. He selected the curriculum, which largely determined the resulting pedagogy. In my interview with him, Mr. Lawson stressed his belief in the importance of students' knowing basic skills. More specifically, he believed in mastery of basic math, reading, writing, and oral communication. To explain his pedagogical theory, Mr. Lawson stated that he favored a teacher-driven approach, but he added that he wanted teachers who would teach basic skills in new ways. He realized that schools must adapt to utilize new and innovative teaching methods now available, such as computers and the use of manipulatives, and he searched for new methods for teaching basic skills. Miller school had received a grant to furnish two computer labs with 25 computers each, and in the 1997-98 school year, the school will have access to the internet. Miller also had an interactive classroom with 8 televisions screens, mounted video cameras and microphones for a daily government course with students from three other nearby rural schools. Regarding his pedagogical theory, Mr. Lawson repeated that there are basic skills students need to know before they can move on and do other things. He added that students need to have mastery of some basic skills and they need to memorize some facts and information in math, reading, and writing. He emphasized that he was not talking about thinking; he was talking about basic skills and facts that "students need to know automatically without thinking about them." He offered the following explanation:

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Students should know what a noun is and how you use it before they get to the upper grades. Students need to know that $9 + 9 = 18$ without having to stop and compute the answer. Otherwise teachers have to back up and reteach these things before they can address the more complex information.

The superintendent explained that he selected the Shurley Method because it helped students achieve the mastery necessary for language (English) requirements later on in school. He favored the SM because of its repetition of skills. Mr. Lawson added that skills are not introduced and then dropped; students repeat skills and add to them throughout the Shurley Method curriculum. When he selected the SM, he had searched for something different. Mr. Lawson's opinion concerning grammar instruction reflects the findings of language arts researchers (Mayher & Brause, 1986). He explained that his own grammar skills were weak and he blamed his weakness in grammar partly because of the way it was taught, "by an old boring textbook and by doing worksheets." He believed the SM was a new approach for teaching the basic skills and grammar rules that students must know.

Mr. Lawson discussed a math program (Reubin Math) for grades K-6, introduced in Utah, that he intended to investigate. In the Reubin Math program all students in the entire elementary school had math at the same time. Each student worked at his or her level until that level was mastered and then the student moved on to the next level. According to Mr. Lawson, "students using this program stay in their own classrooms and they are not singled out; students work independently, but with the help of the instructor." Mr. Lawson thought a similar program for English and reading would be effective as well.

I include this example to demonstrate Mr. Lawson's efforts to teach basic skills using what he considers new approaches.

<u>Teacher Education</u>

To discuss the issue of "theory versus practice" with the administrators, I asked them their opinions concerning teacher education. Mr. Lawson stated that teachers do learn helpful and beneficial information in "education courses." For him, education classes helped students learn the processes of preparing lessons and of getting organized. His thinking was in step with that of Grossman (1990) who argues that teachers need practice in planning before it can become "routinized." The superintendent did add that he thought "experience makes the best teacher." He was pleased that the nearby state university was now placing student teachers in the classroom for longer periods of time. Mr. Lawson believed that student teachers should be in the public school classroom on the very first day of school to understand and comprehend the importance of the teacher in establishing the classroom climate for the remainder of the year. The superintendent stated that there was some dissonance between theory and practice, and he believed that public schools should provide an opportunity for college education instructors to have "real" experiences in "real" classrooms because he did not believe many of the education classes were realistic, but he quickly added they served some positive purposes, such as teaching prospective teachers to make lesson plans and to learn organizational skills and varying methods of instruction. He was not aware that college instructors who work with teachers are required to spend time in public classrooms, but when I informed him, he was pleased. The main point he made was that college instructors needed to be cognizant of what takes

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place in actual classrooms and he believed it was a responsibility of public schools to provide an avenue for college educators to do so. The superintendent did believe that colleges had improved their education programs recently and he attributed that mostly to putting future teachers in the public school classroom sooner. Researchers also agree that learning should be meaningful to students and that those studying to become teachers should have practical and specific knowledge about teaching (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989).

Mr. Lawson did not discuss a particular person or theoretical perspective when he explained his views. The superintendent wanted teachers who would do their jobs and do them to the best of their abilities. Mr. Lawson explained that he wanted teachers who would "teach" from the minute classes started until the minute classes ended. He added, "If teachers would get down to business and not stop to visit they would get more accomplished." Mr. Lawson further added that he did not agree with the pedagogical practices of some of the Miller teachers, but he explained that some were very close to retirement and he felt it would be wasted energy to try to make them change. He also explained that some of these teachers consistently produced high standardized tests scores. Even though Mr. Lawson did not agree with their pedagogy, he was hesitant to make them change because, as he put it, "if it is not broken, don't fix it."

Family Influence

Mr. Lawson said that his teaching philosophy has changed since he first started teaching 25 years ago. Previously he believed that students should have homework. Now he does not advocate homework. Mr. Lawson explained that the family situation for many

Miller students made it difficult to do school work outside school: "Most students at Miller pretty much have to get everything educational while they are in school." He elaborated about the students at Miller:

> Students at Miller school get very little help from home. Many students don't see either of their parents until 9 or 10 at night, if they see them at all. Many students only have one meal a day; some live in houses with dirt floors and in other deplorable conditions and doing homework is nearly an impossible task.

Mr. Lawson instructed teachers who gave homework to make it meaningful and beneficial to students, but he said homework should not determine a student's grade. He did not want students who had no help or support from parents penalized because of homework. To explain the situation, the superintendent added that parents lack the educational background to help students and/or they lack interest. Mr. Lawson also reported that only two parents had asked to see Miller's State Report Card. (See Appendix C.) According to the administrator, most parents believed that the education of the students was solely the responsibility of the school. The parents' attitudes might contribute to the fact that Miller does not have a PTA/PTO.

Summary

The administrators of the school were influential in determining the curriculum and the teaching practices enacted in classrooms. The administrators at Miller were actively involved in the daily practices of the teachers and in the activities of students. The pedagogy observed reflected the beliefs and philosophy of the administrators. Ms.

Davenport considered the superintendent the authoritarian of the school. He selected the curriculum, and he expected teachers to follow the guidelines in the curriculum materials. He was cognizant of the teaching practices of the teachers.

The administrators considered the pressures from outside sources one of their greatest concerns. Both administrators were frustrated by what they considered the misuse of standardized tests scores, but they knew that some type of accountability was necessary. The administrators seemed geniunely concerned with the success of the school.

The Teacher's Perspective of the Influences on Her Pedagogy

In addition to the school context and the administrators, other factors influenced the teacher's pedagogy and her perspective of the curriculum. The sociocultural approach includes consideration of the influence of a person's cultural background (including family and education). Repeated analysis of the coded information indicated that Ms. Davenport's family background and her educational background influenced her pedagogy.

Teacher's Personal and Family Background

Ms. Davenport believed that her family background played an important part in shaping her pedagogical philosophy. Statements coded Family Background were studied and compared to her classroom practices. Ms. Davenport lived a sheltered and conservative life. She was the only child of protestant parents who attended church regularly. Her parents grew up in the Miller and Skyview area; neither attended college. Ms. Davenport's father, now retired, worked as a route salesman for a bread company and he was also a welder. Her mother worked only occasionally because she preferred to be at home with her daughter. Ms. Davenport did not travel much until adulthood. Her travels

as an adult included trips to Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California, Cancun, Jamaica, and Cozumel.

Statements initially coded Family Background were studied and one theme that emerged was her concern for others which became a subcategory in the typology. Ms. Davenport explained that she was taught to "treat people the same, no matter who they are." The teacher added that she believed in "always being myself no matter where I am or who I am speaking to." She believed that every student should be treated equally and consistently. She repeated that her family values influenced her treatment of others. She wanted students to know that she really cared about them. Ms. Davenport's demeanor in the classroom reflected her background. During observations, the teacher was kind to all students. Ms. Davenport worked with students individually during writing assignments. Her procedure was to walk to the desks of students, as they raised their hands, to provide assistance. She knelt beside each student who needed help to work with him or her at eye level and she seemed to give that particular student her undivided attention. During one observation, I noted that she had her back to all the other students while she was helping a student write his paper. She appeared to be totally engrossed in the student's paper and was not distracted by the other students.

The stimulated recall sessions indicated that Ms. Davenport knew her students well, and she seemed to care about them genuinely. Elbaz (1983) points out that teachers' values are reflected in their concern for the welfare of students. When listening to the recorded lessons during stimulated recall interviews, Ms. Davenport usually talked more about the students than about the lesson. She often recognized the voice of a particular

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student and stopped the tape to comment. In one poignant recall session, she recognized the voice of a student and commented that the child had a particularly troublesome home life; she then lamented that teaching the student about adjectives seemed insignificant when she considered the situation at home.

In another stimulated recall session, Ms. Davenport discussed another child who had had problems with the lesson. She commented about the student's home life; Ms. Davenport noted that she understood why a child, worried about what had happened at home, was not interested in the difference between an adverb and an adjective. During the stimulated recall sessions, I realized that Ms. Davenport actually did know her students well and that she felt affection for them. Ms. Davenport was thoroughly familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of her students; she knew when a student made an error on the question-answer flow. During the oral recitation of the SM lesson if a child made a mistake, she knew if the particular child really knew the concept and had just said it wrong or if the mistake occurred because the student was having trouble comprehending the lesson. During my observations when I heard students say the question-answer flow wrong, I thought perhaps the teacher did not hear those students who made mistakes during the oral part of the lesson. The stimulated recall interviews indicated quite the contrary. Ms. Davenport did hear the mistakes; she knew who made them and the nature of the mistake. She also pointed out that often other students announced when someone did the lesson incorrectly; the announcement usually provoked a comment from the student who made the error, arguing that he or she knew it and had just accidentally said it wrong. During the observations, these episodes of one student catching another at a

mistake and verbally announcing it usually brought laughter from Ms. Davenport. The teacher usually indicated that she knew the mistake was accidental and proceeded with the lesson.

The Teacher's Perspective of the Influence of Her Educational Background

Ms. Davenport reported that her educational background also contributed to her pedagogical practices. I coded as Educational Background statements that Ms. Davenport made about former teachers and classes. The theme of care and concern for others appeared repeatedly in this category as well. In discussing her educational background, Ms. Davenport commented that one of her former high school English teachers had greatly influenced her teaching philosophy and style. According to Ms. Davenport, the particular teacher really cared about students; she took time to tell them about her weekend (events in her life) and she listened as students told their stories. Ms. Davenport added that when it was time to work everyone settled down to work. In Ms. Davenport's words, "Even the boys would do grammar for her." Ms. Davenport indicated that when she thought about becoming a teacher and working with students she always thought of her high school English teacher. Research suggests that previous teachers influence prospective teachers as well (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Lortie, 1975). Research by Lortie (1975) seems to verify the notion that time spent as students provides teachers with images which they transfer to their own classrooms.

Even though Ms. Davenport's class was structured in a traditional manner with students seated quietly in their desks and not speaking unless called on, the atmosphere appeared to be warm and friendly. Ms. Davenport's rapport with students was evident;

students seemed to feel comfortable, at ease, and unthreatened by the teacher. Ms. Davenport always spoke softly and kindly, even when disciplining students. Bullough (1989) comments that teachers may send nonverbal messages that they care about students and that they expect good performances. Also Rosenshine and Stevens (1986) argue that highly-structured and teacher-directed classrooms can be warm and that teachers can demonstrate concern, as seems to be the case in Ms. Davenport's class.

In response to a question about her college education classes, Ms. Davenport indicated that she did not believe they emphasized the "right information." Ms. Davenport explained that teachers learn content in their subject matter classes. For example, teachers learn math in math classes and science in science classes. As a teacher, Ms. Davenport did not feel she learned enough about the "human behavior" aspect of teaching. According to Ms. Davenport, teacher preparation classes should emphasize the psychological aspects of teaching, such as dealing with students who have family problems or with students who have behavior problems. Her opinions here seemed to reflect her beliefs about teachers being caring people who have a genuine interest in and concern for students. Ms. Davenport expressed the frustration she felt when she had students who could not concentrate because they were worried about what was going on at home. Others involved in pedagogical practices touch on the issue of the "realities" of students and of the need for teachers to understand their students (Britzman, 1991; Grossman, 1990).

Summary

The world view of Ms. Davenport influenced how and what she taught and her treatment of students and others. Ms. Davenport believed that her family background

influenced her pedagogical practices. Her background stressed the importance of genuinely caring about others. Also the influence of her years as a student and of a particular teacher shaped her beliefs about teaching. A former teacher contributed to Ms. Davenport's belief that it was important to talk to students and let them know she cared about them. Ms. Davenport's background also indicated her rationale for teaching content. Her classes were structured and focused. She allowed some time for interruption or for getting sidetracked, but she quickly turned things around and had the students back on task.

The beliefs of the teacher appeared to echo those of the administrators who in turn reflected the values and beliefs of the community. The traditional skills approach in teacher-centered classrooms seemed to match the overall ideology of the community. Students throughout the school knew the rules and the expected behavior. The phrase "this is the way we have always done it" seems appropriate and perhaps explains the acceptance of the way the school operated.

The Teacher's Pedagogy, Cognition, and Theory

Ms. Davenport's teaching practices reflected the influences of her cultural, family, and educational background.

Classroom Discourse

Careful analysis of the classroom discourse helped me as I tried to attain an emic or insider's (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993) perspective of the teacher's pedagogical beliefs. The teacher's values and beliefs concerning pedagogy became salient as I recorded and conducted the cross-case analysis of the teacher interviews and of the spoken

interactions I observed and recorded between the teacher and the students. Viewing the teacher in the classroom as she enacted the principles which she discussed in interviews allowed me to interpret more accurately her pedagogical theory.

Ms. Davenport's method of teaching reflected her opinion that students should sit quietly and pay attention to the teacher. Her lessons were predominantly teacher-centered, with the teacher either giving directions to students or asking them questions. Sometimes she addressed the entire class and the whole class responded in unison; at other times she called on individual students. I observed every type of Shurley Method lesson as well as additional writing lessons that were not part of the Shurley Method material--all followed the same basic teacher-centered structure. Most of the discourse between the teacher and students was in the form of I-R-E, with the teacher initiating a question (I), students responding (R), and the teacher evaluating the response (E) (Barton, 1994; Cazden, 1990).

To initiate a response, Ms. Davenport used three types of statements or questions classified by Edwards and Westgate (1994)--directive, informative, and restricted. For example, she used a Directive statement, "OK, ready, go," to start the students on the question-answer flow. Other Directive statements were instructive, such as,

Tell me one way to fix it.

This is an inverted sentence; underline the subject once, and everything else twice.

Close your books. Get out a piece of paper and put your name in the upper right hand corner.

You are going to write a sloppy copy and a correct copy.

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The teacher used Informative statements such as,

Remember, a capital letter goes at the beginning of a sentence; the last test I didn't

count off, but this time I will.

You can't say "She have no tomatoes"; that doesn't make any sense.

To be inverted, the verb has to be before the subject noun.

You have a cheat sheet on page 25 to show you exactly what each sentence should

tell.

Verbs or helping verbs, prepositional phrases, adverbs, if any of these are at the

beginning [of the sentence], then the sentence is inverted.

Ms. Davenport often asked Restricted questions requesting specific information such as,

This is the hardest one; it is going to be a question sentence, isn't it?

When is it a question sentence? What does that tell us?

What's does "couldn't" mean?

How can we write this another way but mean the same?

Why is there a comma after yes? Which rule?

Each observed lesson had little discourse by students, other than student responses to

teacher questions. (See Tables 4, 5, and 6.) I used a coding system that indicated who was

speaking--the teacher or the students. I also noted the type of statement--interrogative,

directive, informational. Coding the type of statement and who said it indicated the

predominance of teacher talk in Ms. Davenport's classroom and provided evidence for me

to conclude that her classroom was teacher-centered. Usually the teacher began with an

explanation of any part of the day's lesson that she thought students might not understand.

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Then they worked each step of the lesson. Most of the SM lessons started with the question-answer flow. After Ms. Davenport directed, "Ok, ready, go," the students recited the question-answer flow in unison. Ms. Davenport kept students on task, and if they discussed something not related to the lesson, she moved them back to the lesson as quickly as possible.

The teacher sometimes gave students directives in the form of a question similar to the manner explained by Delpit (1988), such as, "Are we ready to get started?" which really meant "Let's begin." One example of a "directive question" was "If your test says find all the double negatives you will know what they are talking about, right?" This statement meant that she wanted them to know and recognize double negatives and that she wanted them to know how to correct them. In another instance, the teacher asked a student to identify the main verb in the following sentence: "Cindy and Josh are friends." The student response was "friends." To this Ms. Davenport replied, "Aw, aw, do we have a problem; do we need to have this sentence put on the board?" The teacher meant that there was a problem with the student's response (the student did not provide the correct answer) and that she needed to put the sentence on the board to clarify the mistake. The teacher then put the sentence on the board and had the student do the Shurley Method question-answer flow to determine the correct answer.

During the few informal exchanges between Ms. Davenport and the students, the classroom appeared to have a friendly and congenial atmosphere. For example, in one lesson the students had trouble with the question-answer flow for a sentence (they could not determine which questions to ask) and a student commented that someone "messed

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up." Ms. Davenport replied that "messing up is okay because we all mess up sometimes." She then added, "I mess up." To this comment a student said, "You mess up all the time." Ms. Davenport and the students laughed; they seemed to enjoy teasing her and she had a sense of humor concerning the statement. In a lesson on capitalization and punctuation, the teacher provided the answers, and she called on students to give her the rule number from the back of the text book that matched the answer. One particular student quickly answered correctly without looking up the rule in the back of his book. Ms. Davenport commented that he was doing well and that he was getting the "rule numbers" in his head. The student then confessed that he had worked ahead and that he had already written the answers and rule numbers in his book. Ms. Davenport laughed at the student's comment and said, "I was really getting impressed, but you have done better on the last few pages." That same day she called on another student who gave her the wrong rule number and then quickly changed it to another, which was the correct answer. Ms. Davenport said, "Right," which brought a laugh from the student who confessed that he was guessing. The teacher laughed as well and said, "I know it." During another of these somewhat informal exchanges, one student asked if Ms. Davenport would be their homeroom teacher next year. The teacher replied that she did not know. In response to her comment, several of the students expressed their desire for her to be their homeroom teacher. These examples of informal discourse show that Ms. Davenport and her students did engage in friendly conversation occasionally.

On a few occasions students initiated talk to tell Ms. Davenport about a problem. These instances were usually related either to the lesson or to "tell on" another student,

such as, "I'm having trouble keeping up," "I don't have room in my book to write the answers," "Somebody messed up," "Susan has one of those things off her chair," or "Karen stepped on my toes."

I have witnessed many teachers in many classrooms at Miller in my position as an entry or first-year teacher supervisor. My observations in the other classrooms in the school indicated that the teacher-centered classrooms with the teacher "giving" information to students appeared to be the predominant method of instruction. In every type of Shurley Method lesson the teacher-centered format was prevalent; writing lessons were teacher-centered as well. The students seemed to understand that their role was to receive information and provide answers when called on. Analysis of the classroom discourse provided examples of Ms. Davenport's teaching practices and helped me determine her teaching theory.

Theory and Practice

Ms. Davenport had difficulty answering questions about theory and she had difficulty articulating her theory. On a number of occasions I questioned Ms. Davenport about her theory, and each time she insisted that she did not use any one "method" but that her "theory" was eclectic. In fact, many people hear the word *theory* and they immediately retreat. Some openly admit to a distrust of theory handed down by researchers in the world of academia (Britzman, 1991). Britzman argues that teachers are engaged in theory when in the act of teaching. Clark and Peterson (1986) also argue that teachers' values, beliefs, and principles guide and shape their cognitive and other behaviors, including the things they do in the classroom.

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Even though Ms. Davenport did not articulate a theory, her theoretical approach manifested itself in the classroom and in her interviews. After I probed a number of times, she did explain that teachers should incorporate all the senses in lessons. By "incorporate the senses," Ms. Davenport stated that she meant involving the students in writing, reading, listening, and speaking. Ms. Davenport further added that teachers should monitor students' work, that students should work collaboratively, that students learn through practice and repetition, and that students learn when they are motivated. Other facets of her teaching were observed in her classroom and/or were articulated in her interviews. Ms. Davenport's actions in the classroom and statements in her interviews indicated that, in addition to the theory that she articulated, her pedagogy was teacher-centered and she believed that students must stay on task and follow the rules of the lessons precisely. Statements that addressed her views on teaching and learning and her everyday classroom procedures broke down into six coded categories.

1.) Students learn when they are actively involved;

2.) Students learn by working collaboratively;

3.) Students learn when they are motivated;

4.) Students learn through practice and repetition;

5.) Students learn when teachers monitor their work; and

6.) Students learn in teacher-centered classes.

Ms. Davenport did acknowledge that she thought that the education, or methods, teachers in college classes would "hate the Shurley Method because they are against the rote learning." She then added the following comments that seemed to provide some

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indication of her pedagogical theory:

> I can tell you it [SM] works. They [college teachers] are not in the
>
> trenches. They don't know what it's really like. My teachers advocated
>
> learning in groups and nothing was grammar. It was getting them [the students]
>
> to be creative and have them write--but they never tell you how. They never
>
> tell you how to discipline. We did a poetry book, but I've never used it.

Ms. Davenport said she knew that when students were older and out of school they were

not going to be reading a magazine or newspaper and stop to say, "Look, there's an

inverted sentence," but she added that " knowing the basics is important, and it will be

useful in their everyday use of language." Ms. Davenport further explained, "I've heard

them all [theoretical approaches] and I use a combination." When I asked her about

specific names, such as Dewey, Piaget or Hunter, she merely responded, "Yes, I have

studied all of their theories and I do not adhere to any one of them exclusively. I consider

myself eclectic." She was not familiar with Vygotsky, but she did recognize "zone of

proximal development" (1975) when I mentioned it. One of her education instructors

introduced her to the phrase and the concept, but she did not know its origin, and she

stated that she could not recall what the phrase meant. However, Ms Davenport's actions

in the classroom reflected her beliefs concerning pedagogy and they became more salient

as I compared the different sets of data (Elbaz, 1983; LeCompte & Preissle, 1986).

Students learn when they are actively involved and when lessons incorporate the senses

As earlier stated, much of what some would call a disparity in theory and practice

in Ms. Davenport's class seemed to be a difference in interpretation. Ms. Davenport did

know that research suggests that students should be actively involved in the learning process and that they should be exposed to a variety of learning styles and activities. The teacher stated, "The Shurley Method uses the procedures I learned in my methods courses and in workshops I have attended." In response to an interview question concerning her thoughts on the Shurley Method and on her theory of learning/teaching, Ms. Davenport answered, "The Shurley Method is good because it has everything." She further explained that the SM works because it incorporates all of the senses. Shurley Method materials state that students learn more when they hear, see, say, and do the activities. For Ms. Davenport, the SM does incorporate the senses. The teacher stated that by incorporating the senses she meant that teachers should include writing, listening, reading, and speaking in lessons.

Writing.

Ms. Davenport followed the Shurley Method book closely until after Christmas. In January she occasionally deviated from the Shurley Method and introduced creative writing. She devoted less time to Shurley Method lessons and more time toward writing creatively in order to prepare the students for the state mandated writing tests (Oklahoma Core Curriculum Criterion-Referenced Test) which all fifth graders were required to take. Ms. Davenport had attended workshops that addressed the types of writing required in state writing tests, and she worked to cover the material presented at these workshops. The Miller school district placed heavy emphasis on the state writing test. Ms. Davenport did not think the Shurley Method writing lessons adequately prepared students for the writing tests. She thought the Shurley Method writing lessons were a good place to begin

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because the SM lessons taught students how to organize their thoughts and how to stay focused on the topic. She also believed that after students had learned to write a Shurley Method three-point paragraph, then additional types of writing lessons needed to be incorporated into the language arts curriculum. She believed supplemental writing should be added and that writing should be done more frequently than called for in the Shurley Method material.

Ms. Davenport supplemented SM writing lessons with what she called three-point expanded paragraphs. In these lessons students wrote more supporting sentences for each point than the SM required. Students also wrote narrative, descriptive, explanatory, and persuasive paragraphs. The teacher gave students one or two topics to select from for each of these. A few of the topics were to describe an item the teacher placed at the front of the room, to explain how to make something, to persuade the principal to allow gum, candy, and pop in the elementary grades.

Listening.

According to Ms. Davenport, students were involved in listening activities in a number of ways. Occasionally she read students' papers and asked the class to listen carefully. She explained that she had students listen for both good points and for mistakes. Also, she stated that sometimes she read example papers with specific directives for students, such as,

What makes this introduction so good?

Why is the conclusion good?

What about this paper makes it good?

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Why is this a good paper?

Ms. Davenport also thought that students were developing listening skills by doing the question-answer flow to SM lessons. She stated that students listened to each other as they recited the questions and answers and they frequently pointed out when someone made an error. The teacher added that her students had to listen to her instructions at the beginning of each lesson. She added that she hoped they listened to her instructions throughout each class period. Ms. Davenport enjoyed reading to students, but she did not believe she had enough time to read much with this fifth-grade group. Occasionally Ms. Davenport read a few student paragraphs, but only once did she read a short book related to an upcoming holiday. That reading took less than ten minutes of class time.

Reading.

Ms. Davenport pointed out that even though students at Miller have a separate period and a different teacher for reading, they do a great deal of reading in her class. Ms. Davenport included reading SM sentences in her definition of reading. In the discussion in another area of the findings, I point out that Ms. Davenport did not usually put the sentences for the question-answer flow on the chalk board as instructed in the SM material. She did not believe her students were reading (or listening) when she had the sentences on the board. She stated that her students "were just doing what she did on the board by making the same markings in their books, but they were not paying attention to the sentence." She indicated that she felt her students were reading and paying attention (listening) when she did not put these sentences on the board. Ms. Davenport reported

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that on occasion, she passed out examples of student writing for her students to read and then they discussed various facets of these papers. She stated that sometimes she put a paper on the overhead projector for students to read and then she read it to them while they followed along. After reading the projected paper, they discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the paper. However, during my observation visits, I did not observe such reading activities. When the SM material had a paragraph for students to correct, Ms. Davenport had students read the material carefully to determine the nature of the errors before they tried to make the corrections.

Speaking.

I have already discussed most of the information pertinent to speaking in the classroom discourse section, but I will highlight a few important points here. Ms. Davenport's thoughts concerning speaking might be the clearest indication of varying interpretations of the effectiveness of the Shurley Method. According to the teacher, students had many opportunities to speak while reciting the question-answer flow part of SM lessons. Ms. Davenport and the administrators believed reciting the question-answer flow helped to develop students' speaking skills. Ms. Davenport added that students engaged in speaking activities and developed communication skills when they responded to her questions and she pointed out that on occasion students initiated comments about sentences in the SM material. The information in Tables 4, 5, and 6 indicates the amount of student discourse in the classroom.

Students learn by working collaboratively

When I arrived for one of the observations, Ms. Davenport asked me if I knew

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about collaborative learning. Ms. Davenport tested her students every other Tuesday. Sometimes on the day before, she allowed students to work in assigned groups for part of a class period reviewing for a test; on other occasions she gave the groups only a few minutes for review before the test. The teacher assigned groups of three or four students and she gave a group grade on the test as well as individual grades. The teacher explained that "students sometimes have a way of explaining things that is easier for other students to understand; other students know how to explain things more on their level." Research by Rosenshine and Stevens (1986) suggests that students who work in pairs reviewing worksheets are more engaged than students who work independently. In other comments about groups, Ms. Davenport added that the pressure from group members to do well was "real incentive." When I inquired about her knowledge of collaborative learning, she answered that she learned a little about it in one of her college courses, but she added that she learned the procedure more in depth at a workshop she attended. Here again may be a difference in interpretation in what is considered collaborative working. The information in Tables 4, 5, and 6 indicates that a majority of the time the classroom structure was teacher-centered. The exception was the collaborative session, or working with a partner to review for the tests. In short, during the classroom observations, little time was devoted to collaborative work.

Students learn when they are motivated

Ms. Davenport believed that motivation was important to student learning. The teacher had contests or some type of competition for exams. Each class as a whole challenged the other (the boys' class versus the girls' class) on tests and there was always

great excitement and anticipation waiting to see which class had the higher overall average score. The two classes always sent messages to each other via Ms. Davenport indicating they would win. The number of times each class won throughout the research was about even. Within each individual classroom, groups were also competing. The teacher recorded the groups' members and group tests scores for each class on posters that she displayed in each classroom. Ms. Davenport always announced tests results and awarded prizes to students and groups who had the highest scores and also to those who had made the biggest improvement. Students selected prizes from miscellaneous items, such as pencils, combs, stickers, and such. When I asked her about the competition, her comment was that she certainly had found a way to motivate students. She also laughed and said, "I don't know what that [the contest] does to their psyche, but it certainly has given them more incentive to do well." Ms. Davenport explained that she thought that in the group competition peer pressure was a big factor in motivating students. She stated that group members helped other members and encouraged each other to do well. Ms. Davenport explained that after the results were announced, the class that won was excited, but when they started on the next lesson, the students settled down and forgot about the competition until the next test.

Students Learn Through Practice and Repetition

A common thread found frequently in the classroom observations and in interviews was Ms. Davenport's belief that students needed practice and repetition to learn. The teacher believed that for students to learn and understand the lesson or concept being taught they needed repetition so that, in her words, "it becomes ingrained." In interviews

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she frequently made references to her emphasis on students' needing practice. Several times she stressed that the repetition was what made the SM so successful. She commented that Shurley material goes over and over points and eventually students "get it." Analysis of the different types of data collected, looking for the key linkages between interviews and classroom observations, provided evidence of the repetition of parts of lessons throughout the data (Erickson, 1986). Even in class, Ms. Davenport frequently indicated that her students needed more practice. The teacher had students repeat activities or parts of lessons if they seemed to experience difficulty or if the lessons were not done correctly. It was often difficult for the students to determine the questions to ask for the question-answer flow portion of the SM lessons. When the students had difficulty determining which questions to ask and in what order to ask them during the question-answer flow, Ms. Davenport usually made the students do those sentences again. In one lesson she even joked with a student who made a face when someone expressed confusion about the question-answer flow of a sentence by laughing and saying, "You know I'll make you do it again anyway because several people messed up."

During another observation, when the students were less than enthusiastic about repeating the lesson, Ms. Davenport asserted, "That's what you need--practice, practice, practice." In a stimulated recall session the teacher came to a part of the lesson the students had done incorrectly and she commented, "When they do this enough and repeat it enough, sometimes they do get it; they hear it and can tell something is missing." In another interview Ms. Davenport indicated, "The good thing about the SM is going over it everyday; that's what is good--we go over it everyday and they finally get it. You have to

repeat or they don't get it." When Ms. Davenport explained to me that she usually does not worry about students who "mess up" on the question-answer flow, she said, "It is usually an insignificant error and even if they don't get it, they eventually will because that is what makes the SM so good--they go over it and over it."

On several occasions in the classroom Ms. Davenport made students repeat things if they did not seem to have mastered them according to her specifications. When her classes started working with capitalization and punctuation, she commented, "I'm going over this good and slow because I want to make sure you all are doing it right." On another occasion, a student said that she was having trouble and did not understand what the teacher was saying. That comment resulted in the following exchange:

Ms. Davenport: Do you know why we capitalize "I'll"?

Student: Yes.

Ms. Davenport: Why we have a comma after "Yes"?

Student: Yes.

Ms. Davenport: Why we capitalize June, July, and August and why we have commas in a series?

Student: Yes.

Ms. Davenport: You do know it but you have not done it enough yet. I'll give you some practice; let's do another sentence.

Ms. Davenport commented that, based on what she knew about her students and the repetitive nature of the Shurley Method, she thought the students knew most of the material and she repeated that they just needed more practice.

In one of the stimulated recall sessions, Ms. Davenport was listening to herself read student paragraphs to the class. At one point she heard a mistake in a student paper and she stopped the tape to comment that she had several students who could not write complete sentences. She further commented:

> I have a tough time with about four girls with fragments. We are going to
>
> get to fragments soon; that's what is good about the Shurley Method--we go over
>
> it everyday and finally they get it. These things are getting kind of
>
> boring but they are necessary, I guess.

When we discussed the mistakes students often made in the question-answer flow portion of the lessons, Ms. Davenport reported that she did not usually worry about them because "If they don't get it [now], they eventually will because that is what makes the Shurley Method so good--they go over it and over it." (See Tables 4, 5, and 6 for frequency counts of repetition in classroom observations.) An interesting point concerning repetition was Ms. Davenport's opinion of the Shurley Method 3-Day Rotation Schedule. Ms. Davenport did not follow the 3-Day Rotation Schedule in her classroom. She stated that she did not have time to complete the book by working one page a day and that if she followed the 3-Day Rotation she would be further behind. The teacher explained that the Shurley materials want teachers to do the 3-Day Rotation so that students will achieve success, but Ms. Davenport added that she thought the students were merely memorizing and not understanding the concepts when they classified the same sentences for three days.

Students Learn When Teachers Monitor Their Work

In discussing her teaching procedures, Ms. Davenport stated that she believed

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teachers should go over the material until the student "gets it." When I asked her to explain what she meant by "get it," her first reply was, "I know by their Shurley Method tests scores." She then thought for a moment and added that she also monitors student work to see if they understand. Ms. Davenport stated that many times after a new concept had been introduced, she walked around and checked students' work to see if they had done the lesson correctly. Ms. Davenport's procedure of monitoring seemed similar to what Rosenshine and Stevens (1986) identify as "checking for understanding" (p. 381). Ms. Davenport believed teachers should check student work as the material was presented. She added that students needed help before they were tested. She further stated, "If I wait until the tests, by then students may be hopelessly lost and I have to go back and reteach that concept."

Ms. Davenport also monitored student behavior and attentiveness. In one of our interviews she explained that sometimes when she realized the students were bored or not quite "with it" she had them stop and breathe deeply. Other times she had them stand up and stretch a little. On one of the days I interviewed Ms. Davenport the area had had severe thunderstorms. She explained that the girls in her fifth grade language arts class were preoccupied and worried about the storm. Ms. Davenport reported that she stopped the lesson and allowed her students to discuss the weather for a few minutes. She stated that addressing the distraction usually worked and then she moved the students back on task.

Students Learn In Teacher-Centered Classes

In nearly every observation, Ms. Davenport's class had a teacher-centered, skills-

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based approach and the teacher kept the class focused on the lesson. Ms. Davenport's classroom procedures indicated that she emphasized correctness and attentiveness. She also expected students to stay on task and to follow the rules and procedures precisely.

Correctness.

The teacher seemed to place importance on correctness in the classroom; her values seemed to favor a skills-based approach with emphasis on certain skills students should know. The number of times she had her students repeat parts of lessons until they did them correctly provided examples of her belief in correctness. Throughout my field notes there was evidence of her desire to have quiet, order, and correctness. Her insistence on following the SM procedure for writing a three-point paragraph serves as an example. Ms. Davenport instructed students to write about three of their strengths or weaknesses in a nine-sentence paragraph. The teacher gave the following instructions: "How many sentences--9; would it be OK to have 10--No; would it be OK to have 8--no. You have to have 9 for a three-point-paragraph." In another three-point-paragraph writing lesson, one student asked if she could put "and" between two sentences instead of a period. Ms. Davenport answered, "No, because then you would be combining sentences and then you would only have eight sentences and you have to have nine." In yet another example, Ms. Davenport was working individually with students as they were completing a writing assignment when she discovered that a student had not followed her instructions. Her reaction went as follows: "Oh Bob, you've jumped off the topic: Three Reasons You Need a Good Education." The student had to start on a new piece of paper and she helped him think of several reasons. As she walked away from his desk, she gently patted him on the

back and said, "Sorry."

The teacher expected the same correctness or perfection of herself. During a stimulated recall session Ms. Davenport heard something she had omitted in her explanation to her students and her response was, "Here is something I forgot to tell them. It's awful when you find out you [the teacher] have done something wrong." While listening to the taped lessons in the stimulated recall sessions, she frequently made references to her instructions to students and she thought she could improve.

Attentiveness.

When Ms. Davenport addressed the class, she expected students to stop whatever they were doing and to give her their full attention. At the end of one class the teacher stated, "I need to talk to you; I need all ears. If you are still writing you are not going to hear." On another day when students were having trouble doing the question-answer flow for a sentence, Ms. Davenport announced, "OK, here's what you do. Put your hands down. I'm going to tell you; I don't want you to tell me. Here is what you do in Shurley Method." If students were talking, Ms. Davenport stood at the front of the room and asked for quiet. During one observation a student was looking in her desk and not following along in the book. Ms. Davenport stopped the lesson and moved the student to the front of the room to make sure she was paying attention.

Students Learn By Staying On Task and By Adhering to the Rules and Procedures Precisely.

Ms. Davenport believed in covering as much of the curriculum as possible. When I asked her if students ever tired of doing the Shurley Method lessons, she said "yes" and

she admitted that her sixth-grade class would start to "rebel" soon, but she added that she "had a few things to cover first before she could do other things." To explain what she meant by "rebel," Ms. Davenport stated that her students would become "bored" with the SM lessons and that they would want a change. She also added that she enjoyed reading to her students, which she tried to do often. She elaborated that reading aloud to the students provided a needed change and broke up the routine. But, to this statement she added that she was not reading to her fifth-grade classes because she had too much material to cover to get them where they needed to be. She did not believe they had covered enough of the SM material or mastered enough of the language arts rules to be prepared for the sixth grade. Occasionally, after papers had been turned in and graded, she read a few of them orally to the class and asked students to listen carefully to determine if they could hear anything wrong. Students seemed to enjoy having their papers read. Ms. Davenport read only a few papers on each of these occasions and students seem disappointed when she announced they had to stop and get to work. The teacher had a strong sense of keeping the class on task and of adhering to her schedule. One day just before the bell, Ms. Davenport said, "Ok we have about four minutes; let's do the last one." The students had a great deal of trouble with this last sentence, which caused the teacher to say, "Oh, that was the worst one all day; let's do it again and hurry."

As previously stated, Ms. Davenport seemed to be time conscious. She tried to keep students focused and on task. She did allow time for some spontaneity, but she said that they soon must get back to the lesson. During one lesson a student raised his hand and said he was having trouble keeping up. The teacher suggested he mark only every

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other word in his book, instead of labeling the part of speech for every word, and then she commented, "We are going about as slow as we can; you just need to do your best and work as fast as you can." On another occasion students were reading aloud the sentences they had written at the end of a lesson and she announced that they would have to stop. To the protesting and disappointed students, Ms. Davenport stated, "I don't have time to let all of you read; that would take up too much time."

At the beginning of one class period Ms. Davenport was having difficulty getting the students started; they were all talking at once. She sternly admonished them:

Just a minute. What were we talking about the other day? Taking turns--

raise your hand. With all of you talking at once, we are wasting time.

Other teachers have been working with you on this. I want you to put

your thinking caps on and get in the English mode. Raise your hand and

be recognized if you want to speak.

During the same class period Ms. Davenport urged the students to speed up because the other class was going to be ahead.

In response to my question concerning the amount of material she needed to cover throughout the school year, Ms. Davenport replied that she tried to get completely through the Shurley Method book. She explained that she tried to cover one page or lesson a day, but because she added several writing assignments, she was usually about 15 pages (lessons) short of completing the SM book. She added that it was difficult to cover all the material because many extracurricular events interferred with classtime, such as school picture days, ballgames, tournaments during school, and achievement tests. Ms.

Davenport appeared to have a need to account for classtime and student work. Elbaz (1983) argues that teachers who are inclined to value-skills orientation favor work that has concrete examples, such as completed lessons. Elbaz also argues that curriculum materials similar to the Shurley Method restrict spontaneity and cause teachers concern over covering the material in a certain amount of time.

Thinking Processes--Reflection

More insight concerning Ms. Davenport's theory became clear as I carefully read and reread field notes and transcripts of interviews and of the stimulated recall sessions. Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995) note that teachers need to reconsider and revise teaching practices. The data I collected seemed to indicate that Ms. Davenport was a reflective teacher. She was attentive to her students and she seemed to have an intuitive sense about someone having difficulty with some part of the lesson. Ms. Davenport appeared to be attuned to students' reactions. When she realized students were experiencing difficulty, she stopped and tried to articulate the concept or rule another way.

The SM is similar to the "teacher proof curriculum packages" of the 60s (Apple, 1983). All the "work" has been planned, written, and graded. The SM material has scripts telling teachers exactly what to say; it even tells teachers when it is time to close the door so that the noise from the "enthusiasm" of students during oral recitation will not disturb other classes. At the outset of my study, I wondered what I would find in my research with such a structured curriculum. After the first few observations and interviews, while analyzing my field notes, I discovered that Ms. Davenport used other methods to explain some of the concepts and rules (she deviated from the scripted texts). These instances

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were coded Deviations from the Shurley Method. I also discovered that the teacher reflected on the events and students in her classes. Throughout the study Ms. Davenport expressed or demonstrated her reflective thinking processes. I coded as Reflective all statements Ms. Davenport made about students or lessons that had previously taken place. She did not just open the instructor's book, read from it, and march through each lesson. The teacher reported that she used to do that: "In my first year I would plod through the material no matter what." But she discovered that that procedure did not work. Ms. Davenport reported that she followed the procedures prescribed by the Shurley material, but she also sensed times when students needed additional explanations, more practice, or some type of deviation in presentation and method. Frequently these deviations took place spontaneously, especially when students asked questions or indicated they did not understand. At the beginning of lessons the teacher would often ask, "What about this sentence is different?" or comment "This sentence is harder so let me explain what you do." Sometimes when grading papers, Ms. Davenport noticed problems or discovered areas needing attention. When she saw problems, she thought about them and reflected on them; she tried to find solutions to problems. Britzman (1991) argues that the common belief of many, that we learn by experience, is more myth than truth. She posits that "experience is known only after we express what happens" (p. 218). Britzman further argues that it is through introspection that we understand experience through the context of what we already know. Other researchers agree that teachers use what they know about their students and the curriculum to understand the events taking place in the classroom and to make the necessary adjustments. They argue that teachers reflect and mediate

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between thought and actions to improve their pedagogical practices (Elbaz, 1983, Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). Through introspection, Ms. Davenport reflected on the characteristics of her students and made adjustments to fit their needs.

I observed Ms. Davenport's intuitive and reflective nature during one of the lessons on capitalization and punctuation. On that particular day, the students were restless and inattentive, and progress through the lesson was slow; the teacher seemed cognizant that the students did not understand the lesson or the concept being taught. At the end of the class as we walked to her next classroom, she expressed her frustration and concern. During the interview conducted the next day, I asked, "What were you thinking during that lesson?" Ms. Davenport replied that she "stayed awake at night" trying to determine or think of a different way to cover the lessons on capitalization and punctuation. She thought of an alternative method and it seemed to work much better. Shurley lessons have sentences with no punctuation and no capitalization and students have to make the necessary corrections.They also have to turn to the back of their books and find the corresponding rule and write the rule above each correction they have made. Ms. Davenport decided to provide the answers for students and then have the students tell her the rule. Students could not just say the rule number; they had to tell her what the rule stated. The teacher said, "If they just tell me the rule number it will not mean anything to them, so they have to tell why the rule fits." The first day they tried this "new" procedure she stopped after they had done a few sentences and asked the students which way they preferred; all the students indicated the "new" way was better. Through reflection the teacher demonstrated her concern for students and her willingness to make changes in the

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inherited curriculum (Bullough, 1989).

I observed another example of her reflective nature when she graded a Shurley Method test. As she graded one particular student's paper, she noticed that the student had repeatedly made the same mistake throughout the test. Ms. Davenport explained that she thought about the student and considered what she could do to help alleviate the problem. Her solution, which seemed to help, was to call the student to her desk, show her the mistake, and explain the rule. Reflecting on the success of this procedure, the teacher decided to try calling students to her desk to watch her grade their exams; this procedure enabled her to show the students what they had missed, to explain their mistakes, and to clarify any confusion they may have had. She helped students determine what they did wrong and made sure they knew how to correct their mistakes. The teacher's practice of reviewing material missed on tests seemed in line with Rosenshine and Stevens' (1986) suggestion that teachers should provide feedback and reteach points when necessary. They argue that "all teachers. . .correct student errors, but frequently the corrections are uninformative, consisting of only a single word or sentence, . . .[and that teachers do not] reteach when necessary" (p. 380).

When Ms. Davenport determined a need to do so, she made changes in presenting the Shurley Method material. One change involved the question-answer flow. The teacher's manual instructs teachers to put the question-answer flow sentences on the board before the students arrive. The idea is for students to read each sentence from the board while watching a class member or the teacher mark all the parts of speech as the class recites the questions and answers. Ms. Davenport explained that she no longer wrote the

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sentences on the board because the students were just marking what she marked and they were not really paying attention to what they were doing. The teacher had students read the sentences from their textbook/workbook and make the necessary markings while they recited the sentences orally.

During the school day Ms. Davenport engaged in reflection as well. Depending on which class covered a lesson first, she considered the students' responses and thought about any problem areas encountered during the lesson. By the time she taught the same lesson to the other fifth-grade group, she usually had made adjustments. On a number of occasions she would tell the students that they could benefit from the other class's problems because she knew what gave them trouble. Ms. Davenport tried to explain problem areas ahead of time in the introduction to lessons.

Summary

To summarize Ms. Davenport's pedagogy, cognition, and theory involves reconsidering allthe topics discussed above; each category influenced the other and in some cases categories overlapped. First and foremost, Ms. Davenport loved teaching and she genuinely cared for her students. Through her reflections, interviews, and the classroom observations, the teacher's values and philosophy concerning teaching became evident (Elbaz, 1983). She, like most of the community, had traditional and conservative values. From her parents she developed a strong work ethic. She also believed in a structured, teacher-centered, task-oriented class with emphasis on skill mastery. The teacher's pedagogical practices appeared to reflect the values of the administrators and the community as well.

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However, summarizing Ms. Davenport's pedagogical theory is problematic. The data showed she had great difficulty articulating her theory, and her teaching practices indicated some inconsistencies and contradictions. In many instances she indicated a need to follow SM procedures precisely, but occasionally she changed or deviated from the SM. Ms. Davenport was in a unique position as the language arts teacher for grades five through eight. Once Miller students became fifth graders they had Ms. Davenport as their language arts teacher through the eighth grade. She explained that with each new group of fifth graders she could tell that the primary grade teachers had not followed all of the SM procedures precisely. She added that she always had to explain and teach parts of the Shurley Method that the students should have learned in grades one through four. The interesting point is that Ms. Davenport was in a position to know that other teachers did deviate some from the SM procedures and she could have deviated as well, but a majority of the time she closely followed the SM curriculum. Perhaps her heavy reliance on following the Shurley Method instructions and procedures provides insight into her difficulty in formulating *her own* teaching theory.

Influence of Outsides Sources

Mandates from outside the school influenced the Miller School District curriculum. When I asked Ms. Davenport why she thought Mr. Lawson selected the Shurley Method, without a moment's hesitation she said, "the state-mandated tests." She amplified:

The bottom line is the State Department says it's important that

we pass the achievement tests. They pressure the superintendent

and no superintendent wants to be on the "at risk" list. All want

to pass the test, so you teach grammar--that's the bottom line.

Ms. Davenport further added, "What's the end objective and is this the way to get there? If you want grammar and to pass the test then this [the Shurley Method] will get it like no other I have ever seen." The teacher explained that she was in a position to see the difference because she also taught the seventh and eighth grade language arts classes, and those classes used traditional language arts books, not the Shurley Method. Ms. Davenport pointed out that when she instructed her junior high students to put an adjective or an adverb in a sentence, the students who had not had the SM just looked at her with blank faces and they were lost. She commented that if she could select her own language arts curriculum, she would use the Shurley Method, but would supplement the SM with additional language arts material. She would use the SM "halfway" if she did not have to worry about test scores.

Almost in contradiction to the above statement, when I asked the teacher if she ever changed a lesson or if she did something that was really not part of the SM, she replied, "Yes, because of tests." Ms. Davenport stated that she thought the Shurley Method was ineffective for writing, and at some point she did vary or change the writing aspect of Shurley material. According to the teacher, knowing grammar helped students learn how to write correct sentences and it was a good starting place, but she thought the amount and type of writing done in SM lessons needed to be changed. Ms. Davenport explained that the Shurley Method writing lessons were a good starting place because they helped students with structure and organization, but she thought students needed to move on from this to other types of writing. She explained that she tells students, "You have to

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crawl before you can walk." The teacher equated the SM writing lessons with crawling.

She added that the SM was the beginning point, but she felt additional writing lessons

should be incorporated. Ms. Davenport reported in an interview in early September that

soon she would have to "get the fifth grade ready for the state writing test" given in the

Spring. During the 1996-97 school year, Ms. Davenport taught four Shurley Method

writing lessons and added thirteen additional writing lessons. Ms. Davenport commented

that she added the thirteen supplemental writing assignments because of the state

mandated writing tests. In Oklahoma all fifth grade students take a writing proficiency

test, which is a criterion-referenced test. Ms. Davenport explained:

> They take the writing test in March. Do I practice? I practice on it all year.
>
> To me the Shurley three-point paragraph is the starting place. We know
>
> that we are going to be tested over the different modes of writing such as
>
> explanatory, descriptive, creative, and since the Shurley Method doesn't cover
>
> these different modes of writing I have to compensate for that.

When the school board at Miller hired the superintendent in 1993, the board

members expected him to work on raising tests scores and to remove the school from the

"at risk" list (now labeled "low-performance"). Miller had been on the state "at risk" list

for two years because of writing scores on the state's standardized norm-referenced test

(at that time the norm-referenced test had a writing component). Miller was facing the

possibility of losing state funding or of being annexed, and as Ms. Davenport made clear,

no superintendent wanted to be annexed. When I asked Mr. Lawson what he considered

the most important part of his job, he immediately answered "finances." With money for

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schools tied to performance on standardized tests, administrators appear to have no choice other than to emphasize tests scores. Mr. Lawson requested teachers attend various workshops, meetings, seminars, and conferences that provided information pertaining to tests and that were available in various disciplines. He sent Ms. Davenport to just such a meeting for the state mandated writing test. The teacher said that at this workshop she learned the types of writing the tests cover and the criteria for grading the state writing test.

Both the superintendent and the principal expressed their dislike of being assessed by national norms. They felt it was unjust and invalid to compare a small rural school district in the Oklahoma to large urban schools in other parts of the country. Mr. Lawson explained that the Oklahoma Legislature requires a norm-referenced test and the State Department of Education requires a criterion-referenced test. He added that he was frustrated with testing. Mr. Lawson believed tests results were misused. He further stated, "When others get the information from the tests and they say whether we are doing well or not based on National norms and on criteria set by outside sources--yes, that's frustrating." Mr. Lawson stated that the misuse of tests was the biggest problem for administrators. He added that the testing material was a problem. The superintendent asserted that the criterion-referenced math test was more a reading test than a math test. He elaborated that he did not believe the criterion-referenced math test accurately assessed math skills. To explain, the superintendent stated that he had served on a committee assigned the task of developing the state criterion-referenced math test. He stated that the committee used the PASS objectives to create the tests and that as a result the end

product was more a reading test than a math test.

Even though the administrators disliked the situation and the method of assessment, both felt there had to be some type of regulatory board. When discussing standardized tests, Mr. Blake commented that he did not like it that Miller was compared to schools that had little in common with Miller, but he said that there must be some type of assessment and that so far no one has come up with a better way.

Mr. Blake's statement to parents on the State Department report card for Miller indicated his view of the difficulty Miller school faced by being compared to larger, more urban schools. (See Report Card, Appendix C.) Addressing the issue of standardized tests, Mr. Lawson and Mr. Blake acknowledged that tests scores were important. Both asserted that they do not "teach" to the tests.Yet, according to the administrators, they used the tests to look for weak areas and areas that needed work. For example, when I inquired about other subject areas, Mr. Blake stated, "They pretty much have all their tests scores up, except for spelling." He further explained that spelling scores for Miller students were low and "they were looking for a spelling program now." Mr. Lawson's explanation about other areas needing attention according to test scores was, "Right now we are looking for the 'magic' spelling program." Mr. Lawson's explanation to other areas needing attention according to test scores was, "Right now we are looking for the *magic* spelling program."

Ms. Davenport elaborated on the spelling problem when I inquired about her grading procedures for writing assignments. I asked her to explain her method of assessment for student writing. In her response she mentioned that she looked for organization and for correctness; she then added that she "has to take off for spelling." I

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asked her to elaborate. The teacher reported that at the first faculty meeting of the 1996-
1997 school year the administrators announced to the teachers, "We want correct spelling
emphasized." The administrators instructed all teachers in all classes, regardless of the
subject, and in all grades to take off for spelling errors. Ms. Davenport explained that their
rationale was that the emphasis on spelling would improve students' spelling skills and
improve spelling scores on the mandated tests.

Mr. Blake indicated that the administrators and teachers tried to make the
students understand the importance of the tests. Teachers encouraged students to take the
tests seriously and to try their best. Mr. Blake stated that in the past many students did not
try and they just marked any answer. The administration tried to remedy the "I don't care
attitude." Students received a "party day" if they did well on the tests and showed
improvement. If tests results were up, the whole school had a "fun day" with games, pizza,
soft drinks, etc. According to Mr. Blake, this plan had been very successful. He stated that
most students did try to do well and that tests scores were up. Mr. Lawson also agreed.
Mr. Blake further explained that tests scores were not as big a concern now because they
have them "way up." To verify Mr. Blake's statement, Miller received the Title 1
Distinguished School award from the State Board of Education in the spring of 1997. The
award identifies schools from high poverty areas that exceed expectations on both state
and national standardized tests. Also in June, 1997, Mr. Lawson was named the
Administrator of the Year for his district. The announcement in the Skyview newspaper
stated that he "directed the Miller Public Schools from the 'At-Risk' list to becoming
recognized as a Distinguished Title I School in 1997." In August, 1997, Mr. Lawson was

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named Oklahoma Superintendent of the Year.

The emphasis on tests scores spilled over into the community as well. Ms. Davenport explained that on the day tests scores arrived at school, news of the results spread quickly. She walked to the drive-in across the street from the school during her break, and the people there were full of praise and compliments for her because the scores on the language arts area of the tests were way up. She said that several other people in the community also commented on the language arts tests scores. (See Tables 7 and 8 for tests results.)

Summary

Researchers discuss the influence of standardized tests scores and the pressures they present to schools as well. Jackson (1986) notes that "achievement test scores have become the outcome variable by which to measure teaching effectiveness and the quality of schools in general, not only for researchers and many school administrators but for the public at large" (p. 132). Smith (1995) argues that, even though many educators dislike the situation, control by bureaucrats in the form of standardized tests continues. He further asserts that assessment places pressure from politicians on educators. Smith drives home his point in explaining that administrators are pressured to turn in "numbers," but they encourage their teachers not to teach to the tests, which causes them confusion on how to produce the "numbers" needed on standardized tests. Johnson (1992) also admits that complaints about standardized tests are not new. He says that standardized tests have little to say about what students actually know, and other educators agree (Hudson, 1989). Barton (1994) encourages schools to be cautious about standardized tests and what they

tell us. He argues that schools should rely more on teacher assessment. Johnson (1992) calls emphasis on tests by educators and the general public a way to "avoid failure" (p. 339). His point seems to apply to schools that want to avoid being "at risk" because of low tests scores. Ms. Davenport and the administrators at Miller understood the issues at work and the political constraints the schools faced. The Miller educators tried to do thebest job possible under these restrictions. The State Department of Education through state mandates affects the curriculum selection and pedagogical practices of many schools. Schools administrators often succumb to the pressures of state mandates because many of the mandates influence the school finances and the future of the school.

Influences of the Language Arts Curriculum

The language arts curriculum was a major focus of the research and a discussion of the influence of the Shurley Method should be included in the reported findings.

Self-esteem

Throughout the research period the positive self-esteem of the students and the teachers and the pride of the community concerning the school were obvious. I coded positive statements made about students' work and their enthusiasm for lessons Pride and Self-esteem. Ms. Davenport believed the SM was partly responsible for the overall morale of the school and community. Previously, morale had been low. The community had had no confidence in the school and there had been many complaints about teachers and the curriculum to the school board. The superintendent and the principal, like Ms. Davenport, believed they had turned things around and they credited the SM for part of their success.

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They believed that the SM had helped raise self-esteem and they credited the SM for creating a sense of pride in students, teachers, parents, and other community members.

It is difficult to determine the origin of the pride and enthusiasm in the Miller community for the Shurley Method. Mr. Lawson explained that he originally learned about the SM from a couple of parents. He then started investigating and locating schools that were using the SM. He visited with the superintendents of those schools, observed students doing the Shurley Method in a few of the schools, and then decided to try it in the first and second grades for one year. According to the teachers, the first and second grade students seemed to enjoy reciting the jingles and the question-answer flow and they started doing demonstrations for other grades at Miller. Students and teachers in the other grades were amazed at these demonstrations. The next year, based on the success in the first two grades, the superintendent decided to adopt the Shurley Method as the language arts curriculum for grades one through six. The students throughout the elementary grades began to gain confidence as they learned the jingles and mastered the question-answer flow. The superintendent explained that the pride and enthusiasm escalated from there.

Both administrators and Ms. Davenport discussed in their interviews the pride of students, teachers, parents, and community members when students were invited to other schools to demonstrate their skill at reciting the question-answer flow for sentences using the SM. On a number of occasions Miller students demonstrated the SM question-answer flow for other schools, educators, and state legislators. Miller students also did presentations at a national meeting for rural educators, at the state capitol, and at other schools in the area. Ms. Davenport, Mr. Lawson, and Mr. Blake spoke of these

performances and indicated the delight and pride of students, teachers, and parents on these occasions. The Superintendent explained that when Miller started using the Shurley Method it was still very new to the state and everybody wanted to see a demonstration of students reciting the question-answer flow portion of SM lessons and the SM jingles. Mr. Lawson added that people from other schools came to visit and to observe Miller students do SM lessons. The opportunities to demonstrate the SM for others improved the self-esteem of students and teachers. Mr. Lawson credited the Shurley Method for helping to increase pride in the students, the teachers, and the community as a whole. On occasion Mr. Lawson has served as a spokesperson for the SM. At the request of Brenda Shurley, he has visited many schools in Oklahoma to report on the improvements that Miller has experienced in the area of language arts since implementing the SM. Mr. Lawson included statements concerning pride and enthusiasm related to language arts in his presentations. The superintendent provided a copy of the material he used to make these presentations. His written remarks state:

> One measure not evaluated by standardized test is the students [sic] desire to
>
> learn English. Since adopting the Shurley Method our students [sic] desire
>
> to learn English has increased 100%. We now have students who say they
>
> like English and look forward to English class.

Barton (1994) argues that "to be literate is to be confident in the literacy practices one participates in" (p. 187), and such confidence seemed to be the case with students in Ms. Davenport's class. Students were proud, confident, and eager to "perform" for others. They appeared to enjoy demonstrating their skill publicly. Mr. Blake said that at

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the state capitol the legislators thought the students did well because they had rehearsed the sentences. He said the legislators gave the students, at the students' request, a sentence to test their skill. The legislators were amazed at the ability of the students as they took the sentence correctly through the question-answer flow and they did so with ease. According to Mr. Blake, the first year the Shurley Method was introduced at Miller, it was used in two classes (first and second grade) to try it out, and the results were quite good. Mr. Blake further explained that during that year the second graders did a demonstration for the eighth graders who were amazed at the second graders' proficiency. Mr. Blake added that the eighth graders were embarrassed because "the second graders could out-do them in grammar skills."

During my first few observations the students were eager to "perform" the question-answer flow for me. They seemed to enjoy reciting orally and on several occasions they solicited sentences from me which they enthusiastically recited using the question-answer flow. The SM material stresses to teachers that they must be enthusiastic. According to Shurley, if teachers present lessons with enthusiasm, students will share this attitude as well. She instructs teachers to be excited, energetic, and positive when presenting lessons. Shurley specifically states that her method will raise self-esteem and that students will be proud to demonstrate what they know. Lortie (1975) acknowledges that teachers feel a sense of accomplishment when students do well. He also suggests that student enthusiasm increases a teacher's feelings of effectiveness.

The teachers and administrators at Miller school seemed to have a great sense of pride in students. Ms. Davenport was eager to share the accomplishments of her students.

On a few occasions, she phoned me reporting student success in recent scholastic events. The day achievement tests scores arrived, Ms. Davenport was eager to tell me how much the language arts scores had improved. In her word the scores in language arts had "skyrocketed." (See Tables 7 and 8 for tests scores.)

Student Differences

During one of the interviews with Ms. Davenport, I inquired about meeting the needs of new students who had not had the Shurley Method, of those with learning differences, and of those from other cultures. The teacher admitted that the Shurley Method offered little help for students other than the mainstream, and she acknowledged that it was difficult for some students to adjust to the Shurley Method. The Shurley Method Resource Booklet has a page titled "Ideas and Suggestions for Modification of the Shurley Method." This page suggests that teachers may assign a "study helper (study buddy) to students new in the Shurley Method or those needing help" (p. 11). The materials also suggest that teachers could allow students who have trouble writing to do part of the work orally. Another suggestion is to make cassette tapes while students do the question-answer flow for "students who need extra help to take home to enhance their learning" (p. 11). To accommodate students who were at a definite disadvantage, Ms. Davenport paired students who needed extra help with other students until they became familiar with the Shurley procedures. On tests those students took only half of the test. During one observation on the day before a test, Ms. Davenport quietly told two students they would only take part of the tests, and she said, "Remember what you missed on the last test because that will be on this test--study that." On another day the teacher showed

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me the grades recorded for the first test. The three new students who had not had the SM before moving to Miller had the lowest scores. Ms. Davenport explained that one student should have been in Special Education but Miller apparently had too many students in the Special Education class. Ms. Davenport stated, "I feel bad about expecting her to know how to do this work." A few days after this particular observation, the student was placed in a Special Education class.

The superintendent explained that he was very sympathetic to physically and culturally challenged students; however, he added that it was difficult for a school the size of Miller to accommodate each and every special need. Miller and four other area schools had pooled their resources to meet some of the state requirements for special student needs. Miller also sent one group of special-needs students to Skyview for classes. Mr. Lawson explained that Miller paid Skyview dearly for this service, but Miller had no choice.

Most of the population in Miller was white. However, according to Mr. Blake, an Hispanic community had settled in an area south of Miller to work on a ranch and they sent their children to Miller. For these children the language at home was Spanish. Mr. Blake commented that when any of the Hispanic children used the phone and called home they spoke Spanish. Ms. Davenport had one of the Hispanic students in her class. During one interview, the student's name came up and Ms. Davenport expressed her concern. She explained that because no one at home spoke English the student was having a difficult time. Ms. Davenport explained that she had tried to put her with a partner for a little additional help, but the Hispanic student was upset and did not want to be singled out. Ms.

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Davenport explained that the student did not want to be treated any differently from any other student in the classroom. Ms. Davenport explained, "It's a stigma thing." Ms. Davenport admitted that the Shurley Method did not allow for students other than the mainstream and that it was difficult for new students as well. Perhaps she stated her theory concerning cultural differences when she commented, "They have to learn to assimilate sometime."

Summary

Administrators, teachers, and students had great pride in their school. The research seemed to indicate that Miller school was influenced by outside mandates imposed by the state. These mandates operating within the school setting influenced administrators, teachers, students, and the curriculum of the school. Another finding suggested that the language arts curriculum, from the teacher's perspective, seemed to have influenced the school and community members positively. An exception to the positive influence was that the Shurley Method did not make allowances for students with special circumstances and special needs.

CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS

Summary of the Research

The findings from the research offer important information for those interested in public schools in rural areas. The research provides an indication of the constraints imposed on rural administrators by outside sources, usually the State Department of Education, as these administrators operate their schools. The findings suggest that outside mandates greatly influence pedagogy in many rural schools. Although the State Department of Education merely constrains by defining boundaries and setting targets, administrators and school boards often interpret these constraints too narrowly.

The superintendent at Miller stated that he selected the curriculum materials based on his opinion of the needs of his students. He explained that he determined these needs by considering the criterion-referenced and the norm-referenced test scores. The superintendent used test scores as indicators of weaknesses and areas needing attention. When the superintendent took office, Miller had been on the at-risk list in Language Arts for two years. The school board challenged him to remove Miller from the at-risk list. He selected a curriculum that he thought would meet that challenge. The superintendent added that he considered finances his greatest concern as an administrator. He explained that finances were partly influenced by the mandated test scores. Repeated low test scores could result in annexation or closing of the school. No school administrator wants his or her school closed. Consequently, some administrators make decisions that they believe will meet the needs of students and will keep the school off the at-risk list. The issue is complex because it presents seemingly contradictory information. On one side, prior

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research, discussed in the related literature, suggests that teaching grammar using an isolated skills approach is ineffective in improving usage and in improving writing. And on the opposite side, emphasizing grammar instruction to label the parts of speech, using a skills approach, some believe is virtually necessary to meet some state mandates. I believe the assessment of whether the school and the teacher are successful or effective depends on who is doing the assessment and on the criteria used. For Miller school, the goal was to achieve the necessary scores on standardized tests to keep the school off the high challenge/low performance list. The State Legislature and the State Department of Education validated the school's efforts; tests scores were up at Miller and consequently the school was considered successful.

Discussion

An important discovery made by the research involved the values and beliefs of the participating teacher and others in the school setting. My preconceived idea was that the curriculum did not match the teacher's and the administrators' values and beliefs concerning pedagogy, but the findings suggested the opposite. The heavy reliance on teaching skills, the predominance of teacher talk with students responding when called upon, and the structure of the classroom indicated that the Shurley Method mirrored their perception of pedagogy. Another preconceived idea I had was that the language arts program was dissonant from the way the school members spoke and that they were unaware of this disparity. Having completed this portion of the planned longitudinal study, I now understand the fallacy of my assumption. My "insider's" view showed that the school officials and teachers did realize the disparity in language use, and the disparity or

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dissonance was another reason for their selecting the Shurley Method.

Understanding the goals of the school, the influence of outside mandates, the difficulties the school faced in meeting these mandates, and the underlying values in the school context makes me more empathetic to their situation. I have a greater appreciation and understanding of the pragmatics and politics involved in maintaining a school, particularly a rural school. When considered within the cultural context, the school was meeting the needs of students, as the superintendent said, "to the best of our abilities." The administrators also selected curriculum materials they believed would maintain the school's existence and the community's existence as well.

As in any research, this research has limitations. The study also has implications for classroom teachers, for teacher educators and for educational researchers.

Limitations

A limitation of the study concerns the teacher's assessment and use of the Shurley Method. The teacher in this study did not use the SM exclusively to teach writing. She used it as a beginning or starting point and then she supplemented the writing curriculum with additional writing activities; her deviations make it difficult to assess the total effectiveness of the SM in teaching writing. Ms. Davenport admitted that she believed the SM provided a sound foundation in writing, but she believed that additional writing instruction was needed once writing had been introduced. The fact that the teacher deviated from the SM in the area of writing suggests that she had informally assessed it and found it to be insufficient for teaching writing.. The long term effects of the SM in improving writing may be detected in the planned longitudinal study with this group of

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students. As these students advance into junior high and high school, the overall effectiveness of learning grammar by the SM to improve writing may become more evident.

Another limitation of the study is the paucity of research on the Shurley Method of Language Arts Instruction. Shurley materials assert that the SM will improve writing skills. The Shurley Method materials' claims are unsupported by systematic and controlled research. In light of previous research, Noguchi (1991) argues that "anti-grammar studies have, by far, outnumbered the pro-grammar ones" (p. 2). Hillocks (1986) reviewed 2,000 studies to support his argument that grammar is ineffective in improving writing. Continued study of the SM might help determine the long term success of the SM in improving writing. The exploratory study reported here might lay a foundation, but continuation of the study may provide results to demonstrate whether or not the Shurley Method's assertions are true.

Implications for Classroom Teachers

To understand the implications of the research requires considering the short term or immediate effectiveness of the SM as compared to its long term effectiveness. The implications may be similar to those found by Petrosky (1990) in the Mississippi Delta. Petrosky found that some schools were continuing the old method of drill and recitation. Students learned grammar by rote drill and memorization and by working numerous grammar worksheets. The interesting phenomenon Petrosky discovered was that the students in these classes scored above average on state mandated tests. Petrosky attributes the above average scores to the method of teaching and to the material taught. In short, he

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claims the teachers were teaching to the tests. The problem, as Petrosky sees it, is that students learn what they need to score well on the tests but they soon forget the information. The greatest harm in this method of teaching is that students do not learn to think or to analyze information for themselves. Petrosky feels the schools are doing the students an injustice and are not preparing them for the working world or for college. This may be the case in Miller. Students at Miller were successful according to the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, but did this method of assessment adequately determine success in life situations that had nothing in common with norm-referenced test scores?

Another implication concerns the top-down nature of public education. Mandates calling for assessment in the form of standardized tests often influence teaching practices and curriculum choices. In 1975 Lortie pointed out that advances had been made that gave teachers more control over their profession, but he also argued that "today as yesterday, teachers continue to work in settings where formal authority is vested in board members who do not belong to their occupation and are therefore beyond the reach of its internal controls" (p. 6). Even some twenty years later, Lortie's words still ring true. In some schools teachers have little voice concerning curriculum selection. Classroom teachers should use their collective voices to gain more control over their curricular choices, assessment procedures, and the resulting pedagogy. Teachers should work to inform and educate school administrators and the public concerning current pedagogical research and theories. Teachers should insist on curriculum materials that meet the needs of students and that prepare students for life outside the public school classroom, and they should call for alternate assessment procedures in place of the heavy emphasis on standardized tests.

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Implications for Teacher Educators

What does the study reported here tell teacher educators and how does it affect what we do in the classroom? Clearly the problem is difficult and finding a solution will be problematic. Perhaps one step in the right direction is to acknowledge the dilemma that administrators and teachers face and to alert students of teaching to the complexities they may encounter in the "real world." Future teachers should know the constraints placed on public schools by outside sources. They should know the pressures that school administrators face in meeting these constraints. They should know that these pressures and constraints influence curriculum selection. Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995) also suggest that teacher preparation courses are more beneficial if they apply classroom lessons to the practical act of teaching. Future educators should understand the emphasis placed on tests scores and the practices adopted by schools to produce acceptable test scores. An important question for those involved in education should be the overall and long term effects that the curriculum and classroom practices have on students and teachers.

One implication suggests that teachers of future English teachers need to be well informed about the many varieties of schools. They should exercise caution when formulating opinions or making assumptions about public schools in general. University education teachers need to understand the rationale behind administrative decisions in public schools. Many factors influence public school administrators' curriculum choices and the resulting pedagogy whether the school is rural or urban, large or small. Those involved in education need an awareness of the hazards in considering public education as

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a "one size fits all" pedagogy. Future teachers need to know how to adapt to the varieties of schools and to the curriculum choices made by administrators and/or teachers. They should understand that each school is different, as is each group of students, and those differences make finding an ideal curriculum problematic. In some school districts, teachers and/or administrators select curricula similar to the preprogrammed material described by Apple. (See Chapter 2, pages 24-25.) Preprogrammed curriculum materials often fail to consider the differences in schools and students. Teachers should be encouraged to find creative, unique, and innovative methods of teaching to meet the needs of their students when they are expected to teach these preprogrammed curricula or those that are contrary to their beliefs, their pedagogical theories, and to current research.

The research reported provides an example of the gap existing between theory/research and practice. Rather than criticizing or pointing the finger at schools that seem to ignore research findings, university instructors should work to narrow the gap by seeking to understand the rationale of schools when selecting curriculum materials. Instead of an "us versus them" situation, both sides should attempt to work together to create classrooms that challenge students to think and grow analytically and to become lifetime learners.

Implications For Future Research

Findings from the research raised questions for future researchers. Could the Shurley Method be a short term solution to a long term problem? Do curricula like the SM leave students without the necessary skills to succeed in college? Could the heavy reliance on learning grammar by rote and through isolated practice and repetition compound the

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problem for communities like Miller? If curricula like the SM leave students ill prepared for college, as was the case in the Petrosky study, will the number of Miller residents with a higher education remain consistently low? Could the SM be disempowering teachers as Michael Apple argues? (See Chapter 2, pages 24-25.) Could the fact that Ms. Davenport had difficulty articulating her teaching theory be an indication that she has been disempowered by the school's curriculum? These are questions that future research on the Shurley Method might address.

An additional benefit from the research concerns the importance of teachers telling "their" stories. At the outset my interest was the Shurley Method, but the nature of the research broadened the topic. The sociocultural approach necessitated the "why" of the Shurley Method as much as the "how" and with what results. I discovered that many factors influenced the selection of what and how to teach. It was not as simple as isolating the Shurley Method. Ethnography intends to do more than supply numbers and frequency counts (Elbaz, 1983). In communicating with Ms. Davenport, we both gained understanding. My interests and intent were to provide a view of the teacher as nearly as possible from her lens (Heath, 1983) and to understand the work she did, the way she planned for instruction, and her decision-making processes both inside and outside the classroom (Shubert, 1992). Working with Ms. Davenport and reading other accounts of teachers gave me an awareness of the need for more teacher stories or stories told by researchers and teachers working closely together, as in this case.

Erickson (1986) suggests that a researcher helps to make "the familiar strange" when working with a teacher to tell the teacher's story of life in the classroom. Elbaz

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(1991) focuses on what she calls the "ordinary teacher's story" (p. 9) told in the teacher's voice. She points out the importance of allowing teachers to express their "concerns in their own voices" (p. 9). Elbaz questions how teachers are given expression in the language of research. She comments that often this expression is given from the outside or, at best, is presented in a "detached and dispassionate way" (p. 12). Elbaz further says that often the authority of the school and the culture of the community influence the teacher's voice, a fact which in her view researchers have treated poorly. Elbaz points to the importance of researchers and teachers working together and of listening to one another. Teachers should speak in their voices. My intent was to present the teacher's voice and to provide a view of her perspective in the information reported.

In conducting this research I benefitted because I have a greater understanding of the enormity of my task as a teacher educator. I gained insight into my responsibility to inform future teachers about the gaps that often exist between the university classroom and *real* public school classrooms. I feel an obligation to help these future teachers overcome long established beliefs about teaching in teacher-centered classrooms using a skills approach and to integrate current theories and practices concerning language arts pedagogy into their classes.

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APPENDIX A

PRIORITY ACADEMIC STUDENT SKILLS
PASS
Language Arts
Grade 5
Program Skills

I. Use thinking skills to acquire and process written and auditory information for a variety of purposes.

II. Effectively express ideas in oral and written modes for a variety of purposes and audiences.

III. Recognize major literary and cultural traditions and use them as a foundation for effective communication.

The student will:

A. Listen for information and for pleasure (e.g., directions, teacher-read stories).

B. Identify the main idea in a work of nonfiction (e.g., informative material, *Weekly Reader, Scholastic,* textbooks).

C. Discuss the meaning of figurative language when encountered in appropriate text (e.g., literal v. interpretive reading, metaphors, similes, idioms).

D. Distinguish between fact, opinion and fantasy in print and nonprint media (e.g., literature, electronic media, advertising, propaganda).

E. Communicate orally and through written forms on paper and/or on a computer screen (e.g., to inform, to persuade, to entertain, to express ideas; using sentences, paragraphs, compositions, poetry, stories, letters, note-taking skills,

journals, reports, presentations or discussions).

F. Demonstrate thinking skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing (e.g., focusing, gathering information, organizing, analyzing, synthesizing, generating, evaluating print and nonprint information).

G. Speak before a group using appropriate delivery and language skills (e.g., volume, enunciation, pronunciation, word choice, movement, usage).

H. Expand vocabulary through word study, literature and class discussion (e.g., multiple meanings, definitions, meaning in context).

I. Utilize the writing process to develop and refine composition skills (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing or proofreading, publishing or sharing).

J. Demonstrate appropriate conventions in written composition (e.g., complete thoughts, complete sentences, usage, mechanics, spelling).

K. Use descriptive language (e.g., action verbs, vivid adjectives and adverbs).

L. Demonstrate a knowledge of literary elements and how they affect the development of a story (e.g., plot, character, setting).

M. Demonstrate a knowledge of and an appreciation for various forms (genres) of literature (e.g., stories, books, poems, plays, essays). (p. 23).

APPENDIX B

Shurley Method

Examples of Shurley Method lessons are on the following 10 pages.

Figure A

General Q & A Flow definition sheet — Page 3.1

This is a general question and answer flow guide that will help you remember the order of most of the questions.

The Direct Object (DO) Question and Answer Flow Unit 2

Read the sentence: Sam made a kite.

1. First, find the subject and verb by following the steps on Page 1.2
2. Next, say your subject and verb and ask "what."
3. "Sam made what? kite."
4. Since a DO does not mean the same thing as the subject, you say "Verify the noun. Does kite mean the same thing as Sam? No, kite – DO."
5. Then you put a "t" on your verb for a transitive verb because that means you have a direct object in your sentence.
6. Your pattern for a DO is "SN V-t DO P2."
7. Classify the rest of the sentence by following the steps on Page 1.2

The Indirect Object (IO) Question and Answer Flow Unit 3

Read the sentence: Sam made me a kite.

1. First, find the subject and verb by following the steps on Page 1.2
2. Next, find the direct object by following the steps above for DO.
3. Then you say your subject, verb, and direct object and ask "to whom or for whom."
4. "Sam made kite for whom? me – IO."
5. The IO always comes between a V-t and DO.
6. Your pattern for an IO is "SN V-t IO DO P3."
7. Classify the rest of the sentence by following the steps on Page 1.2

The Predicate Noun (Pred N) Question and Answer Flow Unit 4

Read the sentence: A fox is an animal.

1. First, find the subject and verb by following the steps on Page 1.2
2. Next, say your subject and verb and ask "what."
3. "Fox is what? animal."
4. Since a Pred N DOES mean the same thing as the subject, you say "Verify the noun. Does animal mean the same thing as fox? Yes, animal – Pred N."
5. Then you put a "L" on your verb for linking verb because that means you have a Pred N in your sentence.
6. Your pattern for a Pred N is "SN LV Pred N P4."
7. Classify the rest of the sentence by following the steps on Page 1.2

The Predicate Noun (Pred N) Question and Answer Flow Unit 5

Read the sentence: Her dress is pretty.

1. First, find the subject and verb by following the steps on Page 1.2
2. Next, say your subject and verb and ask "what."
3. "Dress is what? pretty."
4. Since a Pred Adj is an adjective in the predicate that always tells what kind of subject, you say: "Verify the adjective. What kind of dress? pretty – Pred Adj (PA)."
5. Then you put a "L" on your verb for linking verb because that means you have a Pred Adj in your sentence.
6. Your pattern for a Pred Adj is "SN LV Pred Adj P5."
7. Classify the rest of the sentence by following the steps on Page 1.2

LEVEL 5 UNIT 1

DEFINITION SHEET — PAGE 1

1. A <u>declarative</u> sentence is a telling sentence. It makes a statement.

2. An <u>interrogative</u> sentence asks a question.

3. An <u>exclamatory</u> sentence expresses strong feeling or surprise.

4. An <u>imperative</u> sentence gives a command or makes a request.

5. <u>Noun (N)</u> – names a person, place or thing.

<u>Noun Jingle</u>
This little NOUN, floating around,
NAMES A PERSON, PLACE, OR THING,
With a knick knack paddy-wack
These are English rules,
Isn't language fun and cool?

6. <u>Subject Noun (SN)</u> - a noun used as the subject of a sentence.
   TO FIND: Ask WHO or WHAT is talked about.

7. <u>Verb (V)</u> – 1. A verb can show the action of the sentence. It will tell what the subject does.
   <u>Hop, read, shouted, laughed,</u> and <u>talked</u> are <u>action</u> verbs.

   2. A verb can also show a state of being.
   It tells what the subject is and shows no action.
   <u>Am, is, are, was, were,</u> and <u>be</u> are the <u>being</u> verbs.

   TO FIND: Ask "WHAT IS BEING SAID ABOUT" and then say the subject of the sentence.

8. Article Adjective (A) – "a, an, the"

9. <u>Pattern 1</u> refers to this word order: SN V P1. The pattern of a sentence is the basic or core part that makes up the word order of that pattern. This core will form a skeleton or framework for the rest of the sentence. Pattern 1 has only two core parts: Subject and Verb.

10. An <u>adjective</u> modifies a noun or pronoun. An adjective asks:
    WHAT KIND? WHICH ONE? HOW MANY?

    To find an adjective - GO! ASK! GET!
    GO – WHERE? To the NOUN or PRONOUN
    ASK – WHAT? WHAT KIND? WHICH ONE? HOW MANY?
    GET – WHAT? AN ADJECTIVE!!

11. An <u>adverb</u> modifies a verb, adjective, or another adverb. An adverb asks:
    HOW? WHEN? WHERE?

    To find an adverb - GO! ASK! GET!
    GO – WHERE? To the VERB, ADJECTIVE, or another ADVERB
    ASK – WHAT? HOW? WHEN? WHERE?
    GET – WHAT? AN ADVERB!!

DEFINITIONS

NOUN JINGLE

This little NOUN, floating around,
Names a person, place, or thing
With a knick knack paddy-wack
These are English rules,
isn't language fun and cool?

PRONOUN JINGLE

This little PRONOUN, floating around,
Takes the place of a little old noun
With a knick knack paddy-wack
These are English rules,
Isn't language fun and cool?

ADVERB

An ADVERB modifies a verb, adjective, or another adverb.
An adverb asks: HOW? WHEN? WHERE?
To find an adverb - GO! ASK! GET!
GO - WHERE?
To the VERB, ADJECTIVE, or another ADVERB
ASK - WHAT? HOW? WHEN? WHERE?
GET - WHAT? AN ADVERB!

ADJECTIVE

An adjective modifies a noun or pronoun.
An adjective asks:
WHAT KIND? WHICH ONE? HOW MANY?
To find an adjective - GO! ASK! GET!
GO - WHERE? To the NOUN or PRONOUN
ASK - WHAT?
WHAT KIND? WHICH ONE? HOW MANY?
GET - WHAT? AN ADJECTIVE!

OBJECT OF THE PREPOSITION JINGLE

Dum De Dum Dum!
An O-P is N-O-U-N or a P-R-O
after the P-R-E-P in a S-E-N-T-E-N-C-E
Dum De Dum Dum - DONE!!

SENTENCE JINGLE

A sentence, sentence, sentence
is complete, complete, complete
when 5 simple rules it meets, meets, meets

It has a subject, subject, subject
and a verb, verb, verb.
It makes sense, sense, sense
with every word, word, word.

Add a capital letter, letter
and an end mark, mark.
Now we're finished, and aren't we smart!
Now our sentence has all its parts.

REMEMBER:

Sub-ject (2 claps)
Verb (2 claps)
Com-plete sense (3 claps)
Cap-ital letter and an end mark, too!
That's what a sentence is all about! (2 claps)

SUBJECT PRONOUN JINGLE

There are seven subject pronouns
that are easy as can be:
       I and we (2 claps)
       he and she (2 claps)
       it and they and you (3 claps)

POSSESSIVE PRONOUN JINGLE

There are seven possessive pronouns
that are easy as can be:
       my and our (2 claps)
       his and her (2 claps)
       its and their and your (3 claps)

PREPOSITION JINGLE

A PREP, PREP, PREPOSITION
is a special group of words that connect a
NOUN NOUN, NOUN or a PRO, PRO,
PRONOUN
to the rest of the sentence

3-Day Rotation Schedule

Day 1 - Total Teaching Day

Introduce the new grammar concepts. Classify the sentences that will be tested.
(No worksheet will be given to students on Day 1.)

Do **"Skill Builder"** checks with your students.

Show your students how to write a **Practice Sentence** using the new concepts you have just introduced by writing a practice sentence together.

Show your students how to write an **Improved Sentence** under the practice sentence by using synonyms, antonyms, and complete word changes to improve different parts of the practice sentence.

Note: To slow down a lesson, repeat Day 1 before proceeding to Day 2.

Day 2 - Teach & Test

Review the grammar concepts taught on Day 1 by classifying the same set of sentences again. Hand out worksheets to students as a test.

Introduce new concepts under Sentence Work. Have students write some of the answers on their worksheet as you explain how to do the work. They will use these answers to guide them as they work the rest of the worksheet independently. (Have students put their practice and improved sentences on a sheet of notebook paper and turn it in when finished.)

Put papers in the finished English work folder.

Day 3 - Teach & Check

Re-examine and discuss the worksheet: Classify the same set of sentences that is on the worksheet again. Then hand the worksheets back.

Checking options:

1. Student graded - exchange papers and do a teacher directed word-by-word check. Discuss correct responses as well as mistakes. Make this a total and focused learning time.

2. Teacher graded - select one or two sentences from the top section and one or two items from the bottom section to grade. Then have students exchange papers and check the rest of the test with you as a practice exercise. This will help them understand their mistakes, and they can use this knowledge to do better on the next test.

Teacher checks and discusses Practice and Improved Sentences with students individually.

STEPS IN WRITING THE THREE-POINT PARAGRAPH

1. Read the assigned topic.   (Favorite foods)
2. Select three points to list about the topic.
   (1. pizza   2. hamburgers   3. ice cream)

Topic Sentence

3. Sentence #1 - Write the topic sentence by using the words in your topic and adding words that tell how many points you will mention. This must be a complete sentence, and it should also be indented.   (I have three favorite foods.)

3-Point Sentence

4. Sentence #2 - Write a sentence listing your three points in the order you will present them in your paragraph.
   (These foods are pizza, hamburgers, and ice cream.)

First Point and Supporting Sentence

5. Sentence #3 - Write a sentence stating your first point.
   (My first favorite food is pizza.)
6. Sentence #4 - Write a sentence that makes a statement about and supports your first point. (I like pizza because of its great Italian taste.)

Second Point and Supporting Sentence

7. Sentence #5 - Write a sentence stating your second point.
   (My second favorite food is hamburgers.)
8. Sentence #6 - Write a sentence that makes a statement about and supports your second point.
   (To me, the best kind is the hamburger that has all the trimmings, even onion.)

Third Point and Supporting Sentence

9. Sentence #7 - Write a sentence stating your third point.
   (My third favorite food is ice cream.)
10. Sentence #8 - Write a sentence that makes a statement about and supports your third point.
    (I love ice cream because I love sweet, creamy things to eat.)

Concluding Sentence

11. Sentence #9 - Write a concluding sentence that summarizes your paragraph.
    Use some of the words in the topic sentence and add an extra thought about the paragraph. (I enjoy eating all kinds of foods, but my favorites will probably always be pizza, hamburgers, and ice cream.)

Sample Paragraph

   I have three favorite foods. These foods are pizza, hamburgers, and ice cream. My first favorite food is pizza. I like pizza because of its great Italian taste. My second favorite food is hamburgers. To me, the best kind is the hamburger that has all the trimmings, even onion. My third favorite food is ice cream. I love ice cream because I love sweet, creamy things to eat. I enjoy eating all kinds of foods, but my favorites will probably always be pizza, hamburgers, and ice cream.

1. SN V-t / DO P2
   A   SN | V-t   DO
   The children | drew pictures. D

2. SN V-t / DO P2
   (Prep A OP) A SN | Adv V-t DO (Prep PP Adj OP) D
   (For an hour) the children | quietly drew pictures (with their new crayons.) D

3. SN V-t / DO P2
   SN | V-t PP C-DO conj C-DO (Prep A OP)(Prep A OP)(Prep PP OP) D
   Bob | keeps his rabbits and chickens (in a coop)(at the back)(of his house.) D

4. SN V-t / DO P2
   HV CSN conj CSN | V-t Adj DO (Prep A Adj OP)(Prep OP) Int
   Did Sam and Jeff | buy two copies (of the new book)(on football?) Int

5. SN V-t / DO P2
   PP SN | V-t A Adj Adj DO (Prep Adj OP conj Adj OP) D
   Our coach | organized a good football team (by hard work and perfect practice.) D

SENTENCE WORK

1. Common noun - names any person, place, or thing. It is not capitalized (girl).
2. Proper noun - names a special person, place or thing. It is capitalized (Susan).
3. S - Singular - one (book, man). / 4. P - Plural - more than one (books, men).

Read the definitions listed above. Write S for singular and P for plural.

Use Sentences 1 and 4

Common Nouns	S-P
1. children	P
2. pictures	P
3. copies	P
4. book	S
5. football	S

Proper Nouns	S-P
1. Sam	S
2. Jeff	S

Underline the part of speech listed on the left:

1. simple subject - The students took a science test.

2. simple predicate - The bay horse ate all the oats.

3. action verb   - We read a story at bedtime.

4. pronouns - She yelled at us from her car.

5. nouns   - The monkey in the cage played tricks on Larry.

6. Adj   - The pretty red roses were placed on the table.

7. DO   - Linda brought a cake to the party.

8. Adv   - Today I will sit quietly at my desk.

9. verbs   - After the show they were going for a walk.

Write a complete sentence using the new concepts that you have learned.

Answers will vary.

GROUP 8 SENTENCES

1. _____ Our meat in the freezer defrosted during the night.

2. _____ Will blizzards sometimes come in the early morning?

3. _____ Look at the soft, beautiful clouds.

4. _____ The distant mountains showed boldly in the autumn sunset.

5. _____ Wow! He yelled and screamed at the taxi driver!

Sentence Work

1. Singular subject (1) – use: is, was, has, does, or verbs ending with s or es.
2. Plural subjects (2+) – use: are, were, do, have, or verbs without s or es endings.
3. YOU (subject pronoun) – use: are, were, do, have, or verbs without s or es endings.

Underline the correct verb in each sentence. Put the rule number (1, 2, 3) in the blank.
(1, 2, 3) (Subject-Verb Agreement Forms)

_____ 1. The girl (jump, jumps) over the mud puddle.
_____ 2. The girls (jump, jumps) over the mud puddle.
_____ 3. You (ride, rides) with my mother.
_____ 4. That steak (taste, tastes) good.
_____ 5. The cheerleaders (yell, yells) for a touchdown.

_____ 6. Your comb and brush (is, are) on the shelf.
_____ 7. The old leaves (is, are) brittle and dry.
_____ 8. My hand (is, are) trembling with fear.

_____ 9. They (wasn't, weren't) going with us.
_____ 10. My favorite present (was, were) the blue vase.
_____ 11. (Was, Were) you going to the meeting?
_____ 12. The tent (was, were) sagging with rain.
_____ 13. The boys (has, have) gone to school.
_____ 14. (Has, Have) you been to the zoo?
_____ 15. Billy (has, have) gone to the farm.
_____ 16. He (doesn't, don't) go very fast in his new car.
_____ 17. (Don't, Doesn't) you remember my favorite story?
_____ 18. Those horses (do, does) farm chores, too.

Write a or an before each word.

19. Would you like _____ olive?   20. Would you pass _____ ripe olive?
21. I need _____ old picture.   22. We took _____ picture of you.

Write syn for synonyms or ant for antonyms.

23. cancel, erase _____   24. active, calm _____   25. increase, decrease _____
26. argue, agree _____   27. fair, carnival _____   28. disturb, irritate _____

Write a complete sentence using the new concepts that you have learned.

GROUP 4 SENTENCES

1. _____ Does your sister take violin lessons at the music academy?

2. _____ Carol and Beth admired my sister's new coat.

3. _____ The mechanic adjusted the brakes on Dad's new car.

4. _____ Does an adjective describe a person, place, or thing?

5. _____ Susie had an acute pain in her side for an hour after lunch.

Sentence Work

Correct the capitalization errors and put the rule number above each correction.
Correct the punctuation errors and put the rule number below each correction.

6. yes ill go to london england for a vacation in june july and august

| Capitals: 7 | Comma: 5 | Apostrophe: 1 | End mark: 1 | |

7. was mr hunter transferred to columbus ohio on tuesday may 22 1989

| Capitals: 7 | Comma: 4 | Period: 1 | End mark: 1 | |

8. yes mr hatfield my next door neighbor is a democrat

| Capitals: 4 | Comma: 3 | Period: 1 | End mark: 1 | |

9. dad i think ill go to daves house to study for my spanish test

| Capitals: 5 | Comma: 1 | Apostrophe: 2 | End mark: 1 |

Write a complete sentence using the new concepts that you have learned.

© SHURLEY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

3-POINT OUTLINE GROUP 15

This is an outline of the steps used in writing a three-point paragraph.

Topic: _____

Write 3 points to list about the topic.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Sentence #1   Topic sentence (Use words in the topic and tell how many points will be used.)

_____

Sentence #2   3-point sentence (List your 3 points in the order that you will present them.)

_____

Sentence #3   State your first point in a complete sentence.

_____

Sentence #4   Write a supporting sentence for the first point.

_____

Sentence #5   State your second point in a complete sentence.

_____

Sentence #6   Write a supporting sentence for the second point.

_____

Sentence #7   State your third point in a complete sentence.

_____

Sentence #8   Write a supporting sentence for the third point.

_____

Sentence #9   Concluding sentence (Summarize the topic sentence and add an extra thought.)

_____

Write your nine sentence paragraph on a sheet of notebook paper. Be sure to re-read your paragraph several times slowly.

Check these things: (1) Have you followed the pattern for a 3-point paragraph?
(2) Do you have complete sentences?
(3) Have you capitalized the first word and put an end mark at the end of every sentence?
(4) Have you checked your sentences for capitalization and punctuation mistakes?
(5) Have you checked your verb tenses?
(6) Have you varied your sentence structure?

INDEPENDENT WRITING – EXPLANATORY GROUP 1-D

1. PLAN TO WRITE (narrow topic, brainstorm, and organize)

Title: <u>Why I Am a Good Student</u>

Brainstorm for ideas.

organize work area
listen carefully
complete assignments
softball captain
willing to work hard
willing to work carefully
enthusiastic
respectful toward others

Why I Am a Good Student

I. Good attitude _____
   A. Willing to work _____
   B. _____
   C. _____
   D. _____

II. Good study habits _____
   A. Listen carefully _____
   B. _____
   C. _____
   D. _____

Introductory sentence: There are two reasons I am a good student.

2. WRITE ROUGH DRAFT

The topic above has been selected, narrowed, brainstormed, and put into partial outline form for you. You are to sort and write the subtopics under each topic on your own paper. Then you are to write a rough draft. Follow these steps:

1. Use a pencil and a separate piece of notebook paper.
2. Skip every other line.
3. Follow your outline.
4. Write ideas in complete sentences.
5. Write a paragraph for each topic. Remember to indent.
6. Use the Word Bank below.

   Word Bank   eager, energetic, prepared, important, concentration, reward, goal, schedule, pride, distractions, remembering, thoughtful, dependable

3. EDIT ROUGH DRAFT

Exchange papers with your editing partner. Use your editing checklist as a guide for circling errors to be corrected. Discuss ways to improve your paper with your editing partner. After you have exchanged back, put corrections above each marked error. Now, proofread your paper carefully and correct any remaining errors. Be sure to use the editing check list.

4. WRITE FINAL PAPER

1. Use an ink pen.
2. Do not skip a line.
3. Write neatly.

4. Read over final paper.
5. Hand in final paper, outline, and rough draft on time.

APPENDIX C

1994-1996

School Report Cards

1994-1995 SCHOOL REPORT CARD

From the Principal,

Education in a community is a complex system. It is impacted by the type of industry, the socio-economic characteristics, size, funding sources, availability of teachers, expectations of governing bodies, politics, community expectations, etc. This report card provides some information regarding these factors.

This report card in no way allows for comparison of this district to other districts. From this report card you can conclude that our poverty level is fairly significant and that the educational attainment of adults is significant with 39% not having a high school diploma. If these two factors were considered by themselves, it would suggest that our students should score significantly below the state averages.

Reviewing this test data on this report card indicates that our students scored above or near the State average in most areas. The state average means that half the schools in the state scored below and half scored above, therefore not everyone could be above the state average. Therefore, the only reason to get concerned about these scores are if they are significantly below the state average. We will address these areas through staff development each year.

While we are very proud of our school and it's accomplishments and while this report card indicates we are doing quite well considering all the factors involved, we will continue to strive to improve the quality of our program. If you review this report card and would like to visit with me, feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Offering Grades KG-8

From the Secretary of Education,

More is demanded of our schools today than ever before. Each year our desire as parents and educators is to improve the quality of education for our children. Two of the main ingredients going into a child's education are assistance provided by the school system and support received through parental involvement. Parental involvement is not just interaction between parent and child, but also includes regular communication between parent and school.

To make the parent-school side of the equation the best that it can be, it is imperative that parents be well informed about the school and district which their children attend. Hopefully, at the local level you are already kept informed through newsletters or other means. At the state level, the Office of Accountability has created the first ever Oklahoma School Report Card. This report card covers school year 1994-95. Inside you will find information about your community, your school and its programs, results from nationally normed achievement tests, and results from Oklahoma's Core Curriculum Tests.

We hope you will take time to review your school's report card just as you would your child's report card. It was designed to help you become more knowledgeable about your child's education. If you have questions or concerns, you are encouraged to contact your school's administration. We hope this new effort on our part will encourage and increase communication between parents, teachers, school administrators, and local boards of education.

Remember, effective involvement requires effective communication.

Sincerely,

Dr. Floyd Coppedge
Secretary of Education

Sincerely,

~~Elementary Principal~~

For Additional Information contact:
The Office of Accountability
3033 N. Walnut, Suite 103E - Oklahoma City, OK 73105-2833
(405) 522-4578   Fax (405) 522-4581

Your District Community

This information is from 1990 census data and reflects various socio-economic characteristics of the people living within your school district.

Household Income	$16,189
Unemployment Rate	5%
Poverty Rate	28%

Educational Attainment of Adults

College Graduate 11%
Some College 14%
Less than 12th Grade 39%
H.S. Graduate 36%
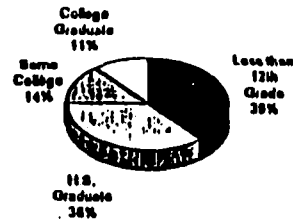
Research has shown there is a strong correlation between the education level of parents and the educational success experienced by their children.

Community Involvement

Through a questionnaire sent to Superintendents across the state, the Office of Accountability tried to determine the amount of interaction that existed between the school, the district, and the community during the 1994-95 school year.

Did this school and/or the school district provide a newsletter for parents and the community? — **Yes**

Did this school and/or district have community/corporate sponsored programs for students which rewarded academic achievement, citizenship, or good behavior? — **No**

Was this school or another school in this district used before or after hours for student or community activities? — **Yes**

Does this district offer a PTA/PTO program? — **No**

NA means the district failed to respond to the question.
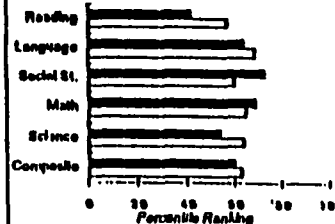FIR means the district failed to respond to the entire questionnaire.

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ELEMENTARY
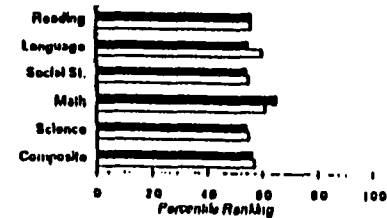
ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited with no deficiencies.

The following information was taken from or calculated using data provided by this school, or district, to the State Department of Education, the Regents for Higher Education, or Vocational Technical Education

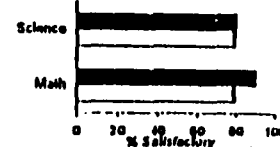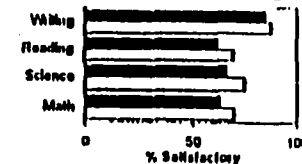|	Your School	Elementary State Average
Enrollment	224	322
Number of Teachers	17	21
Elem Teacher Attendance Rate (District)	98%	95%
Average Salary of Teachers	$29,695	$29,769
Average Years of Teaching Experience	13	12
% of Students eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	74%	59%
Many districts give achievement tests other than those required by law. Did this district?	Yes	66% answered Yes

3rd Grade Achievement Test (ITBS)

Reading
Language
Social St.
Math
Science
Composite

Percentile Ranking

7th Grade Achievement Test (ITBS)

Reading
Language
Social St.
Math
Science
Composite

Percentile Ranking

5th Grade Core Curriculum Test

Science
Math

% Satisfactory

8th Grade Core Curriculum Test

Writing
Reading
Science
Math

% Satisfactory

School   State

District Finances[1]
How the district spent money to educate children.

		State Average
Instruction	59%	57%
Student Support	3%	5%
Instructional Support	2%	3%
School Administration	1%	4%
District Administration	7%	5%
District Support	18%	15%
Other	8%	11%
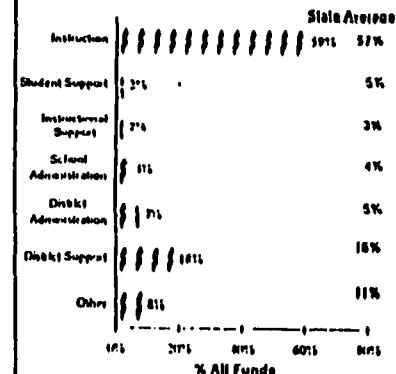
% All Funds

[1] 'All funds' excludes the Bond Fund, but includes all other funds used for financing the school district.

FROM THE PRINCIPAL:

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Included in this school Report Card is some of the statistical data that reflects how   School is doing in comparisons to state averages. This data 'is in no way a complete assessment of our school or how we are doing. It does however give some sense of feeling for overall performance in given areas.

Because schools do not control the imput (in other words we serve everyone who wants to enroll) we cannot accurately determine the output. Every student is an individual with unique characteristics that prevents them from being cloned. Therefore it is impossible to make accurate comparisons without looking at each individual and knowing what they are capable of.

According to the data recorded on this report, School is doing an excellent job. While we are small in numbers of students we are tall in accomplishments.

If you have additional questions please feel free to call us at   .

For Additional Information contact:

Office of Accountability
3033 N. Walnut Avenue, Suite 103E
Oklahoma City, OK 73105-2833
phone: (405) 522-4578 • fax: (405) 522-4581

1995-1996

SCHOOL REPORT CARD

DISTRICT
EL SCH

OFFERING GRADES KG-8

FROM THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION:

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am pleased to provide to you the School Report Card for your child's school. I hope you will take time to review this report card just as you would your child's report card. The card was created by the Office of Accountability and covers school year 1995-96. Inside you will find census information about your community, programmatic information on the school, and indicators of student performance, such as results from mandated statewide achievement tests. On the back of the card, space has also been provided for a message from the principal.

Why have a School Report Card? In Oklahoma we take great pride in maintaining local control of our public schools. However, local control does not stop with the local school board and professional educators. Parents also play a vital role and bear the responsibility of being full partners in the educational process. The School Report Card was designed to help parents become more knowledgeable about the educational process in which their children participate.

It is incumbent upon schools to respond to the unique needs of their students and community. In some cases this may mean implementing a "back-to-basics" approach, while other schools may be expected to provide advanced curriculum offerings. Some schools face the challenge of meeting the needs of a diverse cultural or ethnic base, while other school's students might be best served by a strong association with an area vocational-technical school.

I urge you to get involved in your community's schools and play an active role in your child's education. If you have questions or concerns about the information presented you are encouraged to contact your school's administration or the Office of Accountability. I hope this effort will encourage and increase communication between parents, teachers, school administrators, local boards of education and citizens.
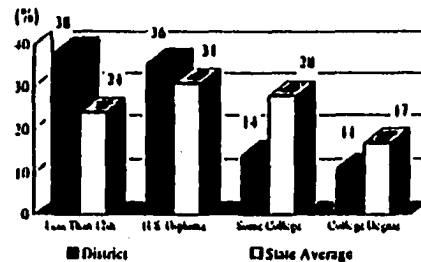
Sincerely,

Floyd Coppedge

District:

Educational Attainment of Adults (Age 20+)

Research has shown there is a strong correlation between the educational attainment of parents and the educational success of their children. This and many other socioeconomic factors from census data are reported in the *Profiles 1996 - District Report* released by the Office of Accountability and available at your local public library.

Legend: ■ District   □ State Average

Information Feedback from Your School District

Newsletter for parents and the community ?	Yes
Community/parent outreach program(s) ?	Yes
Achievement tests offered for grade(s) other than 3 and 7 ?	FTR
Summer school program for remediation?	No
Summer school program for non remediation?	Yes

Information Feedback from Your School

Information packet or handbook ?	Yes
Newsletter for parents and the community ?	Yes
Were the school's facilities available for use by the community ?	Yes
Community/parent outreach program(s) ?	Yes

Support from Your Community

Community/Corporate sponsored program(s) ?	Yes
PTA/PTO program(s) ?	0

1995-96 Juvenile Offenders & Offenses

	Your School	Your District	State Average
There was 1 offender in every ___ students.	72.0	39.9	40.7
Each offender committed an average of ___ offenses.	1.0	1.1	1.3
___ % of offenders were gang members.	0.0%	0.0%	7.0%

1995-96 District Finances

Your school district had 35% of its revenue coming from Local and County sources, while the state average was 31%. Your school district used 60% of its budget on instruction, while the state average was 59%.

Check the *Profiles 1996 - District Report* for a detailed breakdown of your district's revenues and expenditures.

The following information was taken from or calculated using data provided by this school, or district, to the State Department of Education, the Regents for Higher Education, or the Department of Vocational-Technical Education.

Classroom & Administration Characteristics

Your school was accredited with 0 deficiency(ies).

	Your School	District Total (All Schools)	Elem. School State Average
Student Enrollment	216	319	315
Number of Teachers	14.1	23.4	18.1
Teacher Attendance Rate	94.0%	95.6%	94.7%
Average Salary of Teachers	$31,122	$31,518	$30,492
% Teachers with Advanced Degree	64.7%	67.1%	34.6%
Average Years Teaching Experience	13.0	13.3	12.1
Number of Other Professional Staff	0.0	0.0	1.3
Number of Teaching Assistants	0.0	4.0	3.1
Number of Administrators	1.0	3.0	1.1

Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) Achievement Test

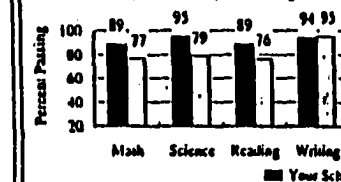3rd Grade : 100% Tested (State Average: 89% Tested)
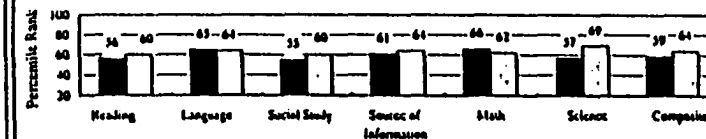
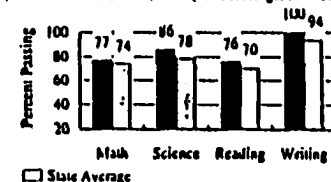7th Grade : 88% Tested (State Average: 90% Tested)

Legend: ■ Your School   □ State Average
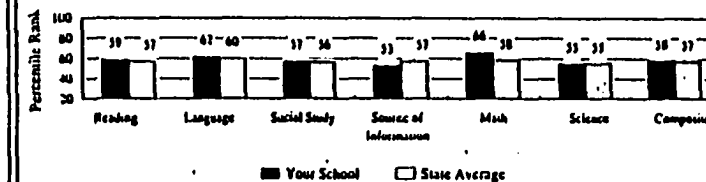
Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test

5th Grade : 95% Tested (State Average: 89% Tested)

8th Grade : 100% Tested (State Average: 90% Tested)

Legend: ■ Your School   □ State Average

Iowa Tests of Basic Skills

	READING			LANGUAGE					MATHEMATICS			CORE TOTAL	SOCIAL STUD-IES	SCI-ENCE	SOURCES OF INFO.			COM-POSITE	MATH COMPU-TATION
	VOCAB-ULARY	COMPRE-HENSION (ADV SKILLS)	TOTAL	SPELL-ING	CAPITAL-IZATION	PUNC-TUATION	USAGE/EXPRESS (ADV SKILLS)	TOTAL	CON-CEPTS/ESTIM.	PROBS/DATA INTERP. (ADV SKILLS)	TOTAL				MAPS & DIA-GRAMS	REF. MAT'LS	TOTAL		
GRADE 3																			
ITBS: N	20	20	20	20	20	20	20		20	20			20	20	20	20			20
GE of Avg SS	3.5	3.5		3.7	4.5	4.5	3.9		4.7	4.3			4.1	4.0	3.7	3.9			4.4
NS	4.7	4.7		5.2	5.7	5.7	5.3		6.5	5.8			5.7	5.4	4.9	5.4			6.1
NCE	46.8	46.8		50.4	57.5	57.8	52.1		65.8	56.8			56.6	53.0	49.9	52.6			60.4
PR of Avg SS: State Student Norms	40	37		41	55	61	48		71	53			64	51	40	44			58
PR of Avg SS: Nat'l Student Norms	44	46		52	66	70	57		79	64			63	57	51	56			69
N TESTED= 20																			
GRADE 7																			
ITBS: N	12	12		12	12	12	12		12	12			12	12	12	12			12
GE of Avg SS	7.6	7.7		9.5	8.5	7.0	8.3		8.4	8.0			7.9	8.6	7.6	7.9			10.5
NS	5.2	4.9		5.4	5.2	4.6	5.3		5.5	5.2			5.1	5.5	4.9	4.9			6.5
NCE	51.3	50.1		54.0	52.3	46.8	52.8		55.0	50.4			50.4	53.6	46.3	49.8			65.7
PR of Avg SS: State Student Norms	50	42		58	43	46	47		58	49			48	61	45	49			70
PR of Avg SS: Nat'l Student Norms	51	50		59	56	49	55		59	52			52	59	48	52			77
N TESTED= 12																			

GE=Grade Equivalent, SS=Standard Score, NS=Nat'l Stat, NCE=Normal Curve Equivalent, PR=%ile Rank

*Includes Mathematics Computation

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

It is the policy of the   Board of Education to take action concerning the renewal or nonrenewal of all certified employees' contracts on or before April 10 each year.

The district will provide reasonable assurance in writing to support employees that the district intends to employ for the subsequent school year no later than ten days after the effective date of the education appropriation bill or by June 1, whichever is later.

The superintendent shall recommend candidates for administrative, support, and certified positions to the board. The principal(s) shall be consulted on the employment and retention of teachers. It will be the duty of the superintendent to see that persons nominated for employment will meet all of the qualifications established by law and by the board for the type of position for which nomination is made. All qualifications being equal, those applicants living in the   school district will have preference over applicants who live out of the district.

Among other requirements for employment, the superintendent shall insure that prospective employees produce legally sufficient documents showing citizenship status. The superintendent may develop rules and regulations governing employment practices. Such rules and regulations, if developed, must be approved by the board of education and shall become a part of this policy.

In the event the board decides not to employ a candidate who is recommended by the superintendent, further recommendations should be made to the board by the superintendent until a selection is made.

The employment of any person with this school district shall not be made or excluded on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, national origin, handicap, pregnancy, parenthood, marriage, or for any other reason not related to individual capability to perform in the position for which employed. In accordance with Oklahoma Statutes Title 70, Section 5-113.1, the board of education shall not consider for employment in any capacity a relative within the second degree of consanguinity or affinity of a board member. However, if such relative is employed with the school district prior to the election of the board member, such employment may continue.

CROSS-REFERENCE: Policy BJB, Separation/Recruitment of Superintendent
                   Policy DOAC, Suspension, Demotion, or Termination of Support Personnel
                   Policy DOCA, Reduction-In-Force, Certified Personnel
                   Policy DOCB, Reduction-In-Force, Support Personnel

APPENDIX D

Formal Interview Questions

Formal Interview 1:

1. Who made the decision to use the Shurley Method in the Miller school district?

2. What were the reasons for the decision to use the Shurley Method? What types of things were considered?

3. How did the teachers feel about teaching the Shurley Method?

4. Do you think all the Miller elementary teachers follow all the steps and instructions exactly as they are presented in the instructor's book?

5. How do you feel about teaching the Shurley Method? Is it difficult? Do you have to do much preparation?

6. What is your overall assessment and opinion of the Shurley Method?

7. If you do disagree with any part of this method, what do you usually do about it?

8. What do you think is the greatest strength of the Shurley Method?

9. What do you think your college methods teachers would say about the Shurley Method?

10. How do you incorporate the Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) into your language arts curriculum? How does the Shurley Method address the PASS objectives?

11. What or who do you think is the most influential in determining what is taught in the language arts classroom?

12. If you could teach exactly what and how you wanted, what would you do?

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Formal Interview 2:

1. In the first interview, you stated that you like the Shurley Method because it works? Could you explain what you mean by "it works?"

2. How does the Shurley Method influence your planning?

3. When do you decide to change or alter the lesson or the routine?

4. Do you think it matters if you make changes?

5. Do you ever question what and/or how something is presented in the SM material?

6. One day when I was observing and the students seemed inattentive, you asked me if I had any advice or suggestions. What were your thoughts that day?

7. What do you normally do when the students seem to be inattentive or in some cases bored?

8. Does the Shurley material offer suggestions for times that the students seem tired, restless, or bored?

9. Do you ever decide to change a lesson and do something that is not really Shurley Method material?

10. What do you think influenced you more as a teacher?

11. What do you remember about your college classes? What did you learn in college classes that has helped you as a teacher?

12. What recommendations would you make to college teachers who teach future teachers?

13. Is there a particular teacher you remember who had an influence in your teaching?

14. What is your opinion of the Priority Academic Student Skills? What do you think is

the rationale for having PASS?

15. What is your opinion of standardized tests and of the required state writing test?

16. Would you change the way you teach and what you teach if you didn't have to worry about test scores?

17. In our previous interview you said that sometimes you think the students get bored because of the repetition, and then you added that you think the repetition is necessary because it is the only way they will "get it?" What do you think is going on with students? Do you think they eventually do get it?

18. What do you think when you have students score poorly on Shurley Method tests?

19. What do you do if you have one or two students who just don't understand the Shurley Method lessons?

20. What do you remember about learning grammar? What importance do you place on writing and speaking? Does the Shurley Method meet your requirements for teaching language arts?

Formal Interview 3:

1. In our previous interview, you said that Mr. Lawson sent you to a work shop to learn information about the required writing tests. How often is it requested of you to attend workshops?

2. Who is in charge of staff development?

3. What are the staff development requirements for Miller teachers? How do you earn your points? Does the school district offer workshops for all Miller teachers?

4. What procedures do you follow if you want to attend a workshop during the school

day? Are you encouraged to attend these meetings or workshops?

5. The superintendent told me that none of the Miller teachers belong to the Oklahoma Education Association? How do you feel about this? What does the school district do when it is time for the state teachers' meeting?

6. What teaching models have you been exposed to?

7. Where did you do your student teaching?

8. What do you think is the theory of the Shurley Method?

9. How do you feel about some other person selecting your curriculum?

10. How did you decide to put the class in pairs?

11. What influenced your decision to have the two fifth grade classes compete?

12. If you were given the opportunity to recommend something to those who teach teachers what would it be?

13. What would your ideal language arts curriculum be? What would you select for the curriculum?

14. How often do you have faculty meetings and how often are you observed by one of the administrators?

15. Who or what do you think has the most influence on what and how you teach?

16. Do you feel pressure from either the administration or from parents and school board members?

17. Who do you think has the most influence concerning what goes on in the classroom: the superintendent, the principal, the school board, or parents?

18. What would you say is the greatest asset of rural schools and what is the greatest

detriment?

Formal Interview with the Superintendent:

1. How did you make your decision to use the Shurley Method? What things influenced your decision?

2. How do you feel about standardized tests?

3. How do you feel about the regulations made by the State Department of Education and by the State Legislature?

4. What is the main thing you want from your teachers? What do you think is the main thing you look for when you hire a teacher?

5. What do you see as your biggest problem as a rural school administrator? Do you think you have different needs and different problems from larger school districts and from urban schools?

6. What is your opinion and assessment of the education classes for teachers and in particular the methods classes?

7. What is the best teacher of future teachers?

8. What advice do you have for college and university education departments and for education instructors?

9. What do you think is the biggest problem for your teachers?

10. What is your educational background?

11. Have you been a classroom teacher?

Formal interview with elementary Principal:

1. What would you say takes most of your time as principal?

2. What do you think is the most important part of your job?

3. What is your greatest concern as an administrator and as the elementary principal in particular?

4. Where did you earn your degree and what did you study in college?

5. How long have you been at Miller? How long have you been a principal? Were you ever a classroom teacher?

6. How much of your job is influenced by the superintendent, the school board, by parents, and by teachers?

7. Do you feel pressure to have your students score well on the achievement tests?

8. What do you think makes a good teacher?

9. What do you think is most influential (family background, education, other teachers, and so on) in shaping teachers?

10. How do you feel about the education classes in college and the methods classes in particular?

11. What would you tell or recommend to college professors who teach future teachers?

12. What are the characteristics of very good teachers? What about poor teachers?

13. What problems do you see that rural schools have that are unique? Do you think there are any educational/school problems that are more or less universal?

14. Who or what has most influenced your educational philosophy?

15. Have any professional or organizational factors helped to shape your educational

philosophy?

16. What is your opinion of the Shurley Method?

17. What is your response to those who say that teaching grammar does not work or that it is not effective?

18. What is your opinion of the Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS)?

19. What was your rationale in splitting the fifth grade by gender? Have any parents expressed an opinion about the boys and girls being in separate classes?

Stimulated Recall

The stimulated recall interviews did not have predetermined questions. During these interviews, Ms. Davenport listened to the tape recording of the class session and she decided when to stop it and make comments. I recorded her responses, then later I read over my notes and made questions for additional formal interviews. The information gathered in the recall sessions led to future interview questions and to some of the questions for the administrators.

APPENDIX E

Miller School Teacher Appraisal System

The Teacher Appraisal System is used by the principal to evaluate teachers. The

administrators and the teachers agreed on the assessment criteria. The principal observes

and evaluates each teacher once a month on triplicates copies of the appraisal system

form. The principal retains a copy of his evaluation for his records; the teacher and the

superintendent each receive a copy of the completed form.

Teacher Appraisal System

Classroom Management (routine discipline)
Classroom Climate (learning environment)
Organization (exhibits preparation)
Record Keeping (grading patterns, lesson plans, and student files)
Demonstrates/models behavior
Content Area Knowledge (explains content)
Provides Sufficient Directions (explains directions and establishes objectives)
Explains Purpose (relates objectives, stresses sequences, establishes closure)
Encourages Response (involves all learners, provides for independent practice)
Supervision (monitors and guides practice)
Adopts Varied Techniques (adjusts based on monitoring)
Evidence of learner Success (student achievement indicators)
Performance and Conduct (commitment to profession and students)
Comments:_____

_____

_____

Criteria: NO=Not Observed; S=Satisfactory; NS=Not Satisfactory; NI=Needs
Improvement

HEAD START/FOUR YEAR OLD KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM
JOB DESCRIPTION

1. Head Start/Four year Old Kindergarten Instructor.
2. Supervising administrator: Mr. Blake, Elementary Principal.
3. Early Childhood certificate required, Head Start experience preferred, CDL/Bus Driver license preferred.
4. Performance responsibilities include: Supervise four year old children from 8:00 A.M. until 3:15 P.M. daily, prepare developmentally appropriate lesson plans daily, complete all Head Start requirements and local district requirements in regard to paper work and duties, attend monthly staff meetings, supervise teacher aids and parent volunteers.
5. Contract will be for a term of one year, renewable only by the recommendation of the principal and superintendent. Salary will be determined by the district salary schedule equated to the level of experience and degree. Applicant agrees to complete a Masters degree in the area of reading specialist within five years of employment and failure to do so may result in termination of employment.
6. The principal will perform all evaluations according to the district policy.

SELECTION CRITERIA
HEAD START/FOUR YEAR OLD KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

1. Enthusiastic, dedicated to education and young people; life's goals to be a teacher of young people.
2. Meet State Board's certification requirements; currently certified.
3. Has working knowledge of Head Start program requirements.
4. Has and can demonstrate loyalty to life, family, school, the profession, administration, and fellow staff members.
5. Leadership ability and traits.
6. Cooperative spirit.
7. Adaptability.
8. Respect for authority, people, and Democracy.
9. Well groomed, neatly dressed, and appears properly.
10. Teaching experience and head start experience preferred.
11. Has and can demonstrate necessary traits to be successful as a classroom teacher.

TEACHER INTERVIEWS
WRITING EXERCISE GIVEN BEFORE THE INTERVIEW BEGINS.

Name_____

Answer the following questions:

1. Describe what loyalty means to you.

2. What would you do in this situation: You have an unruly child who is very rude, and backtalks quite frequently. This child neglects homework assignments, and is disrupting the whole classroom. You have contacted the parents through the principal, but to no avail. What would you do?

3. You are taking a group of boys to gym class, you notice an empty bottle of an alcoholic beverage in a boy's gym bag. You have this student in class and you realize he needs some help personally, his homelife is not the best. What do you do?

4. Why should we employ you?

INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT
HEAD START/EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER
(A note attached said these questions were developed to keep the interviews consistant and organized. Also, the interview concludes with questions and answers of a general nature).

1. Tell us about yourself.

2. Explain your education and training.

3. What are your future plans? For at least the next five years?

4. In your opinion, what is your greatest strength?

5. In your opinion, what are your weaknesses, if any?

6. How do you get along with people; what does cooperation mean to you?

7. What are your pet peeves?

8. What were your most challenging studies in college?
   What subjects did you like the most?

9. What do you do for recreation?

10. How many brothers/sisters in your family?

11. How do you feel about discipline and give examples of how you would handle discipline problems in your class?

12. Do you have a CDL/Bus drivers certificate? If not would you be willing to attend the necessary training sessions to become certified?

13. Do you have any problems with extra-day assignments or after school work?

14. Are you familiar with Head Start requirements and programming?

15. Why should we recommend you for employment at [Miller] Public Schools.

_____   _____

Name of Applicant   Date

Shurley Instructional Materials, Inc.
366 SIM Dr. (off Ballard Rd.)
Cabot, AR 72023
Phone (501) 843-3869

December 8, 1997

Ms. Lynda Thompson
330 West Kings Road
Ada, OK 74820

To whom it may concern:

As a representative of Shurley Instructional Materials, I hereby grant permission for Ms. Lynda Thompson to copy a few pages (no more than 10) out of the 1st Edition Level 5 Workbook, Resource Booklet and Information Booklet. Copying is granted only for use with her dissertation.
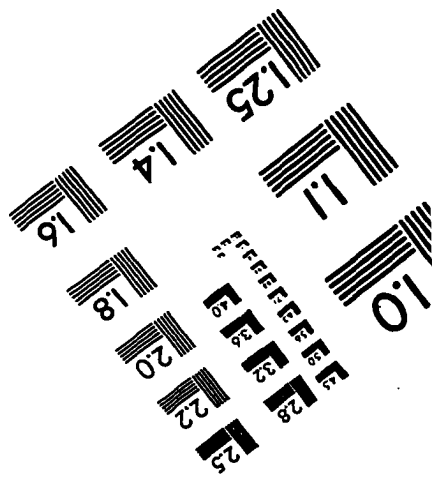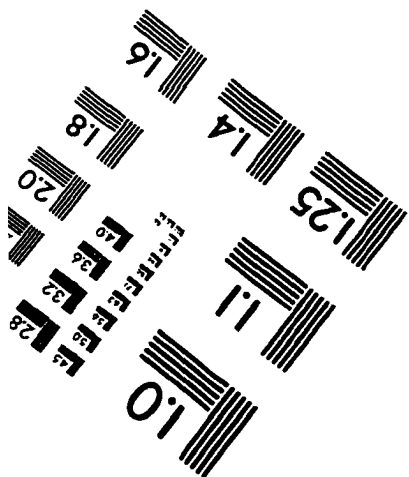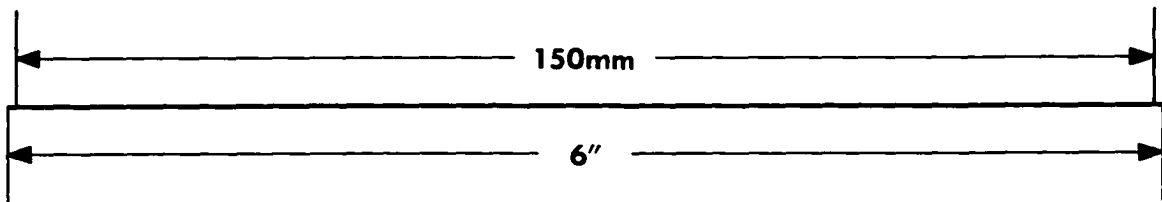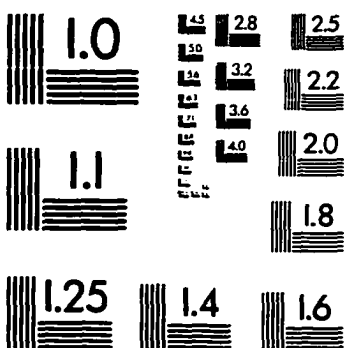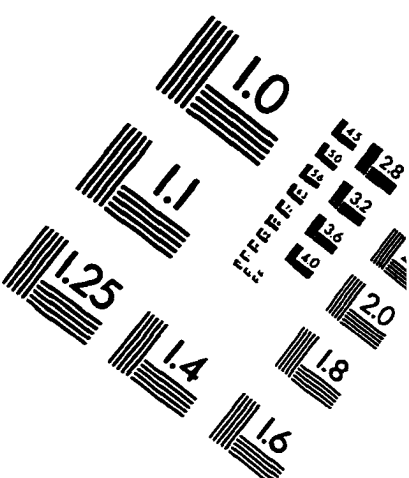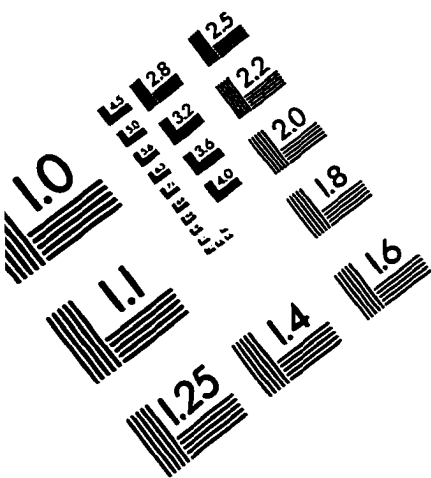
If there are any questions pertaining to this release, please call me at the number listed above.

Very truly yours,

Brenda Shurley

Brenda Shurley

IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (QA-3)

150mm

6"