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CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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THEORY AND PRACTICE OF WHOLE LANGUAGE: CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING WHOLE LANGUAGE TEACHING

by

Doreen Dearing B.A. (Ed.), B.A.

A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Education

Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland

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Dedicated to my mother and father.

Abstract

The main focus of this study was whole language teaching amongst primary teachers, grades kindergarten to three, within the Conception Bay South Integrated School District. The literature was examined with respect to detailed descriptions of whole language philosophy, both in theory and practice. A field survey was conducted with a select group of primary teachers to ascertain their level of knowledge of whole language philosophy and how this knowledge translates into learning experiences for children.

Scheduled interviews were conducted with the provincial primary consultant with the Department of Education, the language arts program coordinator with the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board, and five primary teachers from schools within the Conception Bay South Integrated School District. A mailed questionnaire was distributed to the 49 primary teachers within the five primary/elementary schools under the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board. Thirty-eight or 78 percent of the questionnaires were completed and returned to the examiner.

The many advantages and benefits which a whole language philosophy of teaching and learning can offer to teachers and children alike, were strongly evident from the literature. The literature illustrated also, many activities, approaches, and procedures which have the potential to fit a whole language framework.

Findings from the study revealed that the Department of Education articulates a whole language philosophy in its primary language curriculum guide, and the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board includes a whole language philosophy in its goals for

the school district. The results of the survey indicated that the teachers are working within a whole language framework or are heading in that direction. This is not to say that they are textbook examples of whole language teachers; however, they engage in many practices which are consistent with and reflect a whole language philosophy. Those who indicated that they are whole language teachers are well aware of the benefits whole language can offer to children and to themselves, but are equally aware of the problems associated with it, if teachers are not well informed. Concerns were expressed, particularly with respect to support through inservice and other type sharing sessions, deemed essential in the advancement of knowledge of whole language, and in the successful development of whole language teachers.

Based on findings from this study, recommendations were made for additional support and assistance in the area of whole language, and for further research.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Nature of the Study

For years the teaching of reading was dominated by a basal reader skills approach, which viewed reading as a series of discrete sequential skills to be taught (Beebe, 1990). Beebe pointed out that during the 1970's and 1980's researchers such as Yetta and Kenneth Goodman and Frank Smith shifted emphasis from a skills approach to teaching reading and began to look at reading as a highly complex, multi-faceted, and integrated process. They became concerned with understanding how children learn, as opposed to what comprehension and decoding skills should be taught.

At this same time, according to Reutzel and Hollingsworth (1988), there was a growing dissatisfaction amongst teachers and researchers concerning the amount of time spent on actual reading and writing in the classroom. A definite neglect in these areas was noticed. Reutzel and Hollingsworth noted that skills worksheets and tests were proliferating at such an alarming rate that more and more time was being devoted to them, with less and less time given to reading and writing. Anderson, Hiebert, Scott and Wilkinson (1985) stated that "an estimate of silent reading time in the typical primary school class is seven or eight minutes per day, or less than ten percent of the total time devoted to reading" (p.76). They noted, also, that "Students spend up to seventy percent of the time allocated for reading instruction in independent practice, or 'seatwork'" (p.74).

Concerns regarding the effectiveness of skills approaches to teaching reading, discussed by Beebe (1990), and concerns with the amount of time spent on actual reading and writing in schools, discussed by Reutzel and Hollingsworth (1988), caused both teachers and researchers to look in new directions for ideas surrounding the way children should be taught. In their attempt to understand how children learn to read researchers Smith (1973) and K. and Y. Goodman (1979) began to explore the reading process. They believed that because reading was a language process, it could be learned in the same way as learning to speak. Thus, as Beebe pointed out, emphasis shifted from a skills approach, where reading involved simply learning how to identify words and letters in a particular order, to a language approach, where reading involved combining prior knowledge with knowledge of letter-sound relationships in order to construct meaning from print. In addition, she pointed out that advocates of this new approach stressed the importance of keeping children's language whole in the promotion of teaching reading, thus rejecting the earlier tradition of fragmenting language into letters, words, phrases, and sentences for purposes of teaching. Based on these new ideas teachers and researchers alike began to look at teaching from a "whole language" perspective.

Whole language has become a visible and strong movement in instruction in recent years (Fagan, 1989; McConaghy, 1988). According to Fagan, there are numerous self-professed whole language teachers, yet, there is considerable disagreement amongst them as to what whole language is and what it entails. Also, teachers' knowledge regarding whole language philosophy ranges from very minimal to advanced levels. This,

Fagan believes, has serious implications for the children entrusted to them. Whole language teachers, he feels, require an advanced level of knowledge.

Much has been written about whole language and there are as many definitions as there are individuals who claim to be whole language educators (Fagan, 1989; Gunderson & Shapiro, 1987). It has been termed an approach (Froese, 1990), an attitude (Rich, 1985), a set of beliefs (Altwerger, Edelsky & Flores, 1987; Weaver, 1990), a perspective (Altwerger et al., 1987; Watson, 1989), a philosophy (Fagan, 1989; Haycock, 1989; Newman, 1985; Weaver, 1990), a process of language learning and teaching (Gambell, Newton & Roberts, 1989), and a way of bringing together a view of language, learning, and people (K. Goodman, 1986). The problem is, however, that much of what people have to say reflects a serious lack of understanding of what whole language is really all about (Newman & Church, 1990).

Newman and Church (1990) discuss a number of myths and misconceptions surrounding whole language which are causing confusion and anxiety amongst both educators and the public. The following is an abbreviation of some of these widespread myths, as well as the realities of whole language:

1. Myth: You don't teach phonics in whole language.
   Reality: Whole language teachers teach phonics but not as something separate from actual reading and writing.

2. Myth: You don't teach spelling or grammar in whole language.
   Reality: As children use language they learn about it, discovering much on their own. When appropriate, the teacher might provide information through short focused lessons.

3. Myth: Whole language means literature-based curriculum.
   Reality: Many whole language teachers plan the curriculum around math, science, and social studies. They capitalize on the interests of the students.

4. Myth: Whole language is a way of teaching language arts; it doesn't apply to other subject areas.
   Reality: Whole language philosophy underlies the entire curriculum.

5. Myth: In a whole language classroom, you don't have to teach.
   Reality: Whole language teachers collect materials, initiate learning activities, suggest explorations, observe, and ask questions--all are integral aspects of teaching.

6. Myth: A whole language classroom is unstructured.
   Reality: A whole language classroom is highly structured with both teachers and students contributing to the organization.

7. Myth: There's no evaluation in whole language.
   Reality: Teachers with a whole language perspective observe and interact with students to discover not only what but how they're learning. The evaluation is ongoing.

8. Myth: Whole language teachers deal just with process not product.
   Reality: Whole language teachers are very concerned about the quality of student's efforts, but they also value the process that produces projects.

9. Myth: All you need for whole language is a "whole language" commercial program.
   Reality: There is nothing intrinsically wrong with these materials, but they do not, in themselves, create a whole language learning environment.

10. Myth: Whole language is a methodology.
    Reality: Whole language is a philosophy of teaching and learning.

11. Myth: Giving teachers a few whole language tips makes them whole language teachers.
    Reality: Helping people become whole language teachers means helping everyone engage in serious and ongoing examination of pedagogical beliefs and instructional practices.

12. Myth: You need only a few in-service sessions to change teaching practice.
    Reality: Traditional one-shot in-services may give teachers a few new ideas but leave them without any analytic tools to figure out where to go next or why. (pp.20-24)

In an area of such importance, as the teaching of children, whole language teachers need an advanced level of knowledge of whole language philosophy. For Rich (1986) teachers reach this advanced level when "they read, question the theories 'out there', question personal assumptions about learning and begin to develop personal theories about the way in which learning goes" (p.4). Teachers need to be well informed and assisted in arriving at this advanced stage of knowledge through teacher education programs, inservice programs, department and school board consultants, conferences and professional readings.

Definition of Term

For purposes of this study whole language is defined "as a philosophy of emergent literacy and how children learn" (Haycock, 1989, p.22).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was two-fold. It sought to:

1. Examine the literature with respect to detailed descriptions of whole language both in theory and practice.

2. Gather information with respect to educators' level of knowledge of whole language philosophy and how their ideas and understanding of this philosophy translated into learning experiences for children.

The answers to three major questions were sought:

1. Do educators feel knowledgable and competent in "whole language"?

2. Are individuals receiving adequate support and assistance in their development as whole language educators?

3. Are the activities and procedures within the classrooms of those who claim to be whole language educators consonant with whole language philosophy?

Data was collected by means of a field survey. The survey included:

A. A questionnaire which was administered to the 49 primary teachers, grades kindergarten to three, within the five primary/elementary schools under the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board. The questionnaire focused on the following:

   (i) the extent to which the teachers in the sample felt (a) knowledgeable and (b) competent in the area of whole language;

   (ii) the extent to which professional support and assistance was offered in enhancing the development of individuals as whole language educators;

   (iii) the attitudes of the teachers with respect to whole language, particularly as they related to (a) its effectiveness and (b) its appeal to teachers and students; and

(iv) the types of activities and learning experiences which children were exposed to in the classroom.

(v) the biographical data of the teachers.

B. Scheduled interviews with:

(i) The provincial primary school consultant, Department of Education, St. John's, Newfoundland.

(ii) The language arts program coordinator, Conception Bay South Integrated School Board, Manuels, Newfoundland.

(iii) A group of five primary school teachers, from three of the five primary/elementary schools in the Conception Bay South Integrated School District.

Need for the Study

Whole language is a rapidly growing movement and is leaving its imprint on students and educators from Australia to the United States and Canada (Watson, 1989). According to Moss and Noden (1994), for many teachers, it is the innovation of choice for the 1990s. Its implementation, they believe, is spurred by the need for personal growth and disenchantment with traditional basal instruction. On a smaller plane it is a visible and growing movement within Newfoundland and Labrador. Experiencing Language: A Primary Language Curriculum Guide, published by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Education (1991), describes the philosophy of the primary language program as follows:

> It is governed by a whole language philosophy which advocates that language learning is child-centred, not teacher dominated; that language is integrated, not fragmented; that children learn by being actively involved in authentic language activities that is--they learn by talking and doing rather than through passive listening; as well, they learn to read and write as they engage in experiences with literature and writing instead of isolated drill and workbook exercises, and that children learn best in co-operative interactive, problem solving situations. (p.14)

The Program of Studies for Newfoundland and Labrador (1993-94) states that the primary language program:

1. reflects a whole language philosophy in any method or practice used in the language classroom. (Language is purposefully and meaningfully used for communication, learning and enjoyment).

2. reflects the integration of the language arts (reading, writing, listening, speaking) and language across the curriculum.

3. emphasizes that children learn language by becoming users and producers of language.

4. uses the whole to part method of instruction by beginning with the largest unit of meaning (the whole selection) and proceeding to smaller units (paragraph, sentence, word, word parts, and phonic units).

5. makes evaluation an integral part of each lesson.

6. assures that skill instruction is context based.

7. uses various types of flexible class groupings based upon children's needs, interests, and abilities.

8. is reflected in a physical classroom environment which facilitates communication and the meaningful use of language. A drama stage, an author's chair, a comfortable reading corner, a listening centre, a writing centre, and various other work spaces which promote collaboration and cooperation are evident in all primary language classrooms.

9. has a record-keeping component. Writing folders or large envelopes with samples of children's written work; reading logs which record the books children read; an anecdotal records of children's growth in language are kept and used for evaluation purposes and for teacher-child and teacher-parent conferences. (pp.23-24)

According to Newman and Church (1990) there has been quite an extensive literacy discussion regarding what whole language is, with contributions coming from teachers, school administrators, researchers, theoreticians, and parents. However many of the beliefs and practices which go by the name whole language are not consistent with a whole language philosophy. Obviously there are some serious misunderstandings amongst educators as to what whole language is really about. These misunderstandings materialize in the learning experiences which self-professed whole language teachers offer to children. Teachers need to evaluate whether or not the procedures and activities within their "whole language" classrooms are in harmony with a whole language philosophy.

According to Walmsley and Adams (1993) "adopting a whole language [philosophy] involves making fundamental changes in the way teachers view children and themselves, and many teachers are unable or unwilling to contemplate these changes, especially without support" (p.279). Whole language teachers require an advanced level of knowledge and understanding of whole language philosophy. They cannot, however, be expected to reach this level independently. Much assistance is required on the path to becoming a whole language teacher.

In light of the Department of Education's stand on whole language philosophy as it related to primary language programs and the misconceptions regarding whole language

alluded to in the literature, it was important to ascertain the level of knowledge of whole language philosophy that teachers possessed.

Limitations of the Study

There were a number of limitations to this study with respect to data collection.

1. Random sampling was not used in the selection of sample subjects. Therefore, generalizations can not be made beyond the schools in which the study was conducted. The results may not be representative of the province's primary teacher population as a whole.
2. The sample was relatively small because it involved the primary teachers from one school board only.
3. The participating school board, in the study, represented a thriving young community with a growing population. There was no multi-grading within the schools. Proportionately different results may have been obtained from schools with declining populations and multi-grade classrooms.
4. Not all of the primary teachers completed the questionnaire. A higher percentage of responses may have led to findings somewhat different from those obtained.
5. Interviews were not representative of all grade levels and schools within the board.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature review presents a brief overview of the roots of whole language, and of the history of its movement. Next, the theoretical and research base, in which whole language is solidly rooted is examined. A number of learning and language development theories, including the psycholinguistic theory of how children learn to read, are explored in this section. Finally, whole language is addressed from a practical perspective of how it becomes actualized in the classroom. Various activities and procedures which can be characterized as whole language, along with a rationale for each, are discussed.

Historical Perspective

To fully understand whole language it is important to examine its roots and the history of its movement. An early use of the term "whole language" dates back to the nineteenth century and to the most eminent educator of the time, John Amos Comenius. Comenius (cited in Y. Goodman, 1989) wrote in 1887, regarding the first picture book made for children:

> It is a little Book, as you may see, of no great bulk, yet a brief of the whole world, and a whole language: full of Pictures and Nomenclatures and Descriptions of things...
> We have filled this first book...with the grounds of the whole world, and the whole language, and of all our understanding about things. (p.113)

Comenius's concept of whole language, although somewhat different from that of today, shared some important characteristics with whole language as we now know it. According to Y. Goodman (1989) Comenius believed that "children discover new

information by being introduced to what is familiar to them within their life experiences, by being able to manipulate the concrete objects being studied, and by using their native language to talk about what is being learned" (pp. 113-114). In order for learning to occur children need to enjoy their learning experiences and all learning must be meaningful. Comenius believed that teachers should know their students well enough to ensure clear and distinct teaching that encompassed learning experiences which built on the background and experience of the learner.

The ideas of Comenius closely resemble those held by whole language advocates. His ideas reflected a learner-centred or a child-centred curriculum in which the learner, rather than the content of the material being studied, was the main focus. This did not minimize the importance of content, but held the belief that content could only be understood when learners were actively involved and interested in learning. Learners must be active participants in the learning process with teachers acting as co-learners with the students. (Y. Goodman, 1989)

A number of twentieth century theorists have influenced our thinking about whole language. The philosopher Dewey (1963), placed the learner at the centre of the process of curriculum development. He believed that students should participate in their own learning by solving real problems that were relevant to the moment. He emphasized the importance of the integration of language with all other studies in the curriculum. Dewey envisioned a classroom with the materials and tools to allow students to create, construct, and actively inquire. Language was viewed as being one of those tools. He stated:

> The child who has a variety of materials and facts wants to talk about them, and his language becomes more refined and full, because it is controlled and informed by realities. Reading and writing, as well as the oral use of language, may be taught on this basis. It can be done in a related way, as the outgrowth of the child's social desire to recount his experiences and get in return the experiences of others. (p.56)

The epistemologist Piaget (cited in Y. Goodman 1989), also influenced the whole language movement through his work. He and his co-researchers showed how children are actively involved in understanding their world and in answering the questions and solving the problems the world poses to them. Children, he established, learn through their own activity with external objects. They construct their own categories of thought and organize their world. They do not wait for knowledge to be transmitted to them, rather they are active participants in their own learning.

The Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1967) aided whole language educators through his exploration of the relation between the learning of the individual student and the influences of the social context. He emphasized the important role of the teacher in students' learning, despite the understanding that students were ultimately responsible for their own conceptual development. Other important social aspects explored by Vygotsky included the role of peers and the role of play in the child's development. Both were perceived as having a significant role. Learning, he believed, did not take place in isolation but required support from a social environment such as a school.

The integration of the language arts and other subject areas in the development of the whole language curriculum was influenced by systemic linguist M.A.K. Halliday (cited in Pinnel & Haussler, 1988). According to him, as learners are using language, they are learning language and they are learning through language and about language.

Halliday (1977) developed a system of language use that related the study of language to the context of the situation, the actions within the situation, and the relationship of the persons involved. He identified seven language functions which he labelled instrumental, regulatory, interactional, personal, heuristic, imaginative, and representational.

In addition to theorists, a number of educationists have contributed much to the field of education and to the issues discussed among whole language advocates. Some of the beginnings of whole language are linked with research into the reading process as early as the 1960's. Especially influential in this area was the work of Smith and K. Goodman (1971) into the psycholinguistic method of teaching reading. Through their psycholinguistic theory they established a view of a unified reading process as the interaction between the reader, the text, and the language.

Rosenblatt (1968), also an educationist, drew upon John Dewey's concept of reading and literature. She described reading as the transaction between the reader and the text--a transaction which allowed readers the right to their own meanings. Whole language, influenced by Rosenblatt, incorporated the term transaction to represent the complex and important relationship between the reader and the text. (Y. Goodman, 1989)

The views held by K. Goodman, Smith, and Rosenblatt on the reading process provided a strong rationale for the literature and language-experience based reading programs which were developed and popularized before the 1960's. These programs which immersed children in reading real books (trade books as opposed to basal readers), were based on the seemingly simplistic notion that children learn to read by reading; and reading success can be attained by having children read their own language materials,

written about experiences relevant to their own daily lives. Allen (1976), a strong proponent of the language experience approach, summed up the theory behind the language experiences from the point of view of the young reader. He expressed this view as follows: "What I can think about, I can talk about; What I can talk about, I can write about; What I can write, I can read; and I can read what other people write for me to read" (p.51-52).

Y. Goodman (1989), on discussing the language experience approach, emphasized the "all round development of the child" which immersed children in a wide variety of learning experiences. These experiences were to be accompanied by language activities that would result in the generation of charts, lists and books--all of which became reading material for the children. Children were largely involved in dictating their experiences while the teacher acted as scribe.

The language experience approach to reading was, in some ways, similar to and compatible with whole language. Similarities include: (a) both paint a print-rich environment, (b) fine children's literature is used extensively, (c) the real life experiences of the children are emphasized, (d) language learning takes place in relation to a wide variety of experiences, and (e) children are interested in and excited about what they are learning. (Altwerger et al. 1987; Y. Goodman, 1989)

Despite these similarities, however, Altwerger et al. (1987) pointed out several major differences between the two. One primary difference concerned the relation of oral and written language. Under language experience written language presented itself as a secondary system derived from oral language. Whole language, on the other hand,

recognizes the two systems as being structurally related without one acting as an alternate rendition of the other. Moreover oral language is not a prerequisite for learning written language.

Another difference, pointed out by Altwerger et al. (1987), involved the amount of dictation which the teacher took from the students. Language experience teachers planned for this frequently; whereas whole language teachers are less involved in taking dictation and usually do it only at the request of a child. Whole language teachers engage children in their own writing, as opposed to having them dictate what they want to say.

Penton (cited in Y. Goodman, 1989) stated that a major and lasting influence on the teaching of reading in the whole language movement, resulted from the holistic and progressive educational policy adopted by New Zealand. Literature-based reading instructional programs that immersed children in reading books and magazines were promoted and became commonplace throughout the country. Holdaway (1979) developed a concept of the "Shared Book Experience" where children were read to over and over again from teacher-produced "Big Books". Reading instruction such as this, which focuses on the growing market of trade books for children, as tools of instruction, is representative of reading instruction in whole language classrooms today.

Other influences on whole language have come from the field of composition. Burrows, in They All Want To Write (Burrows, Jackson and Saunders, 1984), established that children need to write as soon as they begin schooling and this writing, according to her, should centre around children's own experiences. The views held by Burrows were supported by the research of Donald Graves during the 1970's. Graves

(1983) suggested that children learn to write and will continue to write when opportunities are provided in a supportive environment.

Since the 1960's research into the fields of reading and composition have enriched whole language. According to Y. Goodman (1989), whole language educators have capitalized on the integration of all the language areas and have attempted to study and understand the relationship amongst them.

From this historical perspective of whole language it is evident that it is not a new idea or something that has come about only in recent years; rather it has roots dating back to at least the nineteenth century. Comments made by Joseph Rice in 1893 (cited in K. Goodman, 1989) regarding the conclusions of his studies to determine the extent to which contemporary school practice reflected the best knowledge, sound as if they could have been written today as an endorsement to whole language. Rice stated:

> In schools conducted upon the principles of unification, language is regarded simply as a means of expression and not as a thing apart from ideas. Instruction in almost every branch now partakes of the nature of a language-lesson. The child being led to learn the various phases of language in large part incidentally while acquiring and expressing ideas... And strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true that the results in reading and expression of ideas in writing are, at least in the primary grades, by far the best in those schools where language in all its phases is taught incidently. (p.213)

There has been, it would seem, a progression from the concerns for children and learning of the nineteenth century educator John Amos Comenius, and from the conclusions reported by Joseph Rice regarding contemporary school practice in 1893, to the whole language support groups and the innovative practices within the whole language classrooms of today.

Theoretical Perspective

Whole language is a grass roots movement that is solidly rooted in theory and research. Its key theoretical premise, as stated by Altwerger et al. (1987), is that :

> The world over, babies acquire a language through actually using it, not through practicing its separate parts until some later date when the parts are assembled and the totality is finally used. The major assumption is that the model of acquisition through real use (not through practice exercises) is the best model for thinking about and helping with the learning of reading and writing and with learning in general. (p. 145)

Language acquisition in both oral and written form is a naturally occurring process. It is natural, not in the sense that it is an innate or an inevitably unfolding process, but in that it is learned incidently when it is an integral part of the functioning of a community and is used in and around with neophytes (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982).

Smith and K. Goodman (1971) have established a psycholinguistic theory of how children learn to read. Their theory of the reading process provided a basis for the whole language movement.

Psycholinguistics, as discussed by Smith and K. Goodman (1971), is a field of study that lies at an intersection of psychology and linguistics. From the linguistic aspect are derived insights into the language system, and the competence which is acquired as people become fluent language users. Learning to speak is accomplished not by imitating adult sentences, but through learning a system of language rules--rules of grammar. These rules must be learnt, however they cannot be taught, as no one, not even linguists, can adequately describe what they are. Linguistic analysis reveals two levels of language--a surface structure and a deep structure. The surface structure encompasses the sounds and written representations of language and the deep structure encompasses the meaning.

The meaning of a sentence is generated not through the individual words but through the interaction of the words together.

The psychological aspect of psycholinguistics offers insight into how language must be learned and used. It identifies the limitations on the amount of surface structure which users can process to comprehend language. The human memory is so constrained that speech or writing could not possibly be comprehended if it were necessary to analyze individual words. (Smith & K. Goodman, 1971)

According to Smith and K. Goodman (1971), psycholinguistic research confirms that language is produced at deep structure levels where meanings are remembered as opposed to individual words. Based upon these insights it is clear that reading is not a process of combining letters into words and words into sentences with meaning springing in automatically. Rather, the deep structure level of identifying meaning either precedes or eliminates the need for identifying individual words.

The child learning to read, like the child learning to speak, must be exposed to and allowed to examine a large sample of language. The child experiences the significant elements of written language through exposure to a wide range of choices.

K. Goodman (1986) emphasized the wholeness of language and its use in context through a strong theory of learning and a theory of language, which firmly support whole language. He outlined a number of important points under the heading "Learning Theory" which he believes allow language and literacy to develop naturally and easily. His points are as follows:

1. Language learning is easy when it's whole, real, and relevant; when it makes sense and is functional; when it's encountered in the context of its use; when the learner chooses to use it.

2. Language is both personal and social. It's driven from inside by the need to communicate and shaped from the outside toward the norms of the society. Kids are so good at learning language that they even overcome counter-productive school programs.

3. Language is learned as pupils learn through language and about language, all simultaneously in the context of authentic speech and literacy events. There is no sequence of skills in language development. Teaching kids about language will not facilitate their use of language. The notion that "first you learn to read and then you read to learn" is wrong. Both happen at the same time and support each other.

4. Language development is empowering: the learner "owns' the process, makes the decisions about when to use it, what for and with what results. Literacy is empowering too, if the learner is in control of what's done with it.

5. Language learning is learning how to mean: how to make sense of the world in the context of how our parents, families, and cultures make sense of it. Cognitive and linguistic development are totally interdependent: thought depends on language and language depends on thought.

6. In a word, language development is a holistic personal-social achievement. (p.26)

In addition to his learning theory, K. Goodman (1986) based whole language on scientific knowledge and theories about language. According to him, it is understood by whole language teachers that language cannot exist without symbols and a system. Dialects of every language have register and grammar. Those who speak differently are not lacking in any linguistic sense. Whole language includes all languages and dialects irrespective of their status in a particular society. Whole language is whole.

K. Goodman (1986) views language as inclusive and indivisible. It cannot be divided up into words, sounds, letters, phrases, clauses, sentences and paragraphs to be studied. Language that is separated into its constituent parts is no longer language. It exists as language only when it is whole. The minimal functional unit is the whole text, or connected discourse in the context of speech or a literary event. If parts of language, such as words, phrases or sentences, are to be studied it should be done in the context of whole real language texts that are part of children's real language experience. Having already dealt with the whole, students are better able to deal with and analyze the parts that comprise it, such as the specific language skills important to reading and writing development.

K. Goodman (1986) encompassed the dynamic and constructive processes of reading and writing into his theories of language. Real writers must have something to say--a purpose--and must have a sense of audience. The writer must decide how much information to provide to enable the reader to infer and recreate what has already been created by the writer. Readers require real texts, not merely something put together to fit a vocabulary list or a phonics sequence. They bring their previous experiences, their values, and their knowledge of the text to make sense of what has been written.

According to K. Goodman (1989) both oral and written language are learned best and most easily in authentic speech acts and literacy events that serve real functions. Learning to read and write can be accomplished in the same natural way that children learn to speak, if children are immersed in a meaningful language-rich environment which affords the opportunity to explore and model the communication processes.

Children learn language in holistic form, not in the bits and pieces of a language that has been broken apart. The whole is always greater than the sum of its parts and the value of any part can only be learned within the whole, such as a whole utterance in a real speech event or a whole text.

Similar to the views held by K. Goodman are those of Edelsky, Altwerger and Flores (1991). They discussed whole language in terms of it weaving together a theoretical view of language, language learning, and learning into a particular stance on education. Their view of language incorporates all language modes (oral, written, and sign) as a means of communicating meaning. Neither language mode is a basis for, or a secondary representation of the other. While all three are different in their own constraints and opportunities, all share certain similarities of characteristics. All are social. Language is used to communicate meaning either through talking with others, reading texts written by others, or through signing with others. Even if one writes only for oneself the language use is still social, in the sense that the conventions of writing are shared with other people, and there are always associations with other texts, contexts or people. All models of language are composed of interdependent and inseparable subsystems. These include the phonological in oral language, the graphic and graphophonic in written language, the syntactic, the semantic, and the pragmatic. In any instance of real language use all of these subsystems are present and are interdependent. If systems are removed artificially, such as stripping away the syntactic system in flash cards, language which may still look like language no longer is language. Words presented in isolation do not constitute language. All language is predictable. The

interdependent subsystems of language working together simultaneously make it so. Cues are offered through these systems which narrow down the possibilities. Predictability, however, is not a characteristic of language fragments; it requires the whole text.

Edelsky's et al. (1991) view of language development is based on the premise that language is learned through actual use, not through practice of its separate parts. Babies do not require or wait for mastery of the various subsystems of language before using it. Their approximations, although unadultlike, accomplish their meaning making task. Language learning, then is both natural and social. From the day they are born, babies observe language in use and always in a social context. In learning language they are also learning the relationships embedded in language.

Just as oral language is a social and a natural process so then, according to Edelsky et al. (1991), is written language. When written language is used around and with the learner it too will gain use. Thus reading and writing are learned through real reading and writing. Drills and exercises on isolated skills and language fragments do not qualify as reading and writing.

Reading, from Edelsky's et al. (1991) whole language perspective, is a process of generating hypotheses in a meaning-making context. A reader uses the cues provided by the print and the knowledge which he or she brings to construct an interpretation of what is being read. Meaning may vary from one reader to another, depending upon the purposes for reading and the expectations in the reading event. Similarly, writing too promotes the discovery of new meanings. Writers are continually revising their thoughts, meanings, and linguistic expressions as they read their own text. Writers are making

meaning for purposes of their own and are using all the language cuing systems in this effort. Reading and writing must be done for a purpose. When a language is not used for a purpose it does not count as language.

The third component of the theoretical framework of whole language, discussed by Edelsky et al. (1991), is a view of learning--not just language learning, but all learning across the curriculum. Like language learning, learning in general occurs in social contexts and is thus a social process involving social relationships.

According to Edelsky et al. (1991) whole language theory contends that students are best served by an education that accounts for the following three ideas:

> (1) that the context for learning should take advantage of people's propensity to do/think/know more when they are part of learning communities;
>
> (2) that planning for learning and teaching has to account for the social relationships in which the learning and teaching will be embedded; and
>
> (3) that what is learned should have some sensible and imminent connection to what it is learned for. (p.24)

Learning is best achieved through manipulation, engagement, and experience. Students should not be treated as passive recipients of knowledge transmitted by teachers. They are not empty vessels to be filled by teachers. Rather, learning requires active participation with students doing science as scientists do and history as historians do. It is not enough to offer students only what textbook writers have to say about what other scholars have learned. Learning must be purposeful and void of empty exercises.

The work of Halliday (1977), also provided a theoretical basis for the development of whole language. According to him the child develops an awareness very

early in life that language can serve various functions which were formerly served by physical means. The child's understanding of language is determined by the particular needs which have been satisfied by language. The child uses language to communicate material and intellectual needs, to direct and engage others, to establish personal relationships, to express feelings, to fantasize or pretend, and so on. Children establish these different uses of language in their daily interactions with other children and with adults. As opportunities for communication arise children selectively use language; thus expanding their knowledge of what language can do, and establishing an awareness that language has many functions which affect them personally. Halliday (1977) stated that "language is, for the child, a rich and adaptable instrument for the realization of his intentions; there is hardly any limit to what he can do with it" (p.2).

Halliday (1977) described seven models of language which are used by the child before reaching school age. These models of language represent what a very young child can do with language as an expression of meaning. The simplest of the models and the first to evolve is the Instrumental. The child uses language as a means of getting things done; it is the 'I want' function. Closely related to this is the Regulatory model. As the name suggests, language is used to exercise control over or to regulate the behaviour of others; it is the 'do as I tell you' function. Still within this social context is the Interactional language model, where language is used in the interaction between the self and others. It is the 'me and you' function. The Personal model plays an important role in the development of personality. Language is used in the expression of individuality and in the awareness of self; it is the 'here I come' function. The Heuristic model refers to

language that is used as a means of investigating one's environment--a way of learning about things. It is the 'tell me why' function. The Imaginative model relates the child to his or her environment also, but in a rather different way than does the Heuristic. Here the child uses language to create his/her own environment. Stories, poems, rhymes, riddles and dramatic games reinforce this 'let's pretend' function. Halliday's final language model is the Representational. Language, in addition to its other uses, is a means of communicating about something or conveying a message. Through this 'I've got something to tell you' function, one informs, describes and expresses ideas. The Representational is the only model of language used by many adults. From the perspective of a child, however, this is a very inadequate model.

Halliday's (1977) seven language models provide us with the understanding that the child defines language according to its uses; it is doing something therefore it has meaning. It is essential that teachers redefine their own notion of meaning to include all the functions of language, not just the Representational or the content function. Education failure, according to Halliday, can be equated with language failure. A child who has not had accessibility to all language functions and has not mastered certain essential aspects of language ability, may not meet with success in school. If one does not know how to properly use language to learn, one cannot be taught successfully. It is important, therefore, that teachers take into account each child's linguistic experiences in choosing educational approaches and instructional methods. Opportunities for language experience which extend over the whole range of functions should be provided for.

Halliday (cited in K. Goodman, 1989) contended that as learners use language they learn language. They learn through language and about language. According to K. Goodman (1989) the whole language curriculum, a dual curriculum in which every activity and experience is an opportunity for both linguistic and cognitive development, builds on this conclusion. Language and thinking develop at the same time that knowledge is developed and concepts and schema are built. The whole language classroom provides opportunities for both these curricula.

Dixon (1967), like Halliday, held a view of language development that was determined by children's experiences with language and through language. Dixon summed up that "language is learnt in operations, not by dummy runs" (p.13). Language and its meaning belong to the student. The student gains new insights into the self, as creator of his/her own world through language.

In his book Growth Through English, Dixon (1967) defined "English" as "a description of the activities we engage in through language" (p.7). The writing, drama, and talk that goes on in English lessons and other subject areas affect our attitude towards, our experience with, and our personal growth in language. Through sharing experiences with others, one is using language to make the experience real to one's own self. Language is used, here, to bring the experience to life as it really was; imaginative work is involved. Dixon stated "if we could observe all the occasions when a child uses language in this way, and put them together, we should have a glimpse of a representational world that the child has built up to fit reality as he knows it" (p.6). Language belongs to the public world and an English classroom is a place where students

meet to share experiences, to talk about people and situations, and to gather satisfying new experiences. The student takes what one can and what one needs from these experiences and builds them into one's own world.

Another major influence on language growth in the primary and elementary grades, has been the work of James Britton. He too directed our focus on students and their language experiences. According to Britton (1970), language as a representation of the world is interwoven with other forms of representation. The things we say suggest that we may use words to support more general ways of classifying and representing experience.

Britton (1970) defined three main function categories of language: (a) the expressive, (b) the transactional, and (c) the poetic. In relation to these functions, he distinguishes two modes of behaviour. These are the role of participant and the role of spectator. "Operating in the actual world" involves the role of participant. Language is used to get things done by participants in the world affairs. The role of spectator is concerned with events not presently taking place--past or imagined events. There is involvement in the recounted experience, but the events involved are distanced from events in the present, and language is not a means to an end.

Britton's (1970) expressive function of language defines expressive speech as language close to the speaker, freely verbalized and unrehearsed. As one presents one's view of things or one's commentary upon the world, one ultimately presents one's self. A verbalization of the speaker's consciousness is presented. It is through this use of language that people truly get to know one another. Through expressive language one

offers one's own unique identity and offers and accepts both what is common and what differentiates one from others. This form of speech is the principal means of communicating opinions, attitudes and beliefs in face-to-face situations. The expressive language function straddles both the participant and the spectator distinctions.

Britton's (1970) transactional language function basically involves language to get things done or functional language; the desired end is outside of the self. Transactional language is divided into two main sub-divisions: (a) the informative, involving the giving and seeking of information; and (b) the conative, involving instruction and persuasion. For language to be truly conative in its function there must be deliberate and recognizable intent on the part of the speaker to change the listener's behaviour, opinions, or attitudes--recognizable to an observer, that is, but deceptive to a victim. The individual within the transactional function is operating from the role of participant. He or she is acting upon the actual world, using language to inform, teach, make plans, solicit, help, or achieve some practical outcome.

The poetic language function discussed by Britton (1970) is concerned with structured or patterned language, as opposed to the unstructured language of the expressive function. Within this function, one is presented with a patterned verbalization of the writer's feelings and ideas in the form of a poem, a short story, a play, or any of the verbal arts. The individual within the poetic is operating from the role of spectator and, in so being, is able to see events in a broader context, and is able to relate events more amply to a broader spectrum of values than the participant.

Britton's (1970) three functions of language can be used as a basis for looking at and considering "language across the curriculum". There are a number of diverse linguistic demands placed on children as they move throughout the curriculum. It is important that teachers look at the interrelatedness of these demands. Expressive language, for example, according to Britton, should play a key role in all areas of learning, from the most subject oriented areas to learning how to use language itself. Ringler and Weber (1984) pointed out that expressive writing is very much like expressive speech; it is a primary means of communication. It serves as a base for specialized and differentiated writing such as (a) transactional writing, which includes the writing of intellectual disciplines, common to school texts; and (b) poetic writing, through which writers share feelings and ideas through their heightened awareness.

According to Britton (1970), much of students' writing is somewhere on a continuum between the expressive and transactional or the expressive and poetic functions.

Transactional↔Expressive↔Poetic

Martin, D'arcy, Newton and Parker (cited in Ringler & Weber, 1984) stated:

> The move out of an expressive use of language in either direction, towards the poetic or to the transactional, involves a heightened degree of organizing thought and shaping it. But the direction taken will deeply affect the nature of that organization. In the transactional function the emphasis is toward a linear, logical set of connections-an inductive or deductive hierarchy of points. In the poetic function...the pattern is not discursive; the connections are implicit and themselves provide the structure which renders the whole inseparable from the parts. (p.392)

Ringler and Weber (1984) discussed that as children move throughout these various writing forms they show growth in their ability to understand and present

themselves to the needs of varied audiences. By understanding the three general functions that writing serves they are able to answer the questions "Why am I writing this?" and "Who will read what I write?". Children come to understand the differing viewpoints, background experiences, and feelings which individual readers bring to the reading. Britton (cited in Ringler & Weber, 1984) stated, "As children expand their understanding that writing has direct functions and that they may direct their own writing to different audiences, they increase their competence as writers" (p.393). Therefore it is important that teachers provide a variety of real audiences for students' writing experiences.

Britton's understanding of language development, which stressed the importance of language across the curriculum and its key role in all areas of learning, closely relates to whole language education.

The various theories surrounding language and learning have lead educators to a greater understanding of the power of language in learning, and the way that language develops in the classroom. The whole language philosophy has grown out of this greater understanding. Children enter school having a functional comprehension of language, as a means of communication in real situations. Whole language builds upon the internalized language which children already have and extends it to the less developed modalities of reading and writing. This is accomplished through authentic speech acts and literacy events that serve real functions, and through real and natural language that is whole, interesting and relevant to the learner. Language that is broken down into bits and pieces is made dull, uninteresting and irrelevant. Children, like adults, try to make sense out of the world around them. This natural tendency is inhibited by language that is

fractionated; thus whole language rejects completely part-to-whole views of literacy development. Learning to read and write is accomplished through real reading and writing, not through exercises about reading and writing.

Practical Perspective

First it is important to emphasize that whole language is not an approach or a practice per se. Rather, it is a philosophy or belief system about the nature of language and learning and how it can be fostered in classrooms and schools. There is no single set of activities or a prepackaged program that can be defined as whole language; however, some activities can be characterized as whole language because they are consonant with and reflect a whole language philosophy. (Weaver, 1990)

Weaver (1990) recognized a number of key features as being consistent with this philosophy, as it is actualized in whole language classrooms:

1. Children are expected to learn to read and write as they learned to talk-that is gradually, naturally, without a great deal of direct instruction, and with encouragement of constant correction.

2. Learning is emphasized more than teaching: the teacher makes detailed observations of the children's needs, then assists their development accordingly. It is assumed that the children will learn to read and write, and the teacher facilitates that growth.

3. Children read and write everyday--and they are not asked to read artificial or simplified or contrived language, or to write something that does not have a "real" purpose and a receptive audience.

4. Reading, writing and oral language are not considered separate components of the curriculum or merely ends in themselves; rather they permeate everything the children are doing in science and social studies, and they are integrated with the so called creative arts.

> 5. There is no division between first "learning to read" and later "reading to learn". From the very beginning, children are presented with predictable and repetitive whole texts and are encouraged to compose whole texts of their own, however brief--real language written for real purposes and a real audience. (p.6)

Perhaps of greatest significance to the whole language philosophy is that language is kept whole (K. Goodman, 1986; Weaver, 1988). Proficient readers and writers use all the systems of language to create meaning, rather than isolate and master one aspect or system of language at a time. Language, according to Weaver, has two major parts. These are (a) the linguistic part, which is made up of the semantic, syntactic and grapho/phonemic systems of language; and (b) the pragmatic part, which has to do with the context in which the language is used and the past experiences and knowledge (schema) that relate to the language event. In real situations where children are learning language, the two are always kept whole and together. Likewise in a whole language program the pragmatic and the linguistic aspects of language are never separated.

The whole language philosophy becomes actualized in the whole language classroom through various activities and procedures. These program components along with a rationale for each are discussed in the sections that follow.

Student-Centred Curriculum

The whole language curriculum is a student-centred curriculum which offers ownership, choice and relevance to the students it serves. According to K. Goodman (1986), placing students at the heart of the curriculum provides them with a sense of ownership that activities are their own. What they are doing through language is useful, interesting and fun for them personally. They are not, merely completing tasks for the

teacher. Oldfather (1993) in an inquiry of student motivation in the whole language classroom found the power of choice to be a very strong motivating factor. Students who were allowed many choices within the well established structures and requirements of the classroom attributed their motivation to learn to their power of choice.

Whole language teachers inquire about students' interests, abilities, and needs, and then use this information in the planning of the curriculum and in their choice of instructional procedures. Weaver (1988) outlined a number of literacy events involving teachers and students which can be undertaken to help them learn about each other. These include: (a) students are encouraged to draw and write about themselves and their families, (b) questionnaires are compiled to help teachers learn about students' interests and backgrounds in reading, (c) students interview each other and present their interviews to classmates and teachers, and (d) students are invited to bring favourite books and magazines to school and to talk about why they like them. As students talk and write about themselves, teachers keep notes concerning individual and class interests and needs. This information can powerfully influence the curriculum plan.

Thematic Units

"Whole language teaching focuses on all aspects of language (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) in an interrelated way as the child learns to read and write" (Beebe, 1990, p.159). This is usually accomplished, according to K. Goodman (1986), through the use of themes which integrate the whole or a large part of the curriculum. Themes can centre around science units, social studies units, literature units, or units which integrate all three, as well as the humanities and physical education. The unit of study

provides a focal point for inquiry, opportunities for language use, and cognitive development. Pupils are actively involved in the planning of the units and they are given choices of authentic and relevant activities within productive studies.

Once a particular topic of study has been agreed upon, steps are taken to find out students' present knowledge about the subject. Through a process of brainstorming students discuss not only what they already know but also what they want to find out. In this way misconceptions are also explored. The students' ideas are written down on the chalkboard or on chart paper for reference throughout the unit. Students are active participants in gathering theme related resources, such as films, videos, books, magazines, stories, and poetry.

Literature-Based Curriculum

Literature, with all its values, benefits and purposes, is at the heart of the whole-language classroom. Froese (1990) defines whole language as "a child-centred, literature-based approach to language teaching that immerses students in real communication" (p.2). By literature-based it is meant that poetry and books ranging from fiction to informational or nonfiction are used as teaching tools. Real communication refers to genuine audiences or interested listeners, which children are surrounded by whenever possible.

Fine literature, including picture books, poems, plays, expository texts, and novels are used extensively in the whole language classroom. These natural or authentic texts are books written for purposes other than instruction, but which can be, and are, used for such purposes. Texts written solely for instruction are unauthentic--the language

is presented in an unnatural manner. Basal readers and the workbooks which accompany them are excellent examples of unauthentic texts. Their artificial use of language does not prepare children for real and purposeful reading in the real world outside of the classroom. (Johnson, 1988)

Given its position of priority in the whole-language classroom, then, literature plays a number of roles. It provides pleasure for children, stimulates the imagination, enables children to acquire a sense of story, encourages children to read for meaning, teaches literacy skills, enhances language development, and promotes creative expression (Froese, 1990; Huck, Helper, & Hickman, 1987).

Good literature in the whole language classroom stimulates and nurtures children's imagination. According to Brown (1980) "literature unlike science or history, is not concerned with facts or information. It is a product of the imagination and its primary contribution is to the development of the imagination" (p.2). Children are provided with opportunities for imaginative play through various role playing activities. They assume the identity of storybook characters and act out stories they have heard. Fairy tales present excellent examples of literature which nurture children's imagination. They offer to the imagination new dimensions which would be impossible for children to discover independently.

The literature-based program teaches children to read for meaning. Learning to read means much more than merely learning the words. Gambell et al. (1989) say that it involves extracting meaning from what is read. According to Burchby (1988) basal readers with their less than compelling texts and illustrations and their suggested teaching

methods and supplementary activities, often times "undermine the process of making meaning, which should be central to the act of reading" (p.115). She goes on to point out that unlike basal reading programs, literature programs do not require one hundred percent word accuracy. If an error does not interfere with the comprehension of a sentence or story, it need not be corrected. Emphasis in literature-based whole language instruction is on reading for meaning rather than on word accuracy.

In the whole language classroom where word perfect oral reading is not emphasized in reading instruction children participate in reading in a variety of ways. These, discussed by Freppon and McIntyre (1993), include (a) reading pictures with text-like language, (b) inventing text, and (c) combining a number of similar reading actions. The whole language teacher, according to Gambell et al. (1989), uses a variety of good literature to teach children to read. Children are encouraged to respond to the literature through (a) discussion of the thoughts and feelings invoked by a particular story, (b) discussion of interpretation of a story, and (c) written follow-up activities, such as writing another version of a specific story. These activities encourage and assist children in reading for meaning.

According to Cochran (1989) literature-based reading instruction emphasizes experiencing the entire story. This is in opposition to basal instruction where the story is viewed in relation to its parts and the opportunity it presents for skills teaching. Literature is, however, used to teach the same skills that were traditionally taught through basal readers, but with a difference. Through literature, skills are taught in context, whereas through basals they were taught as fragmented parts in isolation.

Children must gain control over a particular story or poem before its parts can be considered for other purposes, such as skills teaching. Burchby (1988) pointed out that phonics teaching will make more sense if one looks at known words. She stated that "once a word is known, it is fairly simple to break down into its separate elements. But the application of phonics rules to an unknown word is a very inexact process" (p.116).

Weaver (1988) illustrated that through literature various skills are taught and phonics know-how is developed. Letter-sound relationships and sight vocabulary are enhanced as teachers share books orally with young children. Predictable books, where children can quickly foretell what the print or what the author is going to say, perhaps best develops these two skills in beginning readers. Being able to predict what will happen next gives children a sense of confidence and skill which allows them to deal with unknown texts. Children gain confidence about alphabet possibilities through the language of nursery rhymes, or rhyming refrains common to fairy tales. Teachers can play with language in such a way as to show the many possible patterns that exist. In developing phonics know-how, teachers, according to Weaver, select reading materials which contain alliteration, rhyme, and onomatopoeia. Selections which contain alliteration can be used to teach initial consonant sounds. Rhyme can be used to teach vowel and consonant patterns that occur in the middle or at the end of words, and onomatopoeia can be used in emphasizing these and other aspects of letter/sound associations.

The literature-based program which teaches skills in context allows the time allotted for reading to be spent on exactly that--reading. The basal program, on the other

hand, which teaches skills in isolation, engages students in skill-oriented seat work for as much as seventy percent of the time allotted for reading. (Anderson et al., 1985)

Literature supports and enhances the language development of young children. "For many children the first beautiful language they ever hear comes from the pages of a good children's book" (Froese, 1990, p.52). Froese (1990) discussed children's appreciation of word pictures, such as those created by Tresselt (1947) in his book White Snow, Bright Snow. From the word pictures children gain a first understanding of linguistics or the ordering of words in sentences. This poetic prose enables older children to identify metaphors and similes.

Froese (1990) pointed out, also, that children are responsive to the sound of language. They delight in rhythm and movement. Thus, authors who are sensitive to rhythm and sound provide children with opportunities for both appreciative and creative experiences. Repetition of phrases and rhythms, provide enjoyment for children and encourages them to participate in the reading. Through hearing poetry read aloud children, in addition to experiencing pleasure, develop a sensitivity to the sound and meaning of words.

As well, according to Froese (1990), children gain a sense of the pattern of language through exposure to literature. Repetition of detail in some traditional stories, such as in The House That Jack Built (Galdone, 1961), enable children to see how a pattern of events become a completed story. Such cumulative stories encourage children to make predictions about what will happen next. Also, because the stories are predictable, listeners are invited to participate in the reading.

Literature supports language development by reinforcing children's vocabulary. Sharing several books on the same topic or sharing the same book several times is an excellent way of reinforcing vocabulary in a particular area.

Literature also plays an important role, in the whole language classroom, in its influence on children's writing. It provides an excellent model for writing. According to Graves (1983):

> All children need is literature. Children who are authors need it even more. Because the children write daily and across the curriculum, their need for information is increased significantly. They need to be surrounded with poetry, stories, biographies, science, imaginative and factual books. The children need to hear, speak and read literature. Literature provides more than facts. It provides drama, problem solving and precise language. Children's literature covers virtually the entire span of human experiences and knowledge. (p.67)

Almost all reading activities in the whole language classroom lead into writing activities. For very young children, pattern and predictable books provide literary models for composition. Children experiment with and emulate these patterns in their creative writing.

Finally, literature provides children with a base of information and excellent examples of well-written language (Froese, 1990). Hoskisson (cited in Froese, 1990), emphasizes, for children, an important link between hearing quality literature and being able to comprehend the reading process. He stated:

> Children will learn to read only to the degree they are able to make sense out of the written language materials they are given. By being given stories, whole written language, not bits and pieces, they have the environment needed to make sense out of written language...Children must be immersed in stories when they learn to read, just as they were immersed in language in contextual situations when they learned to speak. (p.57)

Read Aloud

An important part of the whole language curriculum involves teachers reading to or telling stories to students everyday. Weaver (1988) stated that "through the sharing of stories we celebrate and preserve our literary heritage, and we show children that literature is at the heart of their reading program" (p.241). Through sharing literature we are portraying to students that oral and written stories, poems, books and articles hold a place of respect and importance in the curriculum.

Students are encouraged to listen to stories in a relaxed, yet active way. They are invited to discuss and make ties with the language and with the messages. Through listening to good storytellers students relive history, and their imaginations are sparked as they create pictures and images which can be later drawn upon in the writing and telling of their own stories. (Weaver, 1988)

Anderson (1984) summarized the benefits of reading aloud to children as follows: (a) It develops in children a motivation to read independently and books are perceived as being a fun and enjoyable activity; (b) Language development is enhanced, listening and speaking vocabularies are extended, and syntactic structures are developed as different language is heard; (c) Children's prior knowledge and experiences are assimilated with new experiences and knowledge as they are read to from a variety of books, or are told a variety of stories; and (d) The information which children gain through listening to stories can help them in their own reading and writing. According to Burchby (1988) children are encouraged to see themselves as readers and to act as

such; however they are not pushed into the role of reader, but are allowed to develop and refine their ability gradually, over time.

Students Reading Every Day

The whole language classroom is "littered with literacy" (Weaver, 1988). It is filled with meaningful reading and writing for its occupants. Materials range from student authored to professionally authored literature. There are resource books, newspapers, magazines, games, globes, maps, greeting cards, environmental print including such things as photographs of street signs, bumper stickers, and banners, and other out of school print such as brochures, menus, television schedules, posters, and cartoons. Student reading, according to Weaver, in this literary environment is accomplished through supportive language materials, literature groups, sustained silent reading and assisted reading.

(a) Supportive language materials. Supportive language materials that can be read easily because of their familiarity and situational context or because of their predictability, are used with young children. Weaver (1988) pointed out that predictable and supportive language occurs when there are repetitious lines, cumulative lines, rhyming or alliterative words, stories in which a picture or a certain concept will occur on the next page, and stories in which the characters and plots are familiar. Also, stories which the children write themselves are supportive. Because children are familiar with the concepts they are able to reconstruct and read back what they have written.

Familiar poetry, charts, rhymes, and fingerplays are displayed around the classroom and are used with individuals or groups of children. The language is made

easy because it is familiar; it is supported by the context and the text is predictable. Once children become familiar with the language it can be used as a discussion point for teaching various skills, i.e. sound/symbol relationships. (Weaver, 1988)

Holdaway's (1979) "Shared Book Experience", involving books with such supportive features as rhyme, patterned language, interlocking structure and cumulative text, is used extensively to support the natural reading development of children. Large oversized books, or "Big Books", are used in the "Shared Book Experience" to promote early reading. The teacher points out the illustrations and text during the reading. Eventually the children join in the reading.

Many important aspects of reading can be learned through the "Shared Book Experience". These, outlined by Weaver (1990), include (a) the conventions of print, such as reading is done from top to bottom, left to right, words are read, not pictures, what a word is, what a letter is, and what punctuation is; and (b) reading strategies such as using meaning as the first and most important clue to getting words, predicting, and self-correcting. As well, sight vocabulary is developed and sound/symbol relationships are pointed out and discussed during "Shared Book Experiences" with "Big Books". Within the "Shared Book Experience", "the phonics knowledge needed for reading is 'taught' in two ways: indirectly, by exposing children to literature from which they can absorb letter/sound knowledge, and directly, by focusing children's attention on particular letter/sound associations" (Weaver, 1990, p.151).

(b) Literature groups. In whole language classrooms children are often immersed in fine and valued literature through literature group activities. The teacher selects several

books which the children can relate to, introduces the books, and then assembles groups of five or six children who have shown interest in the same book. Weaver (1988) points out that it is essential for each person in the literature group to have a personal copy of the book, to promote reading and to ensure that the reader can attend, and is attending, to the print.

According to Weaver (1988) "the concepts of reflection and dialogue are at the heart of Literature Groups" (p.254). Once children have read for personal meaning, for enjoyment, and learning, they are encouraged to reflect upon their personal and unique experiences with the literature, through journal writing and through entering into dialogue with the members of the group. Discussions can be lead by the teacher or by a student.

Talking, discussing and sharing experiences with literature stimulate interest in reading and develop, in students, literate voices. According to Villaume and Worden (1993), in literature discussions where all members are expected to participate by providing and elaborating on personal responses to literature, literate voices will develop. Villaume and Worden recognized teachers as essential models in this development. Teachers demonstrate initial personal response to the personal responses of other students by sharing their own literate voices. They act as facilitators by encouraging students to expand on their personal responses to literature.

(c) Sustained silent reading. In past years, as was pointed out by Reutzel and Hollingsworth (1988), teachers have spent too much time on teaching the skills of literacy and not enough time on real reading. If children are to become readers, they

require ample time and opportunity for reading in school. Becoming fluent readers is dependent upon practicing reading from real books.

In whole language classrooms there is a period of time set aside every day for sustained silent reading (Anderson, 1984; Weaver, 1988). During this time both teacher and students read books of their own choosing. Children are encouraged to have two or three pieces of reading material in their desk at all times to ensure that maximum use is made of the sustained silent reading time. In the beginning the period should run for approximately ten minutes per day and should be gradually increased depending upon the group of children. Primary age children may benefit more from paired reading than from independent reading. A great deal can be learned from discussing and sharing books with peers.

(d) Assisted reading. The assisted reading discussed by Anderson (1984) and Weaver (1988) is often used in the whole language classroom with children who are at the acquisition stage of reading development, or with children who are having difficulty with beginning reading. The experience is very similar to that of parents and children reading together. The child is assisted into reading, in a totally supportive way, a book that is of interest to him/her. The procedure usually involves the child and the teacher reading together. A somewhat slower pace is set than would normally be expected in oral reading, but in no way is the text distorted. The child usually chimes in after the teacher, or he/she may move ahead of the teacher if the text is highly predictable. It is important that the child attend to the text during the assisted reading, to establish the connection between letters and sounds.

Weaver (1988) pointed out that assisted reading can also be accomplished through "Read Along Booktapes". Children listen to tape recorded stories as they follow along with the written text. This less personal method is usually used with older more proficient readers.

Students Writing Every Day

An integral part of the whole language classroom involves children engaging in some form of purposeful writing everyday, from the very earliest grades. Graves (1981) told us that children want to write. They come to school, he said, already knowing something about the writing process. They have had experiences with paper, crayons, and pencils, and they have seen their parents and older siblings write. Children realize that writing is done for a reason, i.e. to make a grocery list, to write a letter, to leave a note, and so forth. Children come to school knowing that real writing has meaning and is always meant to be read either by the author or by someone else.

In whole language classrooms children are invited to write something meaningful on the first day of kindergarten. They may be invited to draw a picture of themselves and write their name or something about themselves underneath. This informs the teacher, immediately, at which stage of writing development, from scribbling to invented or functional spelling, each child is. It separates the linguistic risk takers from those who feel they can't write because they can't spell or make letters. (Weaver, 1988)

According to Farris and Kaczmarski (1988) writing in the whole language classroom is a social activity. Writers write for many purposes, on topics relevant to themselves, and for their own audience. Being able to choose their own topics makes the

range of topics exceedingly broad. Children who have not had the opportunity to write on a regular basis may require some help in generating topics to write about. Whole language teachers who know their students' interests and abilities are able to suggest topics to them. When children decide what they want to write about themselves and write for their own purposes, the writing is authentic.

Different forms of writing are learned in whole language classrooms by students actually using them. To learn letter writing, for example, mail boxes are set up in the classroom and children are encouraged to write to one another, to relatives, to authors and to various companies, thus providing opportunities for writing with different purposes in mind. (Farris & Kaczmarski, 1988)

Farris and Kaczmarski (1988) pointed out that beginning writers are encouraged to take risks just as beginning readers are. When they write, children are encouraged to sound out the words they need, spelling the best they can and inventing if necessary; all spelling approximations are readily accepted. Initially, the teacher will model, with the whole class or with a group who seem ready for such help, how to spell a word using only the sounds that can be heard. At first children spell using mainly the consonants, but represent more sounds as they gain experience with segmenting words into sounds. This approach, according to Rastall (1993), emphasizes that freedom of expression should not be hampered by a too early insistence on correctness. Newman (1985) believed that the technical aspects of writing (spelling accuracy, punctuation, and neat handwriting) should be viewed as being less important than the meaning that the writer is trying to

convey. These technical aspects can be dealt with during teacher/pupil conferences and during the editing and revising process.

Rather than telling children how to write, Farris and Kaczmarski (1988) pointed out, whole language teachers show them how to write. They demonstrate writing to their students and act as partners in the creating process. Whole language teachers write along with students and very often share what they have written with them, thus providing excellent models of the writing process.

Children express their ideas through writing by keeping journals, conducting research, doing free writing, and silent writing. Rehearsal, drafting, publishing, and sharing written ideas with others are all a part of the process of learning to write by writing. (Ferguson, 1988)

Kids Helping Kids

According to Weaver (1988) the socialization of the members of the class play a major role in the vitality of the whole language classroom. Vygotsky's (1978) ideas about how learners influence each other's learning are reiterated in the whole language classroom, where as Weaver stated, "kids can make each other look better, do better, and be better" (p.267). Children are encouraged to cooperate rather than compete, to read with a partner, to do research with someone with similar interests, and to ask fellow students for revision and editing suggestions. All are resource persons with teachers acting as consultants and guides to their student partners in reading and writing. Students collaborate on math and science problems, making sure all contribute and understand.

When work is done in small groups, grouping is always done on the basis of need and interest and not on the basis of ability, thus keeping everyone's self-esteem intact.

Evaluation

When thinking about whole language evaluation three categories, according to K. Goodman, Y. Goodman, and Hood (1989), have proved very useful. These are: (a) Observation, which includes examining what students are doing while the teacher stands on the sidelines or moves around the classroom. Formal observations involve keeping anecdotal records of a specific nature; (b) Interaction, which includes teacher/pupil conferences, participation in discussions, interactions in journals, and questioning students to discover not only what they know but to challenge them to explore further; and (c) Analysis of what students know about language and how they show development in their language use through their reading, writing and speech. Often teachers keep portfolios of students' work for use in the analysis.

Whole language teachers, according to K. Goodman (1986), are concerned with helping learners build underlying competence. They are not interested in getting students to behave in predetermined ways in class and on tests. Much of the evaluation of students in whole language classrooms is accomplished through "kid-watching" and teacher/pupil conferences. K. Goodman refers to whole language teachers as constant "kid watchers". They realize that much more can be learned about students by carefully watching them than by testing them formally. Teachers evaluate informally as they watch children write, listen to group discussions, engage in casual conversations with students, and observe them playing.

"Kid-watching", discussed by K. Goodman (1986), serves as a basis for the teaching plans and instructional modifications. Teachers are constantly evaluating themselves and their teaching, as they evaluate their students. Through "kid-watching" teachers gain a sense of the progress students have made in their growth, and a sense of the needs which the students have.

In addition to "kid-watching", whole language teachers have their pupils keep portfolios containing samples of their own writing, records of reading experiences, and examples of other types of learning activities (K. Goodman, 1986). This assortment of student work is useful in the evaluation process.

K. Goodman (1986) pointed out, also, that more formal evaluation takes place in one-to-one conferences with students about their reading and writing. The whole language teacher engages in many brief mini-conferences with students, throughout the day, to provide help in their reading and writing activities. A good deal of direct teaching takes place in more extensive and periodic one-to-one conferences which combine assessment and instruction. The teacher makes anecdotal records of what is observed.

Teachers assess children's literacy growth during the individual conferences and plan the instructional situation on the basis of the child's strengths and needs. Knowing the harmful effects of round-robin reading, teachers listen to children read during the one-to-one conference, assessing how well they coordinate letter/sound knowledge with other cues to construct meaning. The teacher looks at the miscues made by an individual child and helps him/her develop strategies to deal with the problem. The strategy lessons

are usually taught during the conference, thus providing immediate feedback to the child. (Weaver, 1988)

Summary

The review of the literature revealed that whole language is not a new idea. The term and the concept have been used and debated for at least several hundred years. Prominent educators like Yetta and Kenneth Goodman, Frank Smith, Carole Edelsky, Michael Halliday, John Dixon, and James Britton support the theory that language acquisition, both oral and written, is accomplished through actual use and not through practice of its separate parts. Language is to be dealt with as a whole and is not to be fragmented. The many and varied functions of language should be understood by teachers and should be used to enhance the entire curriculum.

"Whole language can't be packaged in a kit or bound between the covers of textbooks or workbooks. It certainly can't be scripted" (K. Goodman, 1986, p.63). According to Moss and Noden (1994) its success depends on teachers and students knowing what works best for them and not on a specific sequence of expert identified behaviors within a prescriptive program. Certain activities and procedures, however, such as use of thematic units, use of literature, reading aloud to children, engaging children in real reading and writing, and conferencing with children can all be classified as whole language because they are consonant with and reflect its philosophy.

The whole language classroom is student-centred and language-based. The curriculum is not compartmentalized into neat subject areas and blocks of time. Language learning is not restricted to language arts period, but is occurring right across the

curriculum. The classroom is a reflection of reality where the content to be learned is related to the real life experiences and the concerns of the child. In the words of Dewey (1967), "education in order to accomplish its end both for the individual learner and society must be based upon experience--which is always the actual life-experience of some individual"(p.89).

Whole language offers a refreshing contrast in methodology and emphasis to the restrictive and unnatural basal reading programs and traditional methods of teaching language, by keeping language whole. Emphasis is on the natural purpose of language--communicating meaning.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to present the rationale for using a field survey, to describe the data collection instruments used, and to discuss the procedure and sample.

Introduction

"Survey research is a distinctive research methodology that owes much of its recent development to the field of sociology" (Borg & Gall, 1989, p.416). Twentieth-century sociologists, Lazarfeld, Hyman and Stouffer (cited in Borg & Gall, 1989), linked data collection tools, such as questionnaires and interviews, to logic and to statistical procedures for analyzing data.

Borg and Gall (1989) pointed out that various types of information can be collected by surveys. As a result surveys are frequently used among the scientific disciplines and among researchers in anthropology, psychology, economics, and public health. In addition, studies involving surveys account for a significant portion of the research done in the area of education. A wide array of problems in education can be investigated through survey research. The utilization of survey instruments and methods allow the researcher to study relationships, effects of treatments, longitudinal changes, and comparisons between groups.

Fowler (1988) described three important characteristics of surveys:

(1) The purpose of the survey is to produce statistics--that is quantitative or numerical descriptions of some aspects of the study population.

(2) The main way of collecting information is by asking people questions; their answers constitute the data to be analyzed.

(3) Generally, information is collected about only a fraction of the population--that is a sample--rather than from every member of the population. (p.9)

In survey research the questionnaire and the interview are the most common instruments of data collection.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire is a series of predetermined questions that can be either self-administered, administered by mail, or administered by an interviewer. Its use in research, according to Berdie, Anderson and Niebuhr (1986), is based on the underlying assumption that each individual question will work--meaning that the respondent will be both willing and able to give truthful answers.

Berdie et al. (1986) pointed out also, that the well-designed questionnaire is reliable and valid, in as much as it contains items which are reliable and valid. Reliable questionnaire items consistently convey the same meaning to all people in the sample being surveyed, while valid items provoke accurate and relevant data. Questionnaire items should be determined by the purpose and objectives of the study and should be designed to meet specific goals. Oppenheim (1966) stated:

> A questionnaire is not just a list of questions or a form to be filled out. It is essentially a scientific instrument for measurement and for collection of particular kinds of data. Like all such instruments, it has to be designed according to particular specifications and with specific aims in mind. (p.2)

The questionnaire is a popular and widely used instrument in educational research. McKay (1968), in surveying studies since 1900, found it to hold a two-to-one numerical edge over other methods. It has certain inherent advantages, discussed by Borg and Gall (1989), such as the inexpensiveness and expediency with which it can be administered and interpreted. Also, the questionnaire allows researchers to direct questions toward areas of particular interest to themselves.

There are, however, a number of disadvantages to this method. Borg and Gall (1989) directed attention to the questionnaire's lack of immediate feedback and the shallowness of questionnaire studies which fail to probe deeply enough to provide a clear or true picture of feelings and opinions. Purves and Beach (1972) pointed out that subjects may respond in ways that investigators expect them to respond, or their choices may be influenced by what the school and family has provided.

Interview

The interview as a research method in survey research involves data collection through direct verbal interaction between individuals. It was defined by Stewart and Cash (1978) as "a process of dyadic communication with a predetermined and serious purpose designed to interchange behaviour and involving the asking and answering of questions" (p.3). The word dyad means that the interview is a person-to-person interaction between two parties. There can be more than two people involved in the interview, however, there cannot be more than two parties--the interviewer party and the interviewee party. At least one of the two parties comes to the interview with a predetermined purpose or goal in mind.

The interview, as a research technique, has a number of advantages, discussed by Borg and Gall (1989). Perhaps its greatest advantage, according to them, is its adaptability. The interviewer can use the responses of the subject to alter the interview situation. The interview allows one to follow-up leads and thus obtain greater quantities and clarity of data, and much greater depth is permitted through the interview situation than through other research data collection methods. As well, the interview tends to yield more complete data and data that would probably not be revealed under any other circumstances.

Despite these very important advantages, however, Borg and Gall (1989) pointed out several definite limitations of the interview as a research tool. Because it is relatively easy to ask questions, the interview is often misused to collect quantitative data that could be more accurately measured by tests, observations, or some other method. Another important limitation of the interview involves subjectivity and possible bias in some research situations. Factors contributing to the biasing of data obtained from the interview might include (a) the eagerness of the respondent to please the interviewer, (b) vague antagonism between the interviewer and the respondent, and (c) the tendency of interviewers to seek out answers that support their preconceived notions.

Data Collection Instruments

Data for this study was obtained through a field survey, involving questionnaires and structured interviews. The questionnaire consisted of 52 items using both closed and open questions. The items were formulated using the guidelines of Borg and Gall (1989, pp.423-432). The questionnaire contained sections pertaining to:

(a) Biographical data

(b) Professional data

(c) Teaching context

(d) Teaching practices and attitudes

(e) Support for whole language philosophy

To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire items and to locate ambiguities within items a thorough pretest of the questionnaire was conducted before using it in the study. For the pretest, permission was sought from the superintendent of the Avalon Consolidated School Board (Appendix A). This pretest was then conducted with a sample of approximately twenty primary teachers. The pretest of the questionnaire allowed space for the respondents to make comments about the questionnaire itself, so that they might indicate whether some questions were ambiguous to them, whether provisions should be made to include other questions deemed necessary by them, and any other points that could lead to improving the questionnaire (Appendix D).

Eleven, or 55 percent, of the questionnaires were completed and returned to the examiner. The pretest exercise proved highly beneficial in the design of the final questionnaire. The pretest results including the respondents' comments were studied and changes and improvements were made to the questionnaire accordingly. Changes included adding and deleting categories from certain items, rewording of questions, and the addition of directions. These alterations resulted in the revised questionnaire used in this study (Appendix D).

A letter accompanied by a copy of the revised questionnaire was sent to the superintendent of the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board explaining the nature of the study and requesting permission and support for the administration of the questionnaire and structured teacher interviews (Appendix A). A package was delivered to each school with a covering letter to the principal explaining the nature of the study and requesting cooperation and support (Appendix B). The principals were asked to distribute the questionnaires to all the primary teachers within their respective schools and to collect the completed questionnaires before an assigned date, for pick up by the researcher. Each teacher questionnaire was accompanied by a covering letter explaining the nature of the study, asking for cooperation in completing the questionnaire, and requesting permission to conduct a tape-recorded interview (Appendix C). The questionnaires were coded to identify those who did not respond in order to facilitate a follow-up.

To compliment the findings from the questionnaire and to obtain a more comprehensive view of whole language philosophy, structured interviews were conducted. Letters requesting permission to conduct a tape-recorded interview were sent to the primary school consultant at the Department of Education and to the language arts program coordinator at the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board (Appendix E). Interview schedules are included in Appendix F.

Procedure and Sample

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Education (1991) has stated that the primary language arts program is governed by and "reflects a whole

language philosophy [where] language is purposefully and meaningfully used for communication, learning, and enjoyment" (p.16). The Conception Bay South Integrated School Board has a Strategic Plan for its schools for 1993-94. Goal number eight of this plan promotes "an approach to language instruction which blends aspects of a whole language philosophy with direct teaching of skills and strategies". Considering the position of the Department of Education and the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board it was necessary to obtain information of whole language philosophy as it related to teaching and learning in schools. In order to obtain this information a thorough study of whole language philosophy and implementation within the Conception Bay South Integrated School district was carried out.

The Conception Bay South Integrated School Board is not a large board as it encompasses only five primary/elementary schools. On this basis it was decided that all primary teachers within the board be used in the study. Therefore, the population sample is small and random sampling was not used.

A list of all the primary teachers with the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board was obtained from the board office. The revised teacher questionnaire was distributed to the 49 primary teachers, grades kindergarten to three, identified by the list. The initial contact produced responses from 29, 59 percent, of the sample subjects. All nonrespondents were then contacted through a follow-up telephone call. The follow-up produced an additional 9 responses, 19 percent, for a total response of 38 or 78 percent. A decision was made to omit one questionnaire from the study on the basis that only eight of the possible 52 items were responded to. This respondent indicated that the

questionnaire did not apply to her, as her teaching duties involve primarily physical education, grades kindergarten to six.

The population sample for the structured interviews included:

(a) The provincial primary consultant, Department of Education, St. John's, Newfoundland.

(b) The language arts program coordinator, Conception Bay South Integrated School Board, Manuels, Newfoundland.

(c) A group of five primary school teachers from three of the five primary/elementary schools in the Conception Bay South Integrated School District.

An edited transcript of each of the scheduled interviews is included in Appendix G.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the results of the data collected during the survey. Data was obtained through a field survey involving teacher questionnaires and structured interviews with a primary consultant, a program coordinator, and five primary teachers. The findings from each are analyzed and discussed separately. Where relevant, comparisons of the findings from these sources of data are made.

Analysis of the Questionnaire Responses

Data from the questionnaires are presented as frequency distributions and percentages in table form and are analyzed. It should be noted that the total number of responses presented in some of the tables is fewer than the total number of completed questionnaires (37). This is due to the fact that not all respondents completed every questionnaire item. In order to facilitate discussion of responses to groups of similar questionnaire items, the sequence of items as presented in the questionnaire is frequently altered.

Items 1-8 refer to biographical data about the respondents. Items 1-3 refer to the academic qualifications of the respondents. The responses to items 1-3 are presented separately in Tables 1-4, and are discussed together.

Item 1

What are your academic qualifications?

B.A.	1
B.A. (Ed.) Primary	2
B.A. (Ed.) Elementary	3
B.Ed. Primary	4
B.Ed. Elementary	5
M. Ed.	6
Other, please specify _____	

Table 1

Academic Qualifications

Qualifications	Respondents	Percent
B. A.	7	18.9
B. A. (Ed.) Primary	21	56.8
B. A. (Ed.) Elementary	7	18.9
B. Ed. Primary	4	10.8
B. Ed. Elementary	0	0.0
M. Ed.	7	18.9
Other	6	16.2

Item 2

Have you completed university courses in which whole language has been discussed?

Yes	1
No	2

If yes, please specify how many. _____

Table 2

Whole Language Courses Completed

Whole language courses	Respondents	Percent
Yes	21	58.3
No	15	41.7
Total	36	100.0

Table 3

Number of Whole Language Courses Completed

Number of courses completed	Respondents	Percent
Zero	15	41.7
One	2	5.5
Two	4	11.1
Three	5	13.9
Four	3	8.3
Five	1	2.8
More than five	6	16.7
Total	36	100.0

Item 3

When did you last enroll for a university course?

Within the past year	1
1-5 years ago	2
6-10 years ago	3
11-15 years ago	4
16-20 years ago	5

Table 4

Enrollment in a University Course

Enrollment	Respondents	Percent
Within the past year	6	16.2
1-5 years ago	17	46.0
6-10 years ago	11	29.7
11-15 years ago	2	5.4
16-20 years ago	1	2.7
Total	37	100.0

In item 1 (Table 1), it is possible to give more than one answer. It can be seen that the greatest percentage of the 37 respondents (70.3 %) possess a degree in primary

education, with 56.8 percent holding a B. A. (Ed.) Primary, 10.8 percent holding a B. Ed. Primary, and 2.7 percent holding a B. S. in Primary Education, as indicated in the category 'other'. Only 18.9 percent of the respondents are elementary trained, with a B. A. (Ed.) Elementary degree. Other qualifications represented in Table 1 include a B. A. which is held by 18.9 percent and a M. Ed. which is held by 18.9 percent also. The final category itemized as 'other' comprises 16.2 percent of respondents and includes those teachers who have a Diploma in Learning Resources or a degree in Special Education.

Table 2 indicates that 58.3 percent, or 21, of the respondents have completed courses in which whole language was discussed. Of the 21 respondents 41.7 percent have completed three or more courses (Table 3). According to Table 4, 91.9 percent of the respondents have taken university courses within the past 10 years and, in fact, 62.2 percent of those have taken courses within the past five years.

Items 4-7 of the questionnaire requests information regarding respondents' age and teaching experience. Data from these items are presented in Tables 5-8, and are discussed together.

Item 4

To what age group do you belong?

25 years and under	1
26-35 years	2
36-45 years	3
46-55 years	4
Over 55 years	5

Table 5

Age Distribution

Age	Respondents	Percent
25 years and under	0	0.0
26-35 years	14	37.8
36-45 years	19	51.4
46-55 years	4	10.8
Over 55 years	0	0.0
Total	37	100.0

Item 5

For how many years have you taught, including this present year?

1 year or less	1
2-5 years	2
6-10 years	3
11-15 years	4
16-20 years	5
More than 20 years	6

Table 6

Number of Years Teaching

Number of years	Respondents	Percent
1 year or less	0	0.0
2-5 years	3	8.1
6-10 years	5	13.5
11-15 years	9	24.3
16-20 years	7	19.0
More than 20 years	13	35.1
Total	37	100.0

Item 6

For how many years have you taught primary?

1 year or less	1
2-5 years	2
6-10 years	3
11-15 years	4
16-20 years	5
More than 20 years	6

Table 7

Years Teaching Primary

Years teaching primary	Respondents	Percent
1 year or less	2	5.4
2-5 years	7	19.0
6-10 years	3	8.1
11-15 years	9	24.3
16-20 years	5	13.5
More than 20 years	11	29.7
Total	37	100.0

Item 7

How many years have you taught with the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board? _____

Table 8

Years Teaching with Conception Bay South Integrated School Board

Years teaching with C. B. S.	Respondents	Percent
Less than 1 year	0	0.0
1-3 years	2	5.4
4-6 years	6	16.2
7-10 years	9	24.3
11-14 years	4	10.8
15-18 years	3	8.1
19-22 years	8	21.7
23-25 years	4	10.8
26-28 years	1	2.7
Total	37	100.0

Table 5 indicates that the majority of teachers (89.2 %) involved in this study are between the ages of 26 and 45 years and 62.2 percent of those are 36 years or older. There are no teachers in the age category 25 and under. Table 6 shows a broad range of years of teaching experience, with the greatest number of respondents having taught for 16 or more years (54.1 %). Only 21.6 percent have taught for 10 years or less.

According to Table 7, 75.6 percent of the teachers surveyed have taught in the area of primary for six years or more. However, a significant proportion of 24.6 percent have taught in this area for five years or less and, in fact, 5.4 percent of those have worked in primary for one year or less. Approximately one-half or 45.9 percent of the respondents, as indicated by Table 8, have taught with the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board for 10 years or less.

Item 8 deals with the professional groups or organizations to which respondents belong. The data from this item are presented in Table 9 and are discussed.

Item 8

To which of the following professional groups do you belong? (You may select more than one item.)

Primary Special Interest Council	1
Elementary Special Interest Council	2
Reading Special Interest Council	3
Special Education Interest Council	4
Other, please specify _____	

Table 9

Membership in Professional Organizations

Professional affiliation	Respondents	Percent
Primary Special Interest Council	11	78.6
Elementary Special Interest Council	1	7.1
Reading Special Interest Council	9	64.3
Special Education Interest Council	0	0.0
Other	3	21.4

In item eight (Table 9) it is possible to give more than one response. It should be noted that only 14 of the possible 37 respondents did indeed answer this item. Of the 14 respondents the majority belong to either the Primary Special Interest Council (78.6 %)

or the Reading Special Interest Council (64.3 %). An additional 28.5 percent indicate membership in other organizations.

Items 9, 10, 13, 14 and 21 refer to the teaching context of the respondents. Findings from these items are presented separately in Tables 10-15, and are discussed together.

Item 9

How many children are in your primary class?

Fewer than 20	1
20-25	2
26-30	3
31-35	4
More than 35, please specify _____	5

Table 10

Class Size

Class size	Respondents	Percent
Fewer than 20	14	37.8
20-25	23	62.2
26-30	0	0.0
31-35	0	0.0
More than 35	0	0.0
Total	37	100.0

Item 10

Which primary grade(s) do you teach?

K	1
I	2
II	3
III	4
Multi-grade, please specify grades _____	5

Table 11

Grade Presently Teaching

Grade	Respondents	Percent
K	8	21.6
I	10	27.0
II	10	27.0
III	9	24.3
Multi-grade	0	0.0
Total	37	100.0

Item 13

How many other teachers are there teaching the same grade as you?

None	1
One	2
Two	3
Three	4
Four	5
More than four	6

Table 12

Number of Other Teachers in Same Grade as You

Number of teachers	Respondents	Percent
None	1	2.7
One	19	51.4
Two	10	27.0
Three	6	16.2
Four	0	0.0
More than four	1	2.7
Total	37	100.0

Item 14

If there are other teachers teaching the same grade with you, do you do:

(a) Team planning?

Yes	1
No	2

(b) Team teaching?

Yes	1
No	2

Table 13

Team Planning

Team planning	Respondents	Percent
Yes	34	94.4
No	2	5.6
Total	36	100.0

Table 14

Team Teaching

Team teaching	Respondents	Percent
Yes	11	31.4
No	24	68.6
Total	35	100.0

Item 21

Approximately how much preparation time do you have during the regular teaching week?

None	1
1 hour per week	2
1.5 hours per week	3
2 hours per week	4
More than 2 hours per week	5

Table 15

Time for Curriculum Planning

Time for curriculum planning	Respondents	Percent
None	0	0.0
1 hour/week	3	8.1
1.5 hours/week	3	8.1
2 hours/week	13	35.2
More than 2 hours/week	18	48.6
Total	37	100.0

Table 10 indicates that the entire sample population has class sizes not exceeding 25 pupils. Approximately one-third (37.8 %) of these respondents, in fact, teach fewer than 20 pupils.

Table 11 clearly shows that the respondents are fairly evenly distributed throughout the primary grades (kindergarten to three), with no multi-grading, thus allowing for equal representation of the four primary levels being studied.

An examination of Table 12 indicates that all but one respondent teach in schools where there is more than one teacher working at a grade level. The majority of respondents (51.4 %) work in two stream schools. However, a high percentage of respondents (43.2 %) work in three and four stream schools.

Table 13 confirms a very high incidence (94.4 %) of team planning amongst teachers. Surprisingly however, team teaching, shown in Table 14, is not nearly as widely utilized. Only 31.4 percent of the teachers surveyed respond affirmatively and a number of these indicate that team teaching is done only with the Special Needs Teacher or with the Teacher Librarian.

Table 15 indicates that the greatest number of respondents (48.6 %) have more than two hours of preparation time per week, or six day cycle as is indicated by teachers from some schools. No teacher has less than one hour of preparation time per teaching cycle.

Items 11, 15, 38, 16, 12, and 27 refer to program and classroom organization. Findings from these items are presented separately in Tables 16-21, and are discussed together.

Item 11

Which of the following best describes your program?

Informal program	1
Formal program	2
Mixture of formal and informal	3

Table 16

Type of Program

Program	Respondents	Percent
Informal program	3	8.3
Formal program	0	0.0
Mixture of formal and informal	33	91.7
Total	36	100.0

Item 15

Which best describes the seating arrangement of your classroom?

Rows	1
Semicircle, circle, or square	2
Small groups	3
Other, please specify _____	

Table 17

Seating Arrangement

Seating arrangement	Respondents	Percent
Rows	0	0.0
Semicircle, circle, or square	2	5.4
Small groups	35	94.6
Other	0	0.0
Total	37	100.0

Item 38

What type of grouping do you do in your classroom?

Ability grouping	1
Mixed ability grouping	2
Interest grouping	3
Sometimes mixed ability and sometimes interest grouping	4
Other, please specify _____	

Table 18

Grouping Arrangement of Pupils

Grouping arrangement	Respondents	Percent
Ability grouping	0	0.0
Mixed ability grouping	14	40.0
Interest grouping	0	0.0
Sometimes mixed ability and sometimes interest grouping	18	51.4
Other	3	8.6
Total	35	100.0

Item 16

How often are your children in informal arrangements such as sitting or lying on the floor?

Always	1
Frequently	2
Occasionally	3
Never	4

Table 19

Informal Arrangements

Informal arrangements	Respondents	Percent
Always	0	0.0
Frequently	34	91.9
Occasionally	3	8.1
Never	0	0.0
Total	37	100.0

Item 12

What type of scheduling is most often used in your classroom?

Flexible	1
Fixed	2
Mixture of flexible and fixed	3

Table 20

Type of Scheduling

Scheduling	Respondents	Percent
Flexible	8	22.2
Fixed	0	0.0
Mixture of flexible and fixed	28	77.8
Total	36	100.0

Item 27

In your teaching, do you integrate subject areas (for example, math and science) or are they totally separate areas of instruction?

Integrate	1
Separate	2
Integrate and separate	3

Table 21

Teaching Style

Teaching style	Respondents	Percent
Integrate	13	35.1
Separate	0	0.0
Integrate and separate	24	64.9
Total	37	100.0

Item 11 (Table 16) is somewhat dependent upon the respondents' interpretation of what constitutes a formal or informal program. However, it is encouraging to note that, irrespective of interpretation, the entire group of respondents have programs with some degree of informality. The majority of these (91.7 %) indicate having programs which can be best described as a mixture of formal and informal. Informality within the

physical setting of the classroom is demonstrated through Table 17, which clearly shows all respondents using an informal seating arrangement. The vast majority (94.6 %) indicate having their students seated in small groups as opposed to structured rows. These groups, shown in Table 18, are somewhat flexible and are dependent, to a large extent, upon the particular learning activity or learning situation. Most respondents (51.4 %) use both mixed ability and interest grouping, within their classrooms, at different times. Surprisingly though, 40 percent of respondents indicate using only mixed ability grouping amongst their students. In addition to the seating and grouping arrangements, some 91.9 percent of the teachers surveyed indicate that their students are frequently engaged in very informal arrangements such as sitting or lying on the floor (Table 19).

Table 20, depicting type of scheduling, reveals the greatest number of respondents (77.8 %) using a mixture of flexible and fixed scheduling, with no one using fixed scheduling only. Table 21 portrays all respondents using some measure of integration of subject matter in their teaching. While only 35.1 percent use a totally integrated approach, the remaining 64.9 percent integrate subject areas at times. One teacher pointed out during the interview that often times a particular discipline, such as math or science, does not fit into the theme being studied and is thus taught separately. However, she went on to point out that wherever possible subject areas are integrated (Appendix G).

Items 24-26 and item 28 refer to book resources used in the classroom. Responses to these items are presented separately in Tables 22-26, and are discussed together.

Item 24

How is the textbook regarded in your classroom?

As a major source	1
As a framework to be used along with other resources	2

Table 22

How Textbook is Regarded

How textbook is regarded	Respondents	Percent
As a major source	0	0.0
As a framework to be used along with other resources	29	100.0
Total	29	100.0

Item 25

Do you use a basal reading series?

Yes	1
No	2

Table 23

Basal Reading Series in Use

Basal reading series in use	Respondents	Percent
Yes	23	82.1
No	5	17.9
Total	28	100.0

Item 26

If yes:

(a) Which series do you use?

Networks 1
Other, please specify _____

(b) How do you use it?

As a major source 1
As a framework to be used along with other resources 2

Table 24

Name of Basal Reading Series

Name of basal reading series	Respondents	Percent
Networks	22	100.0
Other	0	0.0
Total	22	100.0

Table 25

How Basal Reading Series is Used

How basal reading series is used	Respondents	Percent
As a major source	0	0.0
As a framework to be used along with other resources	22	100.0
Total	22	100.0

Item 28

How is literature used in your classroom?

As a primary teaching tool	1
As a teaching tool in conjunction with a basal reading series	2
As an extra activity when other work is complete	3

Table 26

How Literature is Used

How literature is used	Respondents	Percent
As a primary teaching tool	17	45.9
As a teaching tool in conjunction with a basal reading series	20	54.1
As an extra activity when other work is complete	0	0.0
Total	37	100.0

The kindergarten teachers, of which there are six, were directed to omit items 24-26 since textbooks and basal readers are not used at this level.

It is clearly evident from Table 22 that all those responding view the textbook as a framework to be used along with other resources. A large number of respondents (82.1

%), however, still use a basal reading series (Table 23), specifically Networks (Table 24). Like the text, though, respondents' regard the basal as a framework to be used in conjunction with other resources and not as a major source (Table 25).

The responses to items 24-26 suggest reliance on other resources. Table 26 depicts a significant other resource--children's literature. All respondents indicate using literature in their classroom, either as a primary teaching tool (45.9 %) or as a teaching tool in conjunction with a basal reading series (54.1 %).

Items 17-18 deal with classroom and school libraries. Responses to these items are presented separately in Tables 27-29, and are discussed together.

Item 17

Do you have a classroom library?

Yes	1
No	2

If yes, approximately how many trade books and magazines does it contain?

50 or less	1
51-100	2
101-150	3
151-200	4
More than 200	5

Table 27

Classroom Library Facility

Classroom library	Respondents	Percent
Yes	36	100.0
No	0	0.0
Total	36	100.0

Table 28

Number of Books and Magazines in Classroom Library

Number of books	Respondents	Percent
50 or less	0	0.0
51-100	8	22.9
100-150	9	25.7
151-200	5	14.3
More than 200	13	37.1
Total	35	100.0

Item 18

Is there a library in your school?

Yes	1
No	2

If yes, how useful is the library when you are looking for whole language materials (i.e. trade books, magazines, audio-visual materials) ?

Very useful	1
Somewhat useful	2
Of limited use	3
Not useful at all	4

Table 29

School Library Facility

School library	Respondents	Percent
Yes		
Very useful	22	59.5
Somewhat useful	15	40.5
Of limited use	0	0.0
Not useful at all	0	0.0
No	0	0.0
Total	37	100.0

The total number of teachers responding to items 17 and 18 indicate having both a classroom library (Table 27) and a school library (Table 29). For the most part, the classroom libraries, shown in Table 28, are relatively well stocked, with 77.1 percent of the respondents having books and magazines in excess of 100. In addition to the classroom libraries, school libraries too are portrayed positively. Data presented in Table 29 clearly depicts school libraries as being useful when looking for resources to use in a whole language classroom.

Items 29-37 and items 19-20 deal with the various components of the language program, including oral language, reading, and writing. The findings from these items are presented separately in Tables 30-40, and are discussed together.

Item 29

How is the oral language of your students promoted and developed within your classroom? (You may select more than one item.)

Shared reading	1
Sharing time	2
Author's chair	3
Book discussions	4
Questioning techniques	5
Class presentations	6
Cooperative learning groups	7
Other, please specify _____	

Table 30

How Oral Language is Promoted

How oral language is promoted	Respondents	Percent
Shared reading	37	97.3
Sharing time	32	86.5
Author's chair	15	40.5
Book discussions	30	81.1
Questioning techniques	28	75.7
Class presentations	23	62.2
Cooperative learning groups	32	86.5
Other	0	0.0

Item 30

How do you teach phonics? (You may select more than one item.)

Not at all	1
As fragmented skills in isolation	2
In the context of a whole text	3
Short focused lessons	4

Table 31

How Phonics is Taught

How phonics is taught	Respondents	Percent
Not at all	0	0.0
As fragmented skills in isolation	2	5.4
In the context of a whole text	36	97.3
Short focused lessons	26	70.3

Item 31

How do you teach spelling and grammar? (You may select more than one item.)

Not at all	1
As fragmented skills in isolation	2
In the context of a whole text	3
Short focused lessons	4

Table 32

How Spelling and Grammar are Taught

How spelling and grammar are taught	Respondents	Percent
Not at all	0	0.0
As fragmented skills in isolation	2	5.4
In the context of a whole text	36	97.3
Short focused lessons	26	70.3

Item 32

Approximately how often do you read with your students?

Once daily	1
Twice daily	2
Three times daily	3
More than three times daily	4

Table 33

Frequency of Reading with Students

Frequency of reading with students	Respondents	Percent
Once daily	7	18.9
Twice daily	19	51.4
Three times daily	6	16.2
More than three times daily	5	13.5
Total	37	100.0

Item 33

How is student reading accomplished in your classroom? (You may select more than one item.)

Sustained silent reading	1
Shared reading (with a peer)	2
Buddy reading	3
Assisted reading (with a teacher)	4
Literature groups	5
Home reading program	6
Other, please specify _____	

Table 34

Types of Student Reading

Types of student reading	Respondents	Percent
Sustained silent reading	28	75.7
Shared reading (with a peer)	35	94.6
Buddy reading	31	83.8
Assisted reading (with a teacher)	35	94.6
Literature groups	7	18.9
Home reading program	34	91.9
Other	4	10.8

Item 34

How often are your students engaged in sustained silent reading?

Daily	1
2-3 times per week	2
Weekly	3
Not at all	4

Table 35

Frequency of Sustained Silent Reading

Frequency of sustained silent reading	Respondents	Percent
Daily	16	44.4
2-3 times per week	11	30.6
Weekly	6	16.7
Not at all	3	8.3
Total	36	100.0

Item 35

How often are your students engaged in buddy reading?

Daily	1
2-3 times per week	2
Weekly	3
Not at all	4

Table 36

Frequency of Buddy Reading

Frequency of buddy reading	Respondents	Percent
Daily	1	2.8
2-3 times per week	4	11.1
Weekly	26	72.2
Not at all	5	13.9
Total	36	100.0

Item 36

How often are your students engaged in shared reading with a peer?

Daily	1
2-3 times per week	2
Weekly	3
Not at all	4

Table 37

Frequency of Shared Reading

Frequency of shared reading	Respondents	Percent
Daily	10	27.8
2-3 times per week	19	52.8
Weekly	7	19.4
Not at all	0	0.0
Total	36	100.0

Item 37

How often are your students engaged in some form of meaningful writing?

1-2 times per week	1
3-4 times per week	2
Daily	3

Table 38

Frequency of Meaningful Writing

Frequency of meaningful writing	Respondents	Percent
1-2 times per week	4	11.1
3-4 times per week	11	30.6
Daily	21	58.3
Total	36	100.0

Item 19

Do you arrange field trips for your class?

Yes	1
No	2

If yes, approximately how many per year?

5 or fewer	1
More than 5	2

Table 39

Field Trips

Field trips	Respondents	Percent
Yes		
5 or fewer	37	100.0
More than 5	0	0.0
No	0	0.0
Total	37	100.0

Item 20

Approximately how often do guest speakers come into your classroom?

Once a week	1
Once a month	2
Once every two months	3
Once every term	4
Not at all	5

Table 40

Guest Speakers

Guest speakers	Respondents	Percent
Once a week	0	0.0
Once a month	1	2.8
Once every two months	5	13.9
Once every term	25	69.4
Not at all	5	13.9
Total	36	100.0

Item 29 specifies that respondents are permitted more than one selection. It is evident from Table 30 that most respondents made several choices. While all of the

suggested methods of oral language promotion are used to some degree by the respondents, there are, of course, preferred choices. These include shared reading (97.3 %), sharing time (86.5 %), book discussions (81.1 %), and cooperative learning groups (86.5 %).

Tables 31 and 32 present how specific skills are taught. Here again the 37 respondents are permitted more than one choice. An overwhelming 97.3 percent feel that phonics, grammar, and spelling should be taught in the context of the whole text. Some 70.3 percent indicate that short focused skill lessons are necessary also. The issue of skills teaching is discussed at some length by all interviewees and the powerful message that is coming through is that skills must be taught and cannot be left to chance (Appendix G).

Items 32-36 deal with the reading component of the language arts. Table 33 shows 81.1 percent of the respondents reading with their students twice or more daily. The remaining 18.9 percent read at least once daily. Table 34 suggests a variety of means by which student reading can be accomplished. The 37 teachers responding to this item are encouraged to select as many methods as they involve their students in. Practically all of the suggested methods are utilized by the majority of respondents. The least response (18.9 %) is given to literature groups.

Three specific means of accomplishing student reading are identified in Tables 35-37 and the frequency of which students are engaged in each is presented. Table 35 indicates that the largest number of respondents, 44.4 percent, engage their students in sustained silent reading daily, while an additional 30.6 percent do so two to three times per week.

Buddy reading (Table 36), which is usually accomplished by pairing a primary class with a class of a higher grade level, takes place most often on a weekly basis (72.2 %). Shared reading (Table 37), on the other hand, which is generally accomplished by grouping students within a class, occurs more frequently. The majority of respondents (80.6 %) indicate that they engage their students in this form of reading anywhere from daily to two to three times per week.

Table 38 represents yet another language component--student writing. Encouragingly, the majority of respondents, 58.3 percent, indicate involving their students in some form of meaningful writing daily. An additional 30.6 percent indicate having their students write three to four times per week.

Still in the context of language development, it is motivating to note that all respondents arrange field trips for their students (Table 39). It is equally encouraging to note that the vast majority of respondents (86.1 %) invite guest speakers into their classroom at least once every term also (Table 40).

Many of these same language development activities are reiterated by the teachers interviewed (Appendix G).

Items 22-23 are concerned with pupil evaluation. The data from these items are presented separately in Tables 41-42, and are discussed together.

Item 22

How do you evaluate the progress of the children in your class? (You may select more than one item.)

Standardized tests	1
Teacher made tests	2
Teacher observation	3
Teacher/pupil conferences	4
Student projects and reports	5
Student journals or learning logs	6
Portfolio of student's work	7
Other, please specify _____	

Table 41

Methods of Pupil Evaluation

Methods of evaluation	Respondents	Percent
Standardized tests	6	16.2
Teacher made tests	22	59.5
Teacher observation	37	100.0
Teacher/pupil conferences	35	94.6
Student projects and reports	29	78.4
Student journals or learning logs	25	67.6
Portfolio of student's work	34	91.9
Other	3	8.1

Item 23

How do you record the progress of the children in your class? (You may select more than one item.)

Checklists	1
Anecdotal records	2
Running records	3
Daily record book	4
Weekly records	5
Frequent short notes from observations	6
Portfolio of student's work	7
Other, please specify _____	

Table 42

Records of Pupil Evaluation

Records of Evaluation	Respondents	Percent
Checklists	29	78.4
Anecdotal records	33	89.2
Running records	17	45.9
Daily record book	9	24.3
Weekly records	8	21.6
Frequent short notes from observation	35	94.6
Portfolio of student's work	30	81.1
Other	0	0.0

As indicated by items 22 and 23 it is possible for respondents to select more than one answer. Upon examination of Table 41 it is evident that the 37 teachers responding to this item utilize a variety of evaluation techniques that are informal and unstructured. The most widely used amongst respondents include teacher observation (100.0 %), teacher/pupil conferences (94.6 %), and portfolio of student's work (91.9 %). In conjunction with methods of evaluation is the means by which teachers record the

progress of their students. Table 42 portrays respondents as using many record keeping devices, with the most favorable being frequent short notes from observations (94.6 %), anecdotal records (89.2 %), portfolio of student's work (81.1 %), and checklists (78.4 %). Those teachers interviewed, identify these same methods of evaluation and means of recording evaluation data (Appendix G).

Items 39-41 refer to the availability of support for teaching. Responses to these items are presented separately in Tables 43-46, and are discussed together.

Item 39

Does the principal at your school show an active interest in and support for the programs and/or approaches utilized in your classroom?

Yes	1
Somewhat	2
No	3

Table 43

Support of Principal

Support of principal	Respondents	Percent
Yes	28	75.7
Somewhat	8	21.6
No	1	2.7
Total	37	100.0

Item 40

Does your school board office offer any help/support which directly affects your work in the classroom?

Yes	1
Somewhat	2
No	3

If yes, what kind of support is offered you? (You may select more than one item.)

Inservice sessions	1
District collections of materials	2
Help with development of themes	3
Technical help (i.e. computers)	4
Bibliographies	5
Other, please specify _____	

Table 44

Support of School Board

Support of school board	Respondents	Percent
Yes	13	35.1
Somewhat	20	54.1
No	4	10.8
Total	37	100.0

Table 45

Types of Support

Types of support	Respondents	Percent
Inservice sessions	25	75.8
District collections of materials	17	51.5
Help with development of themes	4	12.1
Technical help (i.e. computers)	22	66.7
Bibliographies	5	15.1
Other	1	3.0

Item 41

Are the school board consultants easily accessible when you need them?

Yes	1
Somewhat	2
No	3

Table 46

Accessibility of School Board Consultants

Accessibility of school board consultants	Respondents	Percent
Yes	19	54.3
Somewhat	16	45.7
No	0	0.0
Total	35	100.0

It can be seen from Table 43 that the vast majority of respondents, 75.7 percent, feel that the principal at their school shows an active interest in and support for the programs and/or approaches utilized within their classroom. An additional 21.6 percent view the principal as being somewhat interested and supportive.

Equally important is the support provided by the school board office. Table 44 reveals that 89.2 percent recognize the board office as offering some help and support. However, the amount of recognized support varies, with the greatest number of respondents (54.1 %) viewing the school board as being somewhat supportive. The 33 respondents who see the school board as offering some support indicate that support is most often offered through inservice sessions (75.8 %), technical help (66.7 %), especially with computers, and through district collections of materials (51.5 %) (Table 45). School board consultants, themselves, are viewed as being accessible for the most part (Table 46). However, here again, a large group of respondents (45.7 %) feel that they are somewhat accessible as opposed to just accessible. Participants in the interviews stress the need for a supportive administration in their development as whole language teachers (Appendix G).

Items 42-47 deal with teachers' advancement of knowledge regarding whole language. The findings from these items are presented separately in Tables 47-53, and are discussed together.

Item 42

Have you received any workshops or inservice sessions regarding "whole language"?

Yes	1
No	2

If you have had inservice, please specify the exact topics dealt with.

_____

_____

The majority of responses given to the open ended section of this item are categorized and presented in Table 48. It should be noted that the total number of respondents is 17, and in some instances more than one response is given.

Table 47

Inservice Related to Whole Language

Inservice related to whole language	Respondents	Percent
Yes	27	81.8
No	6	18.2
Total	33	100.0

Table 48

Inservice Topics

Inservice topics	Respondents	Percent
A general overview of whole language	9	52.9
Spelling in whole language	5	29.4
Using children's literature across the curriculum	1	5.9
Teaching skills through poetry and literature	2	11.8
Writing	2	11.8
Conferencing	1	5.9
Integration of music and physical education into the whole language curriculum	1	5.9
Theme development	1	5.9

Item 43

Does your school subscribe to any professional journals?

Yes	1
No	2

Table 49

School Subscription to Professional Journals

School subscription to professional journals	Respondents	Percent
Yes	36	100.0
No	0	0.0
Total	36	100.0

Item 44

Approximately how often do you read professional literature?

Never	1
Weekly	2
Monthly	3

Table 50

Frequency of Reading Professional Literature

Frequency of reading professional literature	Respondents	Percent
Never	0	0.0
Weekly	13	38.2
Monthly	21	61.8
Total	34	100.0

Item 45

From where do you obtain professional literature? (You may select more than one item.)

Subscribe to personally	1
School library	2
Public libraries	3
Queen Elizabeth II Library (MUN)	4

Table 51

Where Professional Literature is Obtained

Where professional literature is obtained	Respondents	Percent
Subscribe to personally	12	32.4
School library	33	89.2
Public libraries	2	5.4
Queen Elizabeth II Library (MUN)	5	13.5

Item 46

How many articles about whole language have you read?

None	1
1-3	2
4-7	3
8-10	4
More than 10	5

Table 52

Number of Articles Read on Whole Language

Number of articles read on whole language	Respondents	Percent
None	0	0.0
1-3	1	2.8
4-7	5	13.9
8-10	2	5.5
More than 10	28	77.8
Total	36	100.0

Item 47

How many books about whole language have you read?

None	1
One	2
More than one	3

Table 53

Number of Books Read on Whole Language

Number of books read on whole language	Respondents	Percent
None	1	2.7
One	2	5.4
More than one	34	91.9
Total	37	100.0

Table 47 indicates that 81.8 percent of the teacher respondents have received at least some inservice relating to whole language. The specific topics dealt with during these sessions have covered a range of curriculum areas (Table 48). However, only 17 teachers identify the exact inservice topics dealt with and the percentage of respondents indicating having attended any particular session is relatively low.

Encouragingly, all of the schools surveyed subscribe to professional journals (Table 49) and all respondents indicate that they read professional literature either weekly or monthly (Table 50). The majority of respondents, 89.2 percent, not surprisingly, obtain their professional reading materials from their school library (Table 51). Approximately one-third (32.4 %) of the respondents subscribe to professional literature personally. According to Tables 52 and 53 most respondents have read in excess of ten articles (77.8 %) and several books (91.9 %) on the topic.

Items 48-50 deal with what whole language is perceived to be. The findings from these items are presented separately in Tables 54-56, and are discussed together.

Item 48

How would you define whole language?

As an approach	1
As a practice	2
As a philosophy	3

Table 54

How to Define Whole Language

How to define whole language	Respondents	Percent
As an approach	19	54.3
As a practice	1	2.9
As a philosophy	15	42.8
Total	35	100.0

Item 49

Is whole language limited to the language arts?

Yes	1
No	2

Table 55

Whole Language Limited to Language Arts

Whole language limited to language arts	Respondents	Percent
Yes	0	0.0
No	36	100.0
Total	36	100.0

Item 50

Can whole language extend across all curriculum areas?

Yes	1
No	2

Table 56

Whole Language Across the Curriculum

Whole language across the curriculum	Respondents	Percent
Yes	35	100.0
No	0	0.0
Total	35	100.0

Table 54, clearly shows the largest number of respondents (54.3 %) defining whole language as an approach rather than a philosophy. Tables 55 and 56 represent two basically rhetorical questions regarding the scope of whole language across the curriculum. All respondents to both items indicate that they do not see whole language as being limited to the language arts but see it as extending across all curriculum areas. This is emphasized also, in the interviews with primary teachers (Appendix G).

Items 51 and 52 (a-j) deal specifically with the whole language teacher and the whole language classroom. The findings from these items, including the information gathered from the open ended responses, are presented separately in Tables 57-66, and are discussed together.

Item 51

Do you consider yourself to be a whole language teacher?

Yes	1
No	2

Table 57

Whole Language Teacher

Whole language teacher	Respondents	Percent
Yes	36	100.0
No	0	0.0
Total	36	100.0

Item 52

If yes:

(a) How important do you feel it is to have clearly stated objectives for the learning experiences you provide?

Very important	1
Somewhat important	2
Not Important	3

Table 58

Importance of Clearly Stated Objectives

Importance of clearly stated objectives	Respondents	Percent
Very important	34	94.4
Somewhat important	2	5.6
Not important	0	0.0
Total	36	100.0

Item 52(b)

Where do you obtain your objectives? (You may select more than one item.)

Textbooks	1
Curriculum guides	2
Student needs	3
Professional literature	4
Other, please specify _____	

Table 59

Where Objectives are Obtained

Where objectives are obtained	Respondents	Percent
Textbooks	15	40.5
Curriculum guides	34	91.9
Student needs	33	89.2
Professional literature	10	27.0
Other	5	13.5

Item 52(c)

Indicate whether or not the following teaching strategies are used by you in your whole language classroom. (You may select more than one item.)

Themes	1
Learning Centres	2
Team Teaching	3
Small Group Work	4
Cooperative Learning Groups	5

Table 60

Strategies Used by Whole Language Teachers

Strategies used by whole language teachers	Respondents	Percent
Themes	37	100.0
Learning centres	37	100.0
Team teaching	9	24.3
Small group work	36	97.3
Cooperative learning groups	33	89.2

Item 52(d)

How comfortable are you with your status as a whole language teacher?

Very comfortable	1
Comfortable	2
Uncomfortable	3
Very uncomfortable	4

Table 61

Comfort with Whole Language Teacher Status

Comfort with whole language teacher status	Respondents	Percent
Very comfortable	15	40.5
Comfortable	21	56.8
Uncomfortable	1	2.7
Very uncomfortable	0	0.0
Total	37	100.0

Items 52 (e-i) provide opportunity for open ended responses.

Item 52(e)

What is your role as a whole language teacher?

The majority of responses given to this item are categorized and presented in Table 62. It should be noted that the total number of respondents to this item is 33, and in some instances more than one response is given.

Table 62

Role of Whole Language Teacher

Role of whole language teacher	Respondents	Percent
To guide or facilitate learning	16	48.5
To motivate, encourage, stimulate, and challenge	6	18.2
To instruct	4	12.1
To expose children to quality literature	3	9.1
To determine student needs and meet them	5	15.1
To expose children to a variety of oral and written language	7	21.2
To be a resource person for students, offering a wide variety of activities and materials	6	18.2
To be a learner along with students	1	3.0
To make learning meaningful and interesting	4	12.1
Other	10	30.3

Item 52(f)

What is the students' role in your whole language classroom?

The majority of responses given to this item are categorized and presented in Table 63. It should be noted that the total number of respondents to this item is 32, and in some instances more than one response is given.

Table 63

Role of Student in Whole Language Classroom

Role of student in whole language classroom	Respondents	Percent
To progress at own rate of development	7	21.9
To actively participate in learning	14	43.7
To bring personal experiences into play in the classroom	4	12.5
To work to one's greatest potential	2	6.2
To enjoy learning	1	3.1
To provide the basis for instruction	4	12.5
To be a decision maker	5	15.6
To learn to read and write by reading and writing and to see oneself as a reader and writer	2	6.2
To be a risk taker	3	9.4
To interact with others and with a variety of resources in the learning process	3	9.4

Role of student in whole language classroom	Respondents	Percent
To become an effective communicator	1	3.1
To question and manipulate	2	6.2
Other	3	9.4

Item 52(g)

What are the benefits for you as a whole language teacher?

The majority of responses given to this item are categorized and presented in Table 64. It should be noted that the total number of respondents to this item is 31, and in some instances more than one response is given.

Table 64

Benefits for Whole Language Teacher

Benefits for whole language teacher	Respondents	Percent
Flexibility	12	38.7
Use of a variety of resources	9	29.0
Greater control over the curriculum	6	19.3
Better able to accommodate the individual differences of students	6	19.3
Continual growth for teacher and students	3	9.7
Rich learning environment	2	6.4
Learner as well as teacher	1	3.2
Continual student evaluation	3	9.7
Able to tie together the many subject areas in a meaningful way	3	9.7
Satisfying experience	3	9.7

Item 52(h)

What are the benefits for the students involved in your whole language classroom?

The majority of responses given to this item are categorized and presented in Table 65. It should be noted that the total number of respondents to this item is 32, and in some instances more than one response is given.

Table 65

Benefits for Students in Whole Language Classrooms

Benefits for students in whole language classrooms	Respondents	Percent
Meaningful learning experiences	7	21.9
Language learning across the curriculum	5	15.6
Open ended activities allow students to progress at own rate	14	43.7
Self-esteem is boosted	4	12.5
Exposure to a variety of resources and teaching methods	3	9.4
Learning is fun	5	15.6
Self-motivated to learn	3	9.4
Confident and responsible learners	4	12.5
High interest materials make learning interesting and stimulating	9	28.1
Other	9	28.1

Item 52(i)

Are you receiving adequate assistance and support in advancing your understanding and knowledge of whole language?

The majority of responses given to this item are categorized and presented in Table 66. It should be noted that the total number of respondents to this item is 30, and in some instances more than one response is given.

Table 66

Receiving Adequate Support and Assistance in Advancing Knowledge of Whole Language

Receiving adequate support and assistance in advancing knowledge of whole language	Respondents	Percent
Yes	12	40.0
Yes, to a degree, but continued assistance needed	6	20.0
No	12	40.0
Total	30	100.0

Item 52(j)

What support do you see as essential in ensuring your successful development as a whole language teacher?

The majority of responses given to this item are categorized and presented in Table 67. It should be noted that the total number of respondents to this item is 29, and in some instances more than one response is given.

Table 67

Types of Support Needed

Types of support needed	Respondents	Percent
Resources	3	10.3
Expert modelling of new techniques	3	10.3
Sharing sessions with other teachers/peer support	17	58.6
Inservice/mini-courses on current topics	19	65.5
Financial	4	13.8
Administrative/school and board	8	27.6
Province wide communication	1	3.4
Current literature	8	27.6
Primary coordinator	4	13.8
Ongoing evaluation of programs	2	6.9
Skill development	6	20.7
Other	4	13.8

Table 57 shows that all respondents consider themselves to be whole language teachers. Table 58 points out the recognized importance amongst whole language teachers of having clearly stated objectives. Some 94.4 percent view this as being very important. Teachers look to a number of sources when determining the required objectives for their students. Table 59, in which it is possible to select more than one response, reveals most respondents using a combination of curriculum guides (91.9 %) and student needs (89.2 %) when making this determination. The curriculum guides are prepared and distributed by the Department of Education and include objectives which are in keeping with a whole language philosophy. The category itemized as 'other' draws attention to a list of objectives compiled for grades one to three, by the past primary coordinator with the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board. These objectives are felt to be very useful by several respondents.

In Table 60 respondents are able to make a number of selections regarding the types of strategies used by them in their whole language classroom. All 37 respondents indicate utilization of themes and learning centres and a large percentage indicate use of small group work (97.3 %) and cooperative learning groups (89.2 %). The vast majority of the teachers surveyed (97.3 %) feel quite comfortable with the status of a whole language teacher (Table 61).

Data from Table 62 indicates that the respondents to item 52 (e) view the role of the whole language teacher as being multi-dimensional. It ranges from the teacher assuming the role of instructor to the teacher assuming the role of student, where he/she becomes a risk taker along with the students. The greatest number of respondents (48.5 %)

describe the teacher's role as being that of a guide or facilitator of learning. This idea comes through strongly in the interviews with primary teachers also (Appendix G). The following are some of the comments concerning the role of the teacher included in the category labelled 'other':

- to work with parents
- to promote a positive attitude towards reading and writing
- to promote independence in students
- to offer choices

Table 63 represents how respondents view the role of students in the whole language classroom. The greatest proportion of these (43.7 %) see students in a role of active participation in their learning. Some (15.6 %) view students as decision makers; some (12.5 %) see them bringing personal experiences into play in the classroom; and for others (21.9 %), students are allowed to progress at a personal rate of development in the whole language classroom. The teachers interviewed stress many of these same points regarding the role of the student (Appendix G).

An examination of Table 64 reveals a number of benefits, as perceived by the respondents, for whole language teachers. Many (38.7 %) view the flexibility which a whole language philosophy permits to be a major benefit. Some (19.3 %) feel that they are better able to accommodate the individual differences of students, working from a whole language perspective. The variety of resources which one uses in a whole language classroom makes the learning more interesting and enjoyable and is seen by many (29.0 %) as a benefit. Also, it is felt that the whole language teacher is benefitted by the

greater control which he/she ultimately has over the curriculum (19.3 %). The provincial primary consultant and the school board primary coordinator, in interviews, reiterate many of these same benefits (Appendix G).

Corresponding to Table 64, Table 65 identifies the respondents' ideas regarding benefits for students in the whole language classroom. The benefit recognized by the greatest number of respondents (43.7 %) is that the use of open ended activities, which are common place in whole language classrooms, allow students to progress at their own rate. Other widely recognized benefits include meaningful learning experiences (21.9 %), learning is fun (15.6 %), and high interest materials, used in whole language instruction, make learning interesting and stimulating (28.1 %). Apart from those listed in the table, the category 'other' includes such benefits as:

- child-centred classroom
- students' develop an appreciation of literature
- skills taught in context
- discovery learners and explorers
- decision makers

Here again, many of these same benefits for students are recognized and identified by the primary consultant and program coordinator during their interviews (Appendix G).

Data from Table 66 shows that 60 percent of the respondents feel that they are receiving adequate support and assistance in advancing their knowledge of whole language. However, 20 percent of these specify the need for continuous assistance. A disturbing 40 percent feel that they are not receiving the necessary support and

assistance. It is pointed out in several interviews that very little has been done in relation to whole language in the past couple of years, especially since the elimination of the position of primary coordinator two years previously (Appendix G).

Respondents identify, in Table 67, several types of support which they feel to be essential in ensuring their successful development as whole language teachers. Inservice sessions and mini-courses on current topics are felt necessary by 65.5 percent of the respondents. Other frequently suggested types of support include sharing sessions with other teachers (outside of one's own school) (58.6 %), school administrative and school board support (27.6 %), and the availability of literature on current topics (27.6 %). The teachers interviewed recognize the need for these supports, also (Appendix G).

A Discussion of the Interviews with a Consultant and a Coordinator

Seven scheduled interviews were conducted, one with each of the following: (a) the provincial primary consultant with the Department of Education, (b) the language arts program coordinator with the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board, and (c) five primary teachers, grades kindergarten, one, and three, from three of the five primary/elementary schools within the Conception Bay South Integrated School District. The interviews were strictly voluntary; as a result the researcher was unable to obtain representation from each primary grade level or from each school involved in the survey.

The ensuing section is a presentation and discussion of the significant points from all interviews. Interviews with the consultant and coordinator are discussed together,

followed by a discussion of the interviews with primary teachers. Where relevant comparisons are made with responses from all interviews.

The consultant and coordinator are first asked to define their role. The provincial primary consultant describes her role as involving a couple of areas, including early childhood education (preschool) and primary education (kindergarten to grade three). In terms of primary education, she indicates involvement with curriculum development, curriculum implementation, and with the identification of resources. Primary teachers and program coordinators, she points out, work closely with her through committees in these areas. The language arts program coordinator describes her role as involving more than one area also. Her responsibilities include language arts, kindergarten to grade twelve, as well as French, music, and art. In addition to her curriculum responsibilities, she has many administrative responsibilities, as a result of her diverse role. In the area of primary education her role involves reinforcing what has already been established by the previous primary coordinator, and clarifying language instructional practices, for teachers, in carrying out the provincial curriculum guide, Experiencing Language. Also, it is her responsibility to make teachers aware of new research and to assess the needs within the school district.

The provincial primary consultant and the language arts program coordinator are next questioned about the policy of the Department of Education and the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board, respectively, regarding whole language philosophy and how this policy gets into the classroom. The provincial primary consultant points out that the provincial curriculum document for primary, Experiencing Language, articulates a

whole language philosophy. How this policy actually gets into the classroom, however, she feels to be somewhat of a contentious issue. It should, she indicates, come from the Department of Education to primary coordinators at the district level and from there to teachers within the schools. However, a breakdown in the transmittal of information from one level to another is alluded to by her. She feels that this breakdown has serious implications for teachers and students within the province's schools. According to the language arts program coordinator, the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board has no policy, as such, regarding whole language philosophy, but whole language, she points out, is included in the Board's Strategic Plan for 1993-94. Recently revised goal number eight of the plan ensures an approach to language instruction that includes the direct teaching of skills and strategies as an integral part of a whole language philosophy. This, she feels to be the closest to policy, concerning whole language philosophy, that the board has. The goals of the board are assembled in booklet form and are distributed to each teacher within the board. It is the responsibility of program coordinators and school principles to clarify these goals for teachers.

The next question asks both the consultant and the coordinator to discuss the benefits of whole language for teachers and students. Both recognize many benefits. They feel that whole language allows teachers (a) ownership over instruction, (b) flexibility to make use of personal knowledge about the way children learn, (c) development of their own programs and curriculum in meeting the needs of their students, and (d) movement away from a subject-oriented curriculum towards one that is more holistic, integrated, and in keeping with the way children learn. Benefits for students in the whole language

classroom, identified by the consultant and coordinator include, (a) a program which fits students' needs, (b) active engagement of students in their learning experiences, (c) a social context for learning which involves interactions with others and with a variety of materials, and (d) meaningful learning experiences.

Another question posed to both the consultant and coordinator addresses the degree of focus placed on supporting and implementing programs that are consistent with whole language philosophy. Differing views regarding this issue are derived from the two respondents. The provincial primary consultant is adamant in her response that there is too little focus and emphasis placed on implementing programs, province wide, that are consistent with whole language philosophy. She emphasizes, what she believes to be, inadequate inservice for teachers in the area of whole language. The language arts program coordinator, on the other hand, indicates a large degree of focus on whole language 'programs' within her board, by way of inservice sessions, grade level meetings, and through the development of curriculum guides and objective booklets. However, she points out that the majority of this information transmission occurred prior to two years ago at which time there was a full time primary coordinator and before inservice days were turned over to individual schools. At present, she indicates, support exists form the perspective that there are people at the board to talk to and the goals of the board have been written down for teachers, but not from the perspective of inservice.

The provincial primary consultant is asked to comment on the extent to which she works with primary coordinators in the interest of the primary grades and in improving the quality of instruction. The language arts program coordinator is asked to comment

on her interactions with the consultant, also. The provincial primary consultant, being relatively new to the position (January 1994), answers as would normally be the case for a person in her position. The consultant, she points out, is involved with inservicing primary coordinators when new programs are coming on stream, or when there is a change in philosophy. The consultant looks to coordinators for periodic feedback regarding the needs of teachers, programs, and schools. As well, the consultant and primary coordinators work closely through committees in developing programs for the primary grades. The language arts program coordinator reiterates many of these same points regarding her interactions with the provincial primary consultant. Despite this however, she indicates that interactions between program coordinators and the provincial primary consultant are very limited.

The interview with the provincial primary consultant seeks to determine, also, the extent to which primary coordinators are involved in provincial curriculum planning and the extent to which the consultant and coordinators work together to develop programs that can be characterized as whole language. The consultant indicates extensive involvement of coordinators in both of these areas. According to her, in the area of curriculum planning, coordinators are involved initially in the needs assessment, then in the development of a philosophy and a curriculum, and later in piloting the program in their schools. With respect to interactions between the consultant and coordinators in the development of programs characterized as whole language, she points out that primary coordinators had been involved in the development of the curriculum guide, Experiencing

Language. Also, she indicates that coordinators are involved in identifying resources that are conducive to and in keeping with whole language.

The final question posed to the provincial primary consultant concerns the degree of direct contact she has with primary teachers. She indicates that generally the primary consultant moves through the district person, who is the primary coordinator or someone filling that role. However, she points out that a line of direct communication is possible between the consultant and primary teachers when, and if, particular needs are identified.

The language arts program coordinator is questioned also, concerning the extent to which she works with primary teachers. She discusses her involvement in this area as being very limited since, as was discussed previously, her many and diverse responsibilities allow very little time for any one area. She is questioned also regarding her involvement with inservice sessions on topics pertaining to whole language philosophy. She indicates some inservice involvement, but adds that it had occurred some five or six years previously.

Finally, the language arts program coordinator is asked to discuss what, if any, she feels to be the major problem(s) in motivating teachers to adopt a whole language philosophy of education. She suggests that the past primary coordinator could best answer this question, but adds that she feels lack of understanding of whole language philosophy, amongst teachers, to be the greatest problem. On discussion of this issue with the past primary coordinator with the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board, several problems are identified (Appendix G, p.291). She feels that teachers lost confidence in their teaching when whole language was first introduced because they were teaching in

ways considered by whole language advocates, as being negative. Teachers were getting a lot of mixed messages from different speakers and from talking to one another. These mixed messages resulted in many misconceptions regarding what should and should not be taught. A major misconception developed surrounding the teaching of the grapho-phonemic language system. Teachers felt somewhat demoralized because they no longer knew what was in favor. She points out also, that with such a drastic change in philosophy from traditional teaching to whole language teaching it took teachers a long time to understand it and trust it.

A Discussion of the Interviews with Primary Teachers

During the interviews with primary teachers they are initially asked to discuss their understanding of whole language. Many similarities are noted amongst their responses. Several indicate that whole language represents a holistic approach to language learning which involves moving from the whole to the part, thus making language learning more meaningful. Many see it encompassing all areas of language (listening, speaking, reading, writing) and extending language learning across the curriculum. The various subject areas are taught as an integrated whole, where possible, rather than as separate disciplines, two teachers point out. Whole language teachers, one respondent indicates, begin with the children's needs and from there establish where they are headed. Another discusses whole language as being a philosophy of how children learn language.

Next, the primary teachers are asked to discuss their opinions regarding the role of the teacher and the role of the student in the whole language classroom. With respect to the role of the teacher respondents overwhelmingly refer to the teacher as a facilitator

or guide of learning. The teacher sets up the learning experiences, monitors student progress, and intervenes where necessary. Respondents indicate that it is the teachers responsibility to expose children to numerous and varied language experiences, by providing opportunities for listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They point out also, that the teacher in his/her role acts as model or demonstrator of the learning experiences. Opinions regarding the role of the student in the whole language classroom, include: (a) students are decision makers, because they are given choices; (b) students are active participants in their learning; (c) students are social learners, interacting with others; (d) students progress at their own rate of development; (e) students have greater control over their learning and take responsibility for it; and (f) students enjoy learning.

The primary teachers are asked to describe some of the types of activities they involve their students in. A vast array of language learning activities are discussed. Use of themes whereby the curriculum objectives are met through focus on a particular topic or unit of study of interest to the children is described. The independent subject areas are integrated within the thematic units. The teachers indicate use of learning centres and cooperative learning groups within their classroom. These, they feel, foster oral language development and independence in their students. A variety of reading activities using children's literature and children's own writing are described. These include (a) reading for skills, (b) reading for enjoyment, (c) buddy reading with an older child, (d) sustained silent reading, (e) shared reading with a peer, (f) assisted reading with a teacher, (g) home reading, and (h) group strategy or guided reading with the teacher, using "Big Books". The teachers indicate also that their students are involved in some form of

writing daily. Writing is done with the whole class, with the teacher acting as scribe and modelling the writing process. It is done by small groups or pairs of children working together, and it is done independently in journals or learning logs. In addition to these activities, several teachers identify a group sharing or circle time during which children are encouraged to express themselves orally, literature is explored, skills are taught, and the reading and writing processes are modelled.

The primary teachers are questioned as to their opinion regarding the teaching of phonics, spelling, and grammar. All respondents seem to agree that the three must be taught and can not be left to chance. They indicate though, that these skills which were once taught as fragmented parts in isolation, are now taught in the context of a whole, whether it be a whole word or a whole reading passage. Where necessary, short focused skill lessons are used to teach a particular skill, but the drill and worksheet activities of the past are no longer a part of the instruction. A concern however, is raised by the teachers regarding the teaching of skills in whole language. They feel that with the advancement of whole language, at least in the early stages, many teachers developed the misconception that phonics, spelling, and grammar no longer need to be taught. The provincial primary consultant and the language arts program coordinator voice a similar concern in their interviews.

Another question presented to the primary teachers requests that they discuss their evaluation of student growth and progress. The teachers point out that they view evaluation as an ongoing and continuous process. The most widely used methods by them, include conferencing with students, observation, and samples of students' work.

Miscue analysis, as a means of evaluation is mentioned by two teachers also. In recording evaluation information the teachers identify use of checklists, short notes from observation, anecdotal records, and tapes of individual students' oral reading.

The next question asks whether the primary teachers consider themselves to be whole language teachers. All of the teachers interviewed indicate that based upon their understanding of whole language, they do indeed consider themselves whole language teachers. They are asked, also, to comment upon the degree of comfort they feel with having this status. Everyone indicates feeling quite comfortable as whole language teachers and with the types of activities taking place within their whole language classrooms.

Finally, the primary teachers are requested to discuss the support and assistance they are receiving in the advancement of their understanding and knowledge of whole language. Most indicate that they are not receiving adequate support in this area. Their only support, they feel, comes from their school administration and from colleagues within their school. A number of necessary types of support, as perceived by the primary teachers, are identified during the interviews. These include (a) a supportive administration; (b) inservice, including a refresher each year to accommodate new teachers; (c) sharing sessions with teachers through district wide grade level meetings; (d) clear and concise reading materials on current issues; (e) university courses; and (f) a primary coordinator at the board level. Much concern is felt over the elimination of the position of primary coordinator, two years previously. Several teachers feel that prior to the elimination of this position, the necessary support and assistance were available.

The previous primary coordinator with the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board, who is now working as a primary teacher, is one of the five teachers interviewed. She indicates, in her interview, that during her six years as primary coordinator she did a great deal with primary teachers regarding whole language. According to her, teachers were involved in a number of inservice sessions, including sessions on Experiencing Language, the provincial curriculum document for primary, and the Networks language arts program, when they were first introduced to the schools. In addition to inservice sessions she indicates that teachers were involved in school based and district wide grade level meetings. Also, articles on whole language were distributed, by the coordinator to primary teachers. A whole language spelling document was developed by a group of primary teachers, headed by the primary coordinator. And finally, a list of whole langauge strategies and objectives for grades one, two, and three were compiled under one cover, by the coordinator, and was distributed to all primary teachers in the district.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the study, present the conclusions drawn from it, and make certain recommendations.

Summary and Conclusions

The main focus of this study was to ascertain the level of knowledge of primary teachers under the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board, regarding whole language philosophy and how their ideas and understanding of this philosophy translated into learning experiences for children. An examination of the relevant literature identified the historical background of whole language and revealed whole language to be solidly rooted in both theory and practice. Its key theoretical premise is that children learn to read and write through real use, just as they learned to talk. While there are no whole language programs, as such, literature suggests a number of classroom activities and procedures which can be characterized as whole language, simply because they are consistent with and reflect the philosophy. Some such procedures include use of thematic units, use of literature as a primary teaching tool, reading aloud to children, engaging children in purposeful reading and writing daily, and using observation techniques and pupil/teacher conferences as the basis for evaluation. Language learning in the student-centred, language-based, whole language classroom occurs right across the curriculum.

To examine the extent to which primary teachers within the Conception Bay South Integrated School District are knowledgeable of whole language philosophy and how their ideas and understanding of this philosophy translates into learning experiences for

children, and the extent to which these teachers are receiving adequate support and assistance in their development as whole language educators, a field survey was conducted. The survey included the following:

1. A questionnaire was distributed to the 49 primary teachers, grades kindergarten to three, within the five primary/elementary schools under the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board. The teacher questionnaire sought to determine (a) the extent to which teachers felt knowledgeable and competent in the area of whole language; (b) the extent to which professional support and assistance was offered in enhancing the development of individuals as whole language teachers; (c) the attitudes of the teachers with respect to whole language, particularly as they related to its effectiveness and appeal to teachers and students; (d) the types of activities which children were exposed to in the classroom.

2. Scheduled interviews were conducted with the provincial primary consultant with the Department of Education, the language arts program coordinator with the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board, and five primary teachers, grades kindergarten, one, and three from three of the five schools involved in the study. It was hoped that the interview sample of primary teachers would include a representative from each primary grade level and from each of the five schools involved. However, there were no willing participants from the grade two level or from two of the schools. All interviews were taped (see Appendix G for edited transcripts).

Thirty eight or 78 percent, of the questionnaires were returned to the examiner. One questionnaire was omitted from the study on the basis that only eight of the possible 52

items were responded to. The major findings from the field survey are summarized in the following section.

Of the teachers responding to the survey, the majority (70.3 %) possess a degree in primary education. It is positive to see that the majority of the teachers are teaching in the area designated by the degree which they hold, however there is some misassignment of teachers at the primary level within the Conception Bay South Integrated School District.

A significant proportion (91.9 %) of respondents indicated that they have taken university courses within the past ten years. More than one-half (58.3 %) of the respondents have completed courses in which whole language was discussed. Since whole language is a relatively new idea to this province, the likelihood of being exposed to it through university courses is greater amongst those who have taken courses in recent years.

The majority (89.2 %) of those responding to the survey are between the ages of 26 and 45 years with 62.2 percent of those being 36 years or older. More than one-half (54.1 %) of them have taught for greater than 16 years. This is reflective of "a constant aging of the teacher workforce" within Newfoundland and Labrador since the early 1970's (Press, 1990, p.31). Press also indicates that declining enrollments have resulted in reduced hiring practices and fewer opportunities for change within schools. This has negative implications for schools and staffs which are being deprived of the fresh ideas and recent qualifications young teachers bring with them.

While many of the teachers, in the survey, have taught in the area of primary for six years or more, a significant proportion (24.6 %) have taught in this area for fewer than six years. In addition, nearly one-half (45.9 %) of the respondents have taught with the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board for 10 years or less. A number of the teachers, then, are relatively new to primary teaching and to the board. In light of these findings, inservice sessions and various other methods of transmitting knowledge and information, regarding new developments and program innovations, are desirable for those teachers. These findings further underlie the need for support and assistance from program coordinators. The position of primary coordinator, had it not been eliminated two years ago, would prove highly beneficial in this area.

The item requesting information regarding membership in professional groups is responded to by only 14 of the possible 37 respondents. This leads one to conclude that the remaining 23 do not hold membership in any professional organizations. It is not surprising though that the majority of respondents who belong to organizations belong to either the Primary Special Interest Council or the Reading Special Interest Council. Both of these organizations focus on issues relating to whole language and relevant to primary teachers. In fact, one of the primary teachers indicates during the interview that some of the best inservices she attended were presented by the Primary Special Interest Council.

The entire population of teachers in the survey have class sizes not exceeding 25 pupils and one-third have fewer than 20 pupils. This seems to confirm the province's movement towards reduced class size, especially amongst the primary grades. It is also

a reflection of article 30.01 of the Provincial Collective Agreement (1991-93) between the School Boards, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Newfoundland Teachers' Association which states:

> In the interest of education, and in order to promote effective teaching and learning conditions, the School Board will endeavor to establish class sizes appropriate to the teaching situation involved within regulatory and legislative restrictions. To this end, the School Board shall establish a committee not later than October 30th in each calendar year, which will meet regularly thereafter at the call of a person designated by the School Board who shall be chairperson, and accept representations and make recommendations to the board regarding the minimum and maximum number of students appropriate for the various classroom situations. (p.30)

With the exception of one, all respondents teach in two, three, and four stream schools and practically all engage in team planning. This group planning time affords teachers opportunity to share and discuss ideas, as well as concerns. One can assume that the variety of activities and possible learning experiences which can be generated during team planning far exceeds what can be derived independently. Team teaching, on the other hand is utilized by only a small percentage (31.4 %) of the respondents. It is difficult to speculate as to why this is so.

All of the teachers have, at least, some preparation time during the teaching cycle. This is especially important for teachers operating from a whole language philosophy, since they are largely responsible for designing and developing the curriculum--something which requires unlimited amounts of time. As was pointed out by K. Goodman (1986), "Whole language can't be packaged in a kit or bound between the covers of textbooks or workbooks. It certainly can't be scripted" (p.63). Obviously a great deal of after school planning is necessary in addition to the allotted preparation time.

With respect to program and classroom organization the study reveals that the majority of primary teachers in the sample: (a) have programs that can best be characterized as a mixture of formal and informal; (b) use both flexible and fixed scheduling; (c) integrate and separate subject areas for instruction; (d) have flexible seating arrangements, which are conducive to the social and cooperative learning and to the oral language development of students; and (e) use a combination of mixed ability and interest grouping. While the majority indicate use of both mixed ability and interest grouping, however, 40 percent indicate use of mixed ability grouping only. This is somewhat distressing since, certainly some degree of interest grouping is consistent with whole language (Weaver, 1988). With respect to scheduling, totally flexible scheduling in many classrooms may be impeded by the fixed scheduling of physical education and music periods and by the infusion of the Special Needs Teacher into the classroom. It is positive though, that there is at least a degree of flexibility amongst all those responding to the survey. The program and classroom organization of the teachers in the survey is reflective, to a degree, of whole language philosophy. However, the vast majority of them seem to be somewhere in the middle between traditional teaching and whole language teaching.

Encouragingly, the study reveals a lessened reliance on the text, by teachers. All indicate that they view textbooks, including basal readers, as a framework to be used along with other resources. A large percentage (45.9 %) of respondents use literature, in their classroom, as a primary teaching tool, while the remainder use it in conjunction with a basal series. Some 82.1 percent of the respondents continue to use a basal reading

series, specifically Networks. This is not overly surprising though, since Networks is portrayed in its planning guide for teachers, as being "a child-centred language program based on well-established knowledge about child growth and development, and shaped by a comprehensive understanding of classroom practice" (McInnes, 1987, p.11), which in essence is very similar to whole language philosophy. While there is definitely a movement away from the confines of texts and formalized instruction, towards an informal whole language 'approach' which is in no way predetermined by texts or set programs, the majority of the teachers in the survey do not seem ready to completely relinquish the security of a textbook base.

Not surprisingly, all of the teachers in the sample indicate that they have both a classroom library and a school library. In whole language classrooms where quality children's literature, various other forms of print, and audio-visual materials play such a significant role, both a classroom library and a school library are essential components. According to Lamme and Ledbetter (1990), libraries are at the heart of whole language.

The study reveals that the primary teachers engage their students in numerous language development activities, encompassing all components of the language program. The oral language development of students which, according to Staab (1994), plays a major role in the whole language classroom, is emphasized by the teachers. Whole language teachers, the literature suggests, read with their students often and provide many opportunities for student reading, both independently and with others (Anderson, 1984; Weaver, 1988). The respondents read to their students daily and provide opportunities for student reading through such activities as sustained silent reading,

shared reading, buddy reading, and assisted reading with a teacher. Literature groups are not extensively used by the teachers, possibly because of the young ages of the pupils involved. It is likely that literature groups would be more widely used with older children. Many opportunities for student writing are provided also. As with reading, whole language teachers engage their students in some form of meaningful writing everyday (Weaver, 1988). More than one-half (58.3 %) of the teachers indicate doing just that, and another one-third (30.6 %) indicate doing so three to four times per week.

The various language skills, including phonics, spelling, and grammar are taught by the vast majority of respondents in the context of the whole text or through short focused skill lessons, such as were discussed by Newman and Church (1990). The teachers feel strongly that skills must be taught. They believe that it is how they teach skills, not whether they teach them, that makes their teaching whole language. Still in the context of language development, all respondents arrange field trips for their students and many (86.1 %) invite guest speakers into the classroom. While field trips and guest speakers do not, in and of themselves, constitute an improved program, they are in an whole language classroom an invaluable learning resource. They extend learning beyond the confines of the classroom to the larger community and provide a necessary link between the school and the community. The number of field trips indicated by all respondents as being fewer than five, is in all probability a direct result of the province's and individual school board's focus on loss of instructional time and their attempts to alleviate this perceived problem. All of these language development activities, utilized

by the teachers in the survey, are consistent with and reflect a whole language philosophy (Anderson, 1984; K. Goodman, 1986; Weaver, 1990).

It is clearly evident from the study that the population sample of primary teachers is moving away from traditional methods of evaluation such as paper and pencil tests, towards informal and unstructured evaluation which relies heavily on observation, teacher/pupil conferences, and samples of students' work. These are recognized by whole language advocates as being suitable methods of evaluation. K. Goodman, Y. Goodman, and Hood (1989), in the Whole Language Evaluation Book, firmly support these techniques.

Extremely important to the success of innovative teaching styles, used by teachers within their classrooms, is the encouragement and support of the school administration and the school board office. Literature sources dealing with the successful implementation of whole language stress the importance of the active support of the school district, particularly the building principal (MacDonald & Courtland, 1992; Moss, 1992). The vast majority of the teachers in the study indicate some support from the school principal and the school board. However 54.1 percent and 45.7 percent of the respondents, respectively, consider the school board somewhat supportive and school board consultants somewhat accessible as opposed to just supportive and accessible--leading one to assume that they are not as supportive and accessible as one would like. Many respondents (75.8 %) indicate that support from the district office most often takes the form of inservice sessions.

The advancement of knowledge of whole language, according to Fagan (1989), is crucial if teachers are to become competent and comfortable with the philosophy. Knowledge can be gained through teacher inservice and by individuals reading professional literature and books on the topic. A large percentage (81.8 %) of the teacher respondents indicate that they have received some inservice related to whole language. However, very few respondents (45.9 %) identify the exact topics dealt with. It is highly probable that the teachers simply can not recall the inservice topics covered. In interviews with the language arts program coordinator and a primary teacher, who for six years served as the primary coordinator with the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board, it is pointed out that prior to two years ago, much had been done in the area of whole language, through inservice sessions and through district wide grade level meetings.

All of the schools in the survey subscribe to professional journals and the vast majority of the teachers have read a number of articles and books relating to whole language. It seems that the teachers surveyed are indeed advancing their knowledge of whole language. Despite this however, in defining whole language some degree of misunderstanding is demonstrated. Many experts in the area of whole language have defined it in terms of a philosophy of language and learning (Haycock, 1989; Newman, 1985; Weaver, 1990). There are, of course, approaches which can be characterized as whole language, simply because they are consistent with the philosophy. However, whole language is not, in and of itself, an approach (Edelsky et al., 1991; Weaver, 1990). More than one-half (54.3 %) of the respondents define it as an approach, as opposed to

a philosophy. It is not surprising though that teachers would think of whole language in terms of a concrete approach to use within the classroom, as opposed to an abstract philosophy or set of ideas, since they already indicated utilization of many approaches within their classrooms, such as (a) shared and independent reading (Anderson, 1984), (b) daily meaningful writing (Weaver, 1988), and (c) informal evaluation (K. Goodman, 1986), which have the potential to fit a whole language framework.

All of the respondents indicate that they do not see whole language as being limited to the language arts, but see it as extending across all curriculum areas. This is representative of what the literature has to say on this issue (Goodman, 1986).

There was an overwhelmingly positive response to the item concerning the teachers perceptions of themselves as whole language teachers. In fact, the entire sample population consider themselves to be whole language teachers. Again, this is not overly surprising, since it has already been shown that there is a definite movement amongst the teachers, away from the formalized, text directed instruction of the past. A large percentage of them utilize procedures considered to be whole language. For instance, many practice flexible scheduling, informally arrange children, integrate subject areas for instruction, evaluate based upon observation and teacher/pupil conferences, regard the textbook as a frame to be used along with other resources, use literature extensively, and engage students in meaningful reading and writing everyday.

The study indicates that those who consider themselves to be whole language teachers recognize the importance of having clearly stated objectives. If a program, whole language or otherwise, is to be effective in meeting the needs of students, it must

be firmly based upon clear objectives. Whole language teachers, who largely design and develop their own curriculum, need to be conscious of this at all times. The various curriculum guides developed by the Department of Education stress the importance of objectives and include objectives which are in keeping with a whole language philosophy. Indeed, the vast majority of respondents (91.9 %) look to these guides in determining the objectives for their students.

The teachers use a number of strategies in their whole language classrooms which indicate a positive move from traditional methods of instruction towards a more multi-faceted approach. These include use of themes, learning centres, small group work, and cooperative learning groups. The study indicates that the teachers feel comfortable with their whole language status. One can only conclude from this, that if teachers are comfortable with the direction they are moving in with regard to teaching and student learning, they will continue in this direction.

Teachers who are working in a whole language framework recognize the changing role of both teachers and students. The teacher in the whole language classroom, assumes the role of guide or facilitator of learning, while the students' role becomes one of active participant and decision maker in the learning process. Teachers are aware of the benefits whole language can offer to children as well as to themselves. They feel that they are better able to accommodate the individual differences of students, and through use of a variety of resources and high interest materials make learning stimulating and enjoyable, working from a whole language perspective. The ideas and perceptions of the teachers regarding the role of teachers and students and the benefits for teachers and students in

whole language classrooms, closely resemble those held by whole language experts, such as K. Goodman (1986), Weaver (1990), and Edelsky et al. (1991). It is clear also, that whole language teachers recognize the importance of a strong understanding of whole language if, as teachers, they are to provide the maximum benefits for the students in their care. A disturbing 40 percent of the teachers surveyed feel that they are receiving less than adequate support and assistance in advancing their understanding and knowledge of whole language. This may be due, in part at least, to the loss of the position of primary coordinator two years previously. It is pointed out by both the past primary coordinator and the language arts program coordinator that very little has been done in this area during the past two years. The teachers feel that several support services are necessary if they are to be successful in their development as whole language teachers. More specifically they recognize a need for inservice sessions and mini-courses on current topics, sharing sessions with teachers outside of their own school and school district, and available literature on relevant and current issues. Literature suggests that all of the supports mentioned are necessary for the development of knowledgeable and well informed whole language teachers (Fagan, 1989).

Primary education in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has changed quite extensively over the past few years. These changes have required primary teachers to adopt a new philosophy of education. The provincial primary consultant describes the philosophy of the primary language program, articulated in Experiencing Language: A Primary Language Curriculum Guide (1991), as being "governed by a whole language philosophy which advocates that language learning is child-centred, not teacher

dominated" (p.14). She expresses concern that this whole language philosophy has not been effectively promoted and inserviced province wide, and as a result, she believes, a number of different versions of the philosophy are operating throughout the province. This, she feels, may lead to some less than positive experiences for children.

This field study reveals, however, that within the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board, which includes a whole language philosophy in its educational goals, efforts have been made to educate teachers regarding whole language philosophy. Both the language arts program coordinator and the previous primary coordinator identify a number of whole language activities which were undertaken to assist teachers in becoming knowledgeable of the topic. However, they point out that much of this information sharing occurred prior to two years ago.

The teacher questionnaire responses and the interviews with primary teachers suggest that the teachers perceive themselves as whole language teachers and that they are working within a whole language framework, or are heading in that direction. The teachers seem to be comfortable with the direction primary education is moving in. They recognize whole language as benefitting both themselves and their students. The responses reveal, also, that teachers see a need for continuous support and assistance if they are to be successful in implementing programs within the classroom, which reflect a whole language philosophy.

Recommendations

Based upon the findings of this study the following recommendations are made:

1. It is recommended that there be increased emphasis on whole language philosophy in the undergraduate degree program for primary teachers at Memorial University of Newfoundland.
2. It is recommended that school board primary/language arts coordinators be effectively inserviced when new programs are coming on stream.
3. It is recommended that school boards continue to provide inservice training in the area of whole language for primary teachers and their principals.
4. It is recommended that inservice be provided, and possibly repeated, on a yearly basis to accommodate new teachers.
5. It is recommended that sharing sessions through district wide grade level meetings be provided for primary teachers.
6. It is recommended that the position of primary coordinator be reinstated in the Conception Bay South Integrated School District.
7. It is recommended that further research be undertaken in the area of whole language, ideally on a province wide scale. Such a study would include a much larger teacher sample and would allow for random sampling. Also, it would include small schools and multi-grade classrooms. The study might investigate whole language throughout the entire primary area or at one particular grade level.
8. It is recommended that further research be undertaken to study outcomes of students who have gone through the school system since the introduction of whole language.

Some changes should be made to the questionnaire if further research is to be undertaken using this data collection instrument.

9. It is recommended that the items be arranged according to their discussion in Chapter IV.
10. It is recommended that items 13 and 40 of the questionnaire be reworded in an effort to clarify them for respondents. Item 13 should state 'Including yourself, how many teachers are teaching at your grade level?' and item 40 should state 'What kind of support is offered you?'.

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Appendix A

Letters to School Boards

Doreen Dearing
c/o Ms. J. Dymond
Faculty of Education
G.A. Hickman Building
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, Newfoundland A1B 3X8

Dear Mr. Lee:

I am a graduate student in the Department of Education at Memorial University. I am working under the supervision of Professor Jean Dymond. As part my Master's degree program in education, I am hoping to undertake a survey of the 49 primary teachers, grades kindergarten to three, under the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board, with respect to whole language as it relates to teaching and learning. The study deals with (a) the extent to which teachers feel knowledgeable about and competent with whole language, (b) the amount of support and assistance provided to teachers in their development as whole language educators, and (c) the types of activities and procedures or learning experiences in which children are involved, in the primary classroom.

Data for this study will be collected through a questionnaire. To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire items a pretest of the questionnaire must be carried out. At this time I would like to ask for your permission to administer the pretest of the attached questionnaire to 20 teachers within your school district.

Participation in the pretest of the questionnaire is voluntary. Subjects may withdraw without prejudice at any time and may refrain from answering any questions they prefer to omit. All information gathered in the pretest is strictly confidential. The results will be reported on a group basis only and at no time will an individual teacher or school be identified. The results of my research will be made available to the subjects and the board upon request. This study has received the approval of the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee.

If at any time you wish to speak with a resource person not associated with the study, please contact Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean, Research and Development, Memorial University.

I am hoping to administer the pretest of the questionnaire during the spring of 1994. As time is a crucial factor, a response to my request as soon as possible would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Yours sincerely,

Doreen Dearing

Doreen Dearing
c/o Ms. J. Dymond
Faculty of Education
G.A. Hickman Building
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, Newfoundland A1B 3X8

Dear Mr. Dawe:

I am a graduate student in the Department of Education at Memorial University. I am working under the supervision of Professor Jean Dymond. As part of my Master's degree program in education, I am hoping to undertake a survey of the 49 primary teachers, grades kindergarten to three, under the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board, with respect to whole language as it relates to teaching and learning. The study deals with (a) the extent to which teachers feel knowledgeable about and competent with whole language, (b) the amount of support and assistance provided to teachers in their development as whole language educators, and (c) the types of activities and procedures or learning experiences in which children are involved, in the primary classroom.

At this time I would like to ask for your permission and support to administer the attached questionnaire within your school district. As well I would like to conduct a tape recorded interview with approximately 10 teachers involved in the survey.

Participation in the questionnaire and interview is voluntary. Subjects may withdraw from this study without prejudice at any time and may refrain from answering any questions they prefer to omit. All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential. The results will be reported on a group basis only and at no time will an individual teacher or school be identified. The results of my research will be made available to the subjects and the board upon request. This study has received the approval of the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee.

If at any time you wish to speak with a resource person not associated with the study, please contact Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean, Research and Development, Memorial University.

I am hoping to administer the questionnaire and carry out the interviews during the spring of 1994. As time is a crucial factor, a response to my request as soon as possible would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Yours sincerely,

Doreen Dearing

Appendix B

Letters to Principals

Doreen Dearing
c/o Ms. J. Dymond
Faculty of Education
G.A. Hickman Building
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, Newfoundland A1B 3X8

Dear _____:

I am a graduate student in the Department of Education at Memorial University. I am working under the supervision of Professor Jean Dymond. As part my Master's degree program in education, I am undertaking a survey of the 49 primary teachers, grades kindergarten to three, under the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board, with respect to whole language as it relates to teaching and learning. The study deals with (a) the extent to which teachers feel knowledgeable about and competent with whole language, (b) the amount of support and assistance provided to teachers in their development as whole language educators, and (c) the types of activities and procedures or learning experiences in which children are involved, in the primary classroom.

Data for this study is being collected through a questionnaire. To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire items a pretest of the questionnaire must be carried out. The pretest will require approximately 30 minutes to complete. The consent of the superintendent of the Avalon Consolidated School Board has been secured to proceed with this pretest in your school. As well, this study has received the approval of the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee.

Participation in the pretest of the questionnaire is voluntary and subjects may withdraw without prejudice at any time or may refrain from answering any questions they prefer to omit. All information gathered in the pretest is strictly confidential. The results will be reported on a group basis only and at no time will an individual teacher or school be identified. The results of my research will be made available to you upon request.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me at home, 738-0269, after 5:30 pm. If at any time you wish to speak with a resource person not associated with the study, please contact Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean, Research and Development, Memorial University.

I would be grateful if you would distribute an envelope containing a copy of the attached questionnaire to each of the primary teachers in your school. The teachers are requested to complete the questionnaire and return it to you in a sealed envelope, before _____, at which time I will drop by your school to collect them. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Doreen Dearing

Doreen Dearing
c/o Ms. J. Dymond
Faculty of Education
G.A. Hickman Building
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, Newfoundland A1B 3X8

Dear _____:

I am a graduate student in the Department of Education at Memorial University. I am working under the supervision of Professor Jean Dymond. As part of my Master's degree program in education, I am undertaking a survey of the 49 primary teachers, grades kindergarten to three, under the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board, with respect to whole language as it relates to teaching and learning. The study deals with (a) the extent to which teachers feel knowledgeable about and competent with whole language, (b) the amount of support and assistance provided to teachers in their development as whole language educators, and (c) the types of activities and procedures or learning experiences in which children are involved, in the primary classroom.

The survey involves questionnaires and tape recorded interviews, each of which will require approximately 30 minutes to complete. Participation in both is voluntary and subjects may withdraw from this study without prejudice at any time or may refrain from answering any questions they prefer to omit. All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential. The results will be reported on a group basis only and at no time will an individual teacher or school be identified. The results of my research will be made available to you upon request.

This study has received the consent of the superintendent of the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board and the approval of the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me at home, 738-0269, after 5:30 pm. If at any time you wish to speak with a resource person not associated with the study, please contact Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean, Research and Development, Memorial University.

I would be grateful if you would distribute an envelope containing a copy of the attached questionnaire to each of the primary teachers in your school. The teachers are requested to complete the questionnaire and return it to you in a sealed envelope, before Thursday, April 28, 1994 at which time I will drop by your school to collect them. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Doreen Dearing

Appendix C

Letters to Primary Teachers

Doreen Dearing
c/o Ms. J. Dymond
Faculty of Education
G.A. Hickman Building
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, Newfoundland A1B 3X8

Dear fellow teacher,

I am a graduate student in the Department of Education at Memorial University. I am working under the supervision of Professor Jean Dymond. As part my Master's degree program in education, I am undertaking a survey of the 49 primary teachers, grades kindergarten to three, under the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board, with respect to whole language as it relates to teaching and learning. The study deals with (a) the extent to which teachers, feel knowledgeable about and competent with whole language, (b) the amount of support and assistance provided to teachers in their development as whole language educators, and (c) the types of activities and procedures or learning experiences in which children are involved, in the primary classroom.

Data for this study is being collected through a questionnaire. To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire items a pretest of the questionnaire must be carried out. I would be grateful if you would participate in this pretest activity by completing the attached questionnaire. It will require approximately 30 minutes to complete. The consent of the superintendent of the Avalon Consolidated School Board has been secured to proceed with this pretest in your school. As well, this study has received the approval of the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee.

Participation in the pretest of the questionnaire is voluntary and you may withdraw without prejudice at any time or may refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit. All information gathered in the pretest is strictly confidential. The results will be reported on a group basis only and at no time will an individual teacher or school be identified. The results of my research will be made available to you upon request.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me at home, 738-0269, after 5:30 pm. If at any time you wish to speak with a resource person not associated with the study, please contact Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean, Research and Development, Memorial University.

Upon completion of the questionnaire please place it in the envelope provided; seal the envelope and pass it along to your principal.This should be done on or before _____, at which time I will drop by your school to pick it up. Thank you for your time and effort in completing this questionnaire.

Yours sincerely,

Doreen Dearing

Doreen Dearing
c/o Ms. J. Dymond
Faculty of Education
G.A. Hickman Building
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, Newfoundland A1B 3X8

Dear fellow teacher,

I am a graduate student in the Department of Education at Memorial University. I am working under the supervision of Professor Jean Dymond. As part of my Master's degree program in education, I am undertaking a survey of the 49 primary teachers, grades kindergarten to three, under the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board, with respect to whole language as it relates to teaching and learning. The study deals with (a) the extent to which you, the teacher, feel knowledgeable about and competent with whole language, (b) the amount of support and assistance provided to you in your development as a whole language educator, and (c) the types of activities and procedures or learning experiences in which children are involved, in your classroom.

I would be grateful if you would complete the attached questionnaire. It will require approximately 30 minutes to complete. In addition to the questionnaire I wish to conduct a tape recorded interview with primary teachers. The interview will involve questions pertaining to whole language teaching and learning. An additional 30 minutes will be required should you agree to an interview.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw without prejudice at any time or may refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit. All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential. The results will be reported on a group basis only and at no time will an individual teacher or school be identified. The results of my research will be made available to you upon request.

This study has received the consent of the superintendent of the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board and the approval of the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me at home, 738-0269, after 5:30 pm. If at any time you wish to speak with a resource person not associated with the study, please contact Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean, Research and Development, Memorial University.

Upon completion of the questionnaire please place it in the envelope provided; seal the envelope and pass it along to your principal. This should be done on or before Thursday, April 28, 1994 at which time I will drop by your school to pick it up. Thank you for your time and effort in completing this questionnaire.

If you are willing to grant a tape recorded interview, upon request, please complete and return, along with your questionnaire, the bottom portion of this sheet. Please note that the tape will be edited by the researcher and erased after the data has been compiled. When I have received your consent I will contact you to arrange a convenient interview time.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Yours sincerely,

Doreen Dearing

I _____ (primary teacher) hereby consent to participate in this study by granting a tape recorded interview to Doreen Dearing. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw my permission at any time. All information is strictly confidential and no individual will be identified.

_____ _____

Date Teacher's Signature

_____

Name of School

_____

School Telephone Number

Appendix D

Questionnaires

PRETEST QUESTIONNAIRE

As you complete this questionnaire please make note of (a) any questions which are ambiguous, (b) any additional questions you feel should be included, and (c) any points you feel could lead to improving this questionnaire. Notes can be written alongside individual questions or in the space provided at the end of the questionnaire.

Please answer the following questions by circling a number at the right.

1. What are your academic qualifications?

B.A. (Ed.) Primary	1
B.A. (Ed.) Elementary	2
B.Ed. Primary	3
B.Ed. Elementary	4
Other, please specify _____	

2. Have you completed university courses in which whole language has been discussed?

Yes	1
No	2

If yes, please specify how many. _____

3. When did you last enroll for a university course?

Within the past year	1
1-5 years ago	2
6-10 years ago	3
11-15 years ago	4
16-20 years ago	5

4. To what age group do you belong?

25 years and under	1
26-35 years	2
36-45 years	3
46-55 years	4
Over 55 years	5

5. For how many years have you taught, including this present year?

1 year or less	1
2-5 years	2
6-10 years	3
11-15 years	4
16-20 years	5
More than 20 years	6

6. For how many years have you taught primary?

1 year or less	1
2-5 years	2
6-10 years	3
11-15 years	4
16-20 years	5
More than 20 years	6

7. How many years have you taught with the Avalon Consolidated School Board?

_____

8. To which of the following professional groups do you belong?

Primary Special Interest Council	1
Elementary Special Interest Council	2
Reading Special Interest Council	3
Special Education Interest Council	4
Other, please specify _____	

9. How many children are in your primary class?

Fewer than 20	1
20-25	2
26-30	3
31-35	4
More than 35, please specify _____	5

10. Which primary grade(s) do you teach?

K	1
I	2
II	3
III	4
Multi-grade, please specify grades _____	5

11. Which of the following best describes your program?

Informal program	1
Formal program	2
Mixture of formal and informal	3

12. What type of scheduling is used in your classroom?

Flexible	1
Fixed	2

13. How many other teachers are there teaching the same grade as you?

None	1
One	2
Two	3
Three	4
Four	5
More than four	6

14. If there are other teachers teaching the same grade with you, do you do:

(a) Team planning?

Yes	1
No	2

(b) Team teaching?

Yes	1
No	2

15. Which best describes the seating arrangement of your classroom?

Rows	1
Semicircle or circle	2
Small groups	3
Other, please specify _____	

16. How often are your children in informal arrangements such as sitting or lying on the floor?

Always	1
Frequently	2
Occasionally	3
Never	4

17. Do you have a classroom library?

Yes	1
No	2

If yes, approximately how many trade books and magazines does it contain?

50 or less	1
51-100	2
101-150	3
151-200	4
More than 200	5

18. Is there a library in your school?

Yes	1
No	2

If yes, how useful is the library when you are looking for whole language materials (i.e. trade books, magazines, audio-visual materials) ?

Very useful	1
Somewhat useful	2
Of limited use	3
Not useful at all	4

19. Do you arrange field trips for your class?

Yes	1
No	2

If yes, approximately how many per year?

Fewer than 5	1
More than 5	2

20. How often do guest speakers come into your classroom?

At least once a week	1
Once a month	2
Once every term	3
Not at all	4

21. How much preparation time do you have during the regular teaching day?

None	1
Approximately 1 hour per week	2
Approximately 2 hours per week	3
More than 2 hours per week	4

22. How do you evaluate the progress of the children in your class? (You may select more than one item.)

Standardized tests	1
Teacher made tests	2
Teacher observation	3
Teacher/pupil conferences	4
Other, please specify _____	

23. How do you record the progress of the children in your class? (You may select more than one item.)

Daily record book	1
Weekly records	2
Frequent short notes from observations	3
Portfolio of children's work	4
Other, please specify _____	

24. How is the textbook regarded in your classroom?

As a major source	1
As a framework to be used along with other resources	2

25. Do you use a basal reading series?

Yes	1
No	2

26. If yes:

(a) Which series do you use?

Networks	1
Other, please specify _____	

(b) How do you use it?

As a major source	1
As a framework to be used along with other resources	2

27. In your teaching, do you integrate subject areas (for example, math and science) or are they totally separate areas of instruction?

Integrate	1
Separate	2

28. How is literature used in your classroom?

As a primary teaching tool	1
As a teaching tool in conjunction with a basal reading series	2
As an extra activity when other work is complete	3

29. How is the oral language of your students promoted and developed within your classroom? (You may select more than one item.)

Author's chair	1
Book discussions	2
Questioning techniques	3
Oral reports	4
Class presentations	5
Cooperative learning groups	6
Other, please specify _____	

30. How do you teach phonics?

Not at all	1
As fragmented skills in isolation	2
In the context of a whole text	3

31. How do you teach spelling and grammar?

Not at all	1
As fragmented skills in isolation	2
In the context of a whole text	3

32. How often do you read to your students?

Once daily	1
Twice daily	2
Three times daily	3
More than three times daily	4

33. How is student reading accomplished in your classroom? (You may select more than one item.)

Sustained silent reading	1
Shared reading (with a friend)	2
Assisted reading (with a teacher)	3
Literature groups	4
Other, please specify _____	

34. How often are your students engaged in sustained silent reading or buddy reading?

Daily	1
2-3 times per week	2
Weekly	3

35. How often are your students engaged in some form of meaningful writing?

1-2 times per week	1
3-4 times per week	2
Daily	3

36. What type of grouping do you do in your classroom?

Ability grouping	1
Interest grouping	2
Other, please specify _____	

37. Does the principal at your school show an active interest in and support for the programs and/or approaches utilized in your classroom?

Yes	1
No	2

38. Does your school board office offer any help/support which directly affects your work in the classroom?

Yes	1
No	2

If yes, what kind of support is offered you? (You may select more than one item.)

Inservice sessions	1
District collections of materials	2
Help with development of themes	3
Technical help (i.e. computers)	4
Bibliographies	5
Other, please specify _____	

39. Are the school board consultants easily accessible when you need them?

Yes	1
No	2

40. Have you received any workshops or inservice sessions regarding "whole language"?

Yes	1
No	2

If you have had inservice, please specify the exact topics dealt with.

_____

_____

41. Does your school subscribe to any professional journals?

Yes	1
No	2

42. How often do you read professional literature?

Never	1
Weekly	2
Monthly	3

43. From where do you obtain professional literature?

Subscribe to personally	1
School library	2
Public libraries	3
Queen Elizabeth II Library (MUN)	4

44. How many articles about whole language have you read?

None	1
1-3	2
4-7	3
8-10	4
More than 10	5

45. How many books about whole language have you read?

None	1
One	2
More than one	3

46. How would you define whole language?

As an approach	1
As a practice	2
As a perspective on learning	3
As a belief system, or a philosophy	4

47. Is whole language limited to the language arts?

Yes	1
No	2

48. Can whole language extend across all curriculum areas?

Yes	1
No	2

49. Do you consider yourself to be a whole language teacher?

Yes	1
No	2

50. If yes:

(a) How important do you feel it is to have clearly stated objectives for the learning experiences you provide?

Very important	1
Somewhat important	2
Not Important	3

(b) Where do you obtain your objectives? (You may select more than one item.)

Textbooks	1
Curriculum guides	2
Student needs	3
Other, please specify _____	

(c) Indicate whether or not the following teaching strategies are used by you in your whole language classroom. (You may select more than one item.)

Themes	1
Learning Centres	2
Team Teaching	3
Small Group Work	4
Cooperative Learning Groups	5

(d) How comfortable are you with your status as a whole language teacher?

Very comfortable	1
Somewhat comfortable	2
Somewhat uncomfortable	3
Very uncomfortable	4

(e) What is your role as a whole language teacher?

(f) What is the students' role in your whole language classroom?

(g) What are the benefits for you as a whole language teacher?

(h) What are the benefits for the students involved in your whole language classroom?

(i) Are you receiving adequate assistance and support in advancing your understanding and knowledge of whole language?

(j) What support do you see as essential in ensuring your successful development as a whole language teacher?

Ambiguities, concerns and suggestions.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions by circling one number at the right. Where indicated, you may circle more than one number.

1. What are your academic qualifications?

B.A.	1
B.A. (Ed.) Primary	2
B.A. (Ed.) Elementary	3
B.Ed. Primary	4
B.Ed. Elementary	5
M. Ed.	6
Other, please specify _____	

2. Have you completed university courses in which whole language has been discussed?

Yes	1
No	2

If yes, please specify how many. _____

3. When did you last enroll for a university course?

Within the past year	1
1-5 years ago	2
6-10 years ago	3
11-15 years ago	4
16-20 years ago	5

4. To what age group do you belong?

25 years and under	1
26-35 years	2
36-45 years	3
46-55 years	4
Over 55 years	5

5. For how many years have you taught, including this present year?

1 year or less	1
2-5 years	2
6-10 years	3
11-15 years	4
16-20 years	5
More than 20 years	6

6. For how many years have you taught primary?

1 year or less	1
2-5 years	2
6-10 years	3
11-15 years	4
16-20 years	5
More than 20 years	6

7. How many years have you taught with the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board? _____

8. To which of the following professional groups do you belong? (You may select more than one item.)

Primary Special Interest Council	1
Elementary Special Interest Council	2
Reading Special Interest Council	3
Special Education Interest Council	4
Other, please specify _____	

9. How many children are in your primary class?

Fewer than 20	1
20-25	2
26-30	3
31-35	4
More than 35, please specify _____	5

10. Which primary grade(s) do you teach?

K	1
I	2
II	3
III	4
Multi-grade, please specify grades _____	5

11. Which of the following best describes your program?

Informal program	1
Formal program	2
Mixture of formal and informal	3

12. What type of scheduling is most often used in your classroom?

Flexible	1
Fixed	2
Mixture of flexible and fixed	3

13. How many other teachers are there teaching the same grade as you?

None	1
One	2
Two	3
Three	4
Four	5
More than four	6

14. If there are other teachers teaching the same grade with you, do you do:

(a) Team planning?

Yes	1
No	2

(b) Team teaching?

Yes	1
No	2

15. Which best describes the seating arrangement of your classroom?

Rows	1
Semicircle, circle, or square	2
Small groups	3
Other, please specify _____	

16. How often are your children in informal arrangements such as sitting or lying on the floor?

Always	1
Frequently	2
Occasionally	3
Never	4

17. Do you have a classroom library?

Yes	1
No	2

If yes, approximately how many trade books and magazines does it contain?

50 or less	1
51-100	2
101-150	3
151-200	4
More than 200	5

18. Is there a library in your school?

Yes	1
No	2

If yes, how useful is the library when you are looking for whole language materials (i.e. trade books, magazines, audio-visual materials) ?

Very useful	1
Somewhat useful	2
Of limited use	3
Not useful at all	4

19. Do you arrange field trips for your class?

Yes	1
No	2

If yes, approximately how many per year?

5 or fewer	1
More than 5	2

20. Approximately how often do guest speakers come into your classroom?

Once a week	1
Once a month	2
Once every two months	3
Once every term	4
Not at all	5

21. Approximately how much preparation time do you have during the regular teaching week?

None	1
1 hour per week	2
1.5 hours per week	3
2 hours per week	4
More than 2 hours per week	5

22. How do you evaluate the progress of the children in your class? (You may select more than one item.)

Standardized tests	1
Teacher made tests	2
Teacher observation	3
Teacher/pupil conferences	4
Student projects and reports	5
Student journals or learning logs	6
Portfolio of student's work	7
Other, please specify _____	

23. How do you record the progress of the children in your class? (You may select more than one item.)

Checklists	1
Anecdotal records	2
Running records	3
Daily record book	4
Weekly records	5
Frequent short notes from observations	6
Portfolio of student's work	7
Other, please specify _____	

Kindergarten teachers omit questions 24, 25, and 26.

24. How is the textbook regarded in your classroom?

As a major source	1
As a framework to be used along with other resources	2

25. Do you use a basal reading series?

Yes	1
No	2

26. If yes:

(a) Which series do you use?

Networks	1
Other, please specify _____	

(b) How do you use it?

As a major source	1
As a framework to be used along with other resources	2

27. In your teaching, do you integrate subject areas (for example, math and science) or are they totally separate areas of instruction?

Integrate	1
Separate	2
Integrate and separate	3

28. How is literature used in your classroom?

As a primary teaching tool	1
As a teaching tool in conjunction with a basal reading series	2
As an extra activity when other work is complete	3

29. How is the oral language of your students promoted and developed within your classroom? (You may select more than one item.)

Shared reading	1
Sharing time	2
Author's chair	3
Book discussions	4
Questioning techniques	5
Class presentations	6
Cooperative learning groups	7
Other, please specify _____	

30. How do you teach phonics? (You may select more than one item.)

Not at all	1
As fragmented skills in isolation	2
In the context of a whole text	3
Short focused lessons	4

31. How do you teach spelling and grammar? (You may select more than one item.)

Not at all	1
As fragmented skills in isolation	2
In the context of a whole text	3
Short focused lessons	4

32. Approximately how often do you read with your students?

Once daily	1
Twice daily	2
Three times daily	3
More than three times daily	4

33. How is student reading accomplished in your classroom? (You may select more than one item.)

Sustained silent reading	1
Shared reading (with a peer)	2
Buddy reading	3
Assisted reading (with a teacher)	4
Literature groups	5
Home reading program	6
Other, please specify _____	

34. How often are your students engaged in sustained silent reading?

Daily	1
2-3 times per week	2
Weekly	3
Not at all	4

35. How often are your students engaged in buddy reading?

Daily	1
2-3 times per week	2
Weekly	3
Not at all	4

36. How often are your students engaged in shared reading with a peer?

Daily	1
2-3 times per week	2
Weekly	3
Not at all	4

37. How often are your students engaged in some form of meaningful writing?

1-2 times per week	1
3-4 times per week	2
Daily	3

38. What type of grouping do you do in your classroom?

Ability grouping	1
Mixed ability grouping	2
Interest grouping	3
Sometimes mixed ability and sometimes interest grouping	4
Other, please specify _____	

39. Does the principal at your school show an active interest in and support for the programs and/or approaches utilized in your classroom?

Yes	1
Somewhat	2
No	3

40. Does your school board office offer any help/support which directly affects your work in the classroom?

Yes	1
Somewhat	2
No	3

If yes, what kind of support is offered you? (You may select more than one item.)

Inservice sessions	1
District collections of materials	2
Help with development of themes	3
Technical help (i.e. computers)	4
Bibliographies	5
Other, please specify _____	

41. Are the school board consultants easily accessible when you need them?

Yes	1
Somewhat	2
No	3

42. Have you received any workshops or inservice sessions regarding "whole language"?

Yes	1
No	2

If you have had inservice, please specify the exact topics dealt with.

_____

_____

43. Does your school subscribe to any professional journals?

Yes	1
No	2

44. Approximately how often do you read professional literature?

Never	1
Weekly	2
Monthly	3

45. From where do you obtain professional literature? (You may select more than one item.)

Subscribe to personally	1
School library	2
Public libraries	3
Queen Elizabeth II Library (MUN)	4

46. How many articles about whole language have you read?

None	1
1-3	2
4-7	3
8-10	4
More than 10	5

47. How many books about whole language have you read?

None	1
One	2
More than one	3

48. How would you define whole language?

As an approach	1
As a practice	2
As a philosophy	3

49. Is whole language limited to the language arts?

Yes	1
No	2

50. Can whole language extend across all curriculum areas?

Yes	1
No	2

51. Do you consider yourself to be a whole language teacher?

Yes	1
No	2

52. If yes:

(a) How important do you feel it is to have clearly stated objectives for the learning experiences you provide?

Very important	1
Somewhat important	2
Not Important	3

(b) Where do you obtain your objectives? (You may select more than one item.)

Textbooks	1
Curriculum guides	2
Student needs	3
Professional literature	4
Other, please specify _____ _____	

(c) Indicate whether or not the following teaching strategies are used by you in your whole language classroom. (You may select more than one item.)

Themes	1
Learning Centres	2
Team Teaching	3
Small Group Work	4
Cooperative Learning Groups	5

(d) How comfortable are you with your status as a whole language teacher?

Very comfortable	1
Comfortable	2
Uncomfortable	3
Very uncomfortable	4

(e) What is your role as a whole language teacher?

(f) What is the students' role in your whole language classroom?

(g) What are the benefits for you as a whole language teacher?

(h) What are the benefits for the students involved in your whole language classroom?

(i) Are you receiving adequate assistance and support in advancing your understanding and knowledge of whole language?

(j) What support do you see as essential in ensuring your successful development as a whole language teacher?

Comments and/or concerns.

Appendix E

Letter to Primary Consultant and Program Coordinator

Doreen Dearing
c/o Ms. J. Dymond
Faculty of Education
G.A. Hickman Building
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, Newfoundland A1B 3X8

Dear _____:

I am a graduate student in the Department of Education at Memorial University. I am working under the supervision of Professor Jean Dymond. As part of my Master's degree program in education, I am undertaking a survey of the 49 primary teachers, grades kindergarten to three, under the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board, with respect to whole language as it relates to teaching and learning. The study deals with (a) the extent to which teachers feel knowledgeable about and competent with whole language, (b) the amount of support and assistance provided to teachers in their development as whole language educators, and (c) the types of activities and procedures or learning experiences in which children are involved, in the primary classroom.

I would very much like to receive the views of primary consultants both at the school board and the Department of Education level regarding this topic. I would greatly appreciate it if you would grant me a tape-recorded interview at your convenience. It will require approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw without prejudice at any time or may refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit. All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential and at no time will you be identified. Tapes will be edited by the researcher and erased after the data has been compiled. The results of my research will be made available to you upon request. This study has received the approval of the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me at home, 738-0269, after 5:30 pm. If at any time you wish to speak with a resource person not associated with the study, please contact Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean, Research and Development, Memorial University.

If you are willing to grant a tape recorded interview, please complete and return the attached consent form to me. When I have received your consent I will contact you to arrange a convenient interview time. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Yours sincerely,

Doreen Dearing

_____(primary consultant/coordinator) hereby consent to participate in this study by granting a tape recorded interview to Doreen Dearing. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw my permission at any time. All information is strictly confidential and no individual will be identified.

_____ _____

Date Primary Consultant's/Coordinator's Signature

_____

Telephone Number

Appendix F

Interview Schedules for Consultant, Coordinator, and Primary Teachers

Interview Schedule for Provincial Primary Consultant

1. How would you define your role as a provincial primary consultant with the Department of Education?

2. Does the Department of Education have a policy regarding whole language philosophy? If so, what is this policy?

3. How does this policy get into the classroom?

4. (a) In your opinion, are there benefits of whole language for teachers? If so, what are they?

   (b) What do you see as being the benefits for children in the whole language classroom?

5. How much focus is placed on supporting and implementing programs that are consistent with whole language philosophy?

6. (a) To what extent do you work with primary coordinators in the interest of the primary grades and in improving the quality of instruction?

   (b) Are the primary coordinators given opportunities to provide input into provincial curriculum planning for the primary grades?

7. To what extent do you work with primary coordinators towards developing programs that can be characterized as whole language?

8. To what extent do you have direct contact with teachers in primary classrooms?

Interview Schedule for Program Coordinator

1. How would you define your role as a program coordinator with the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board?

2. Does the School Board have a policy regarding whole language philosophy? If so, what is this policy?

3. How does this policy get into the classroom?

4. (a) In your opinion, are there benefits of whole language for teachers? If so, what are they?

   (b) What do you see as being the benefits for children in the whole language classroom?

5. How much focus is placed on supporting and implementing programs that are consistent with whole language philosophy?

6. To what extent do you work with primary teachers in the interest of the primary grades and in improving the quality of instruction?

7. To what extent do you work with the provincial primary consultant?

8. Are you involved with any in-service sessions with respect to whole language philosophy?

9. What do you consider to be the major problem(s), if any, in motivating teachers to adopt the whole language philosophy of education?

Interview Schedule for Primary Teachers

1. What is your understanding of whole language?
2. (a) In your opinion, what is the role of the teacher in the whole language classroom?

   (b) What is the role of the student?
3. Can you describe some of the types of activities your students are involved in?
4. What is your opinion regarding the teaching of phonics, spelling, and grammar?
5. How do you evaluate student growth and progress?
6. (a) Do you consider yourself to be a whole language teacher?

   (b) If so, how comfortable are you with this status?
7. (a) In your opinion, are you receiving adequate support and assistance in advancing your understanding and knowledge of whole language?

   (b) If yes, what types of support are you receiving and from where is this support coming?

   (c) What types of support do you see as essential in ensuring your successful development as a whole language teacher?

Appendix G

Edited Transcripts of Interviews with Consultant, Coordinator, and Primary Teachers

Edited Transcript of Interview Conducted with the Provincial Primary Consultant Department of Education Newfoundland and Labrador St. John's, Newfoundland

Question 1

How would you define your role as a primary consultant with the Department of Education?

Response

As it stands right now my role as a provincial primary consultant involves a couple of different areas, early childhood being one of them. In the area of early childhood I am responsible for looking at programs; but then other things would go to social services. We have a link to social services through various committees that I would be involved in, such as the Legislative Review Committee which I am a member of. Social services has that committee in place to look at legislation for early childhood programs and school facilities and so on. Beyond that then my role moves into kindergarten and grades one to three. I'll talk about my role in terms of these primary grades, given that my role in early childhood is kind of different and because of the link with social services. In terms of the primary grades I am involved with developing curriculum. Of course that would be done by bringing in people from the field--teachers, program coordinators, and so on. We would work together to develop programs. I have a role, as well, in terms of implementation, but that side of things would be minor in terms of my role here at the Department of Education. Then in terms of identifying resources for the primary grades,

there is a role for me to play as well. Again I would work through a committee. I would bring in a committee to help me look at resources. So there wouldn't be just one person looking at resources or just one person developing curriculum, but rather I would have a group of teachers or program coordinators from the field helping me to do it. Right now I'm involved in work with the Royal Commission and one of the terms of reference we are grappling with is the full-day kindergarten. I have a working group together for that purpose and our first step in this process is to look at what's available in terms of curriculum programs across the country.

Question 2

Does the Department of Education have a policy regarding whole language philosophy? If so, what is this policy?

Response

In terms of whole language I feel that our curriculum document Experiencing Language articulates a whole language philosophy. Right now Dr. Ed. Jones is working on a framework for language arts for grades kindergarten to three and he too is using the philosophy which is articulated in Experiencing Language to develop targets for language arts. The primary language program, described in Experiencing Language, values the use of holistic strategies which are concerned with systems of learning, such as using quality literature for reading instruction and the use of children's own language for reading and writing activities. It's governed by a whole language philosophy which advocates that language learning is child-centred, not teacher dominated, that language is integrated not

fragmented, that children learn by being actively involved in authentic language activities; they learn in other words by talking and doing and not by passive listening.

Question 3

How does this policy get into the classroom?

Response

That's a difficult question to answer, but one which I will try to answer and be as upfront and straightforward about as I can be with this. The policy regarding the whole language philosophy actually should come from the Department of Education, to the primary coordinators at the district level and then from there to the teachers within the schools. In terms of what's been happening though with whole language philosophy, I really believe that in many respects, it hasn't had a chance to work. I feel that there are so many different versions of whole language philosophy around this province right now that we have a real problem on our hands. The versions of reality that are operating right now, in schools, range from a free for all where anything goes, and not to blame teachers at all, because I believe that they have been at a disadvantage in that they have not been properly inserviced in terms of whole language philosophy. And in trying to deal with what they perceive as the whole language philosophy, as being the way to go, teachers have tried to deal with it the best way they could and often the view or version of whole language that might be operating within a district or within a school can be less than positive in terms of experiences for the children. It varies from one district to

another, from one school to another, and even from one classroom to another. Actually, I had a call from a kindergarten teacher just recently. She's in a three-stream school and she was saying that basically her and her two co-workers are operating in a different way because of a different philosophy or a different perspective of what this philosophy really is. There seems to be a breakdown in relaying information regarding whole language philosophy at every level, from the university, to the department of education, right on down to the district and school levels.

Question 4(a)

In your opinion are there benefits of whole language for teachers? If so, what are they?

Response

Yes, I feel that there are benefits of whole language for teachers if, again I'd like to preface it with this, it is implemented properly and is inserviced the way I think it should be inserviced. I feel that it allows teachers more flexibility to make use of knowledge they have about the way children learn, children's learning styles, and their stages of development. It allows the teacher to be flexible and to develop a program, or to bring a program into the classroom that meets the needs of children, rather than feeling that you are restricted to textbooks and programs that are already in place. It allows teachers to move away from a subject-oriented curriculum to one that is more holistic, more integrated, and more in keeping with the way children learn.

Question 4(b)

What do you see as being the benefits for children in the whole language classroom?

Response

There would be a little bit of an overlap here I believe. In terms of the children as well, I see it as a pulling together, a completeness, a holistic approach to learning that isn't there with the traditional subject-oriented approach to learning. It gets children away from the drill and practice and the kinds of experiences that really are not in keeping with the way children learn. But, I think the big thing is the focus on program, let's make sure that the children fit into this program; whereas it should be the other way around with the program matching the children's needs.

Question 5

How much focus is placed on supporting and implementing programs that are consistent with whole language philosophy?

Response

I feel that there is not enough of a focus, not enough emphasis, placed on implementing programs that would be consistent with the whole language philosophy. I think again we can go back to inservice, inadequate inservice; I think there hasn't been adequate inservicing. And I can't say this relates to any particular level. I think we're all in it together--the department of education, the districts, the schools, and I would include the

university, the faculty of education in this as well. I think the support hasn't been there because it hasn't been implemented properly.

Question 6(a)

To what extent do you work with primary coordinators in the interest of the primary grades and in improving the quality of instruction?

Response

As you're aware I haven't been in this position very long, just since January, but I'll answer it as would normally be the case for the primary consultant. A primary consultant would be involved with the primary coordinators at the district level to the extent that I would be involved with inservicing primary coordinators when new programs are coming on stream. In terms of change of philosophy, then again, the primary consultant at the department level would be involved with inservicing the coordinators in this area as well. In addition to that the primary consultant would be looking for feedback periodically from district coordinators to assess the needs of schools, the needs of teachers, and program needs. There's another area as well and that's the involvement of program coordinators on working groups and steering committees with the department of education. Of course I would be looking to primary program coordinators to work with me in terms of developing programs. So consultants don't develop programs on their own, and when I say programs I mean curriculum guides. I'm not thinking in terms of resources. Primary coordinators would certainly be involved at the curriculum development stage.

Question 6(b)

Are the primary coordinators given opportunities to provide input into provincial curriculum planning for the primary grades?

Response

Absolutely. They would be involved initially in developing the needs assessment and then moving from there to developing a philosophy and so on, and so on. They would be involved in the whole exercise of developing curriculum. Then after a program is developed it would move to a pilot stage where, again, coordinators would be involved with monitoring the pilots in their schools.

Question 7

To what extent do your work with primary coordinators towards developing programs that can be characterized as whole language?

Response

The program which we have in place right now, Experiencing Language, as I said earlier, articulates a whole language philosophy and the primary coordinators would have been involved in the whole process of developing that program. Apart from that, the primary coordinators would be involved with identifying resources that would be conducive to and in keeping with a whole language philosophy. The coordinators would then take this knowledge to teachers. The resources would be authorized or

recommended by the department and there are two categorizes, authorized resources and recommended resources.

Question 8

To what extent do you have direct contact with teachers in primary classrooms?

Response

First of all I'd like to say that a primary consultant moves through the district person who is the primary coordinator, or somebody who is filling that role. But, in addition to going through the district to teachers, I think basically what I see myself doing is getting involved with teachers when needs are identified. The coordinator would be the most likely person who would be in a position to identify situations where the consultant could get involved with teachers. Sometimes teachers will contact the consultant with concerns they have regarding curriculum, programs that are in place, and so on. This certainly helps me and I really like to get feed-back from the classroom level, because I think it keeps me in tune with what is happening and I think it is really important to have that link there. After you have been away from the classroom for some years, you would tend to lose touch. So I think it is really important to hear from teachers. But, in terms of what I could do, strictly speaking, I would have to go through coordinators and I could be invited by coordinators or by principals, through there coordinators, to do inservice with their teachers, or help with and support inservice. Sometimes the primary special interest councils invite consultants to give an inservice in a particular area, but again,

they would identify the need. Basically the coordinator would be the teachers' link with the department.

Edited Transcript of Interview Conducted with the Language Arts Program Coordinator Conception Bay South Integrated School Board Manuels,Newfoundland

Question 1

How would you define your role as a Program Coordinator with the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board?

Response

Well my areas of responsibility right now are primarily language arts kindergarten to grade twelve, and also French, music, and art. The role has changed from just being a curriculum person to actually having more administrative responsibilities, because of all the areas I'm coordinating. I have been responsible for the kindergarten to grade three part for only two years.Up until that time we had a primary coordinator who functioned as someone who tied the curriculum together; she was responsible for all curriculum areas, including the language arts. So the role of the primary coordinator would be different from my role. The primary coordinator was responsible for all areas and the subject area people, such as myself, worked with her. Now in our board the program coordinator is responsible for a particular subject all the way through from kindergarten to grade twelve. The previous primary coordinator established quite a background and foundation in her area. So from the point of view of the primary I have simply been enforcing, or carrying on, or following through what has already been established. In terms of a coordinator generally, it is my role to make teachers aware of an article on what's happening currently or some disagreement with what's happening currently, or

in our case to assess our language instruction as to what our practices should be in carrying out the provincial curriculum guide Experiencing Language.

Question 2

Does the school board have a policy regarding whole language philosophy? If so, what is this policy?

Response

I don't think you can call it a policy, but at the same time it is in our Strategic Plan. Right now the goals of the board,of which we have twenty or twenty-one, are reviewed annually by the principals and vice-principals,who make suggestions for changes, and I would consider that to be a general policy booklet. As far as whole language goes, the statement in there, which is goal number eight, is the closest we have to what our policy is and what our philosophy is. What we are saying, and it has been changed now and it will be going out to schools soon, is "to ensure an approach to language instruction that includes the direct teaching of skills and strategies as an integral part of an whole language philosophy".

Question 3

How does this policy get into the classroom?

Response

In our case, it is in our goals for the board; it is there and it is an important goal for the board. The details of that policy or the characteristics of that instruction are really the responsibility of the language arts coordinator to clarify, and to do so through discussions with the principals and to put it on paper. Then either through staff meetings, through principals, or through after school meetings to try to clarify that policy. It is really the role of the administrators of the board, the coordinators and the principals to clarify the policy for teachers.

Question 4(a)

In your opinion, are there benefits of whole language for teachers? If so, what are they?

Response

Yes, I think there are, definitely. I guess I really see it as a way for teachers to have more ownership over the instruction for their students and to give them a sense of empowerment over knowing that they are the curriculum people, that they can design curriculum, that they can teach curriculum, and that they are the experts when it comes to that whole area. It really does give them more power as teachers when they believe in whole language, because whole language is not confined to a book where everything

can be mapped out just so and everyone does everything from pages 1-35 today. With whole language, teachers can become their own curriculum developers. At the same time there is a time factor and teachers need the resources. Also, I believe that if you are an whole language teacher and believe in it you become much more informed. You become much more comfortable, competent and confident with teaching generally and you're using your knowledge base and expanding it.

Question 4(b)

What do you see as being the benefits for children in the whole language classroom?

Response

There are a lot of benefits for children. When you think about the whole language philosophy generally, one of the components of it is that students are actively engaged in learning and there is a social context for learning. So they learn with others, interacting with others, interacting with a variety of real material, not just artificial isolated workbook material, but meaningful materials. They write for a purpose and they read for a purpose. So meaning is at the forefront and what they are doing is therefore more interesting to them and more valuable to them.

Question 5

How much focus is placed on supporting and implementing programs that are consistent with whole language philosophy?

Response

Again in our district we've done a lot of work in the area that has been ongoing over the years. We've had major inservices on whole language, about four or five years ago, with our primary and elementary teachers. Up until three years ago we had so much time devoted to whole language and language arts in our district; we had two full time people focusing mainly on the langauge arts. There were grade level meetings, after school meetings, inservices and workshops. We invited guest speakers, developed curriculum guides, developed objective booklets, and worked with school committees on such topics as spelling. But about three years ago a lot of that started to cease and one of the big reasons for that was the school improvement process, a program which was brought into our district. That meant that schools had more ownership of their inservice. Right now I have no inservice days; board office gave all of the inservice days to schools. The schools now determine what they need and the requests have to come from the school. The message has been given loud and clear from the department and from the province that inservice time should be devoted to math and science; it is felt that these areas have been neglected in the past. Any new teachers coming in would have to look to the curriculum handbook, the guides, the district policy, and would have to call the board with any questions. The support is still there from the perspective that there are people you can talk to and there is a written policy, but not from the perspective of inservice.

Question 6

To what extent do you work with primary teachers in the interest of the primary grades and in the quality of instruction?

Response

I can say that I do not work very much with primary teachers in the interest of the primary grades and in the interest of improving instruction. Again you have to know the history of our district, and in the past that received hours of attention. Up until about two years ago the primary coordinator was in the primary classroom working with the primary teacher. In the past two years I have really just been moving into the primary area and I am spread from kindergarten to grade twelve, with French, music, and art. Right now instruction has been very strongly established. There is a need there but the need has been addressed over the years. Unless we have more than just one person (coordinator) working in the area, it can't be done. The direction we are moving toward right now is school based expertise and there will no longer be anyone at the board office in the position of program coordinator.

Question 7

To what extent do you work with the provincial primary consultant?

Response

Right now we have a new primary consultant and the primary consultant has a committee that is established to look at the primary curriculum. The interaction right between

coordinators and the provincial consultant is very little or none. The only contact that we are going to have is once a policy or curriculum guide is given out by that committee we will be involved with heading up the reactions, concerns and feedback for the department. The only other way that we will be involved is perhaps to be asked to pilot something or to be asked for a teacher representative for a committee, or something of that nature. I would say that about 80 percent of the coordinators are not closely involved with the primary consultant. When a new document comes out there is generally, but not always, an inservice for coordinators. There is some contact here and there, where you may have something that the consultant is asking for, or a new guide may be being inserviced that you should be aware of, or you may be required to pilot a new program. About once a year we might have an inservice.

Question 8

Are you involved with any inservice sessions with respect to whole language?

Response

Yes, our district has been involved a lot in that but probably as far back as five or six years ago. Now we are concentrating on the current needs in the system which are basically to help teachers focus on objectives and where the objectives fit within a whole language philosophy. So any inservice we would have now would come about through school based inservice or request, or through grade level meetings once we go further with the objectives.

Question 9

What do you consider to be the major problem(s), if any, in motivating teachers to adopt a whole language philosophy of education?

Response

In terms of primary you would really need to talk to the past primary coordinator. But in terms of teachers at the other levels you very often find that teachers don't have a very good understanding of what whole language is, or they think that we don't teach spelling, we don't teach punctuation, we don't teach skills, and so on. So when I've tried to bring up the topic, if I use the term whole language, I very often get a negative response based on that misunderstanding. So what I try to do is clarify just what it means in terms of teaching. There is the perception that when we talk about whole language skills are not involved anymore. I find myself spending a lot of time trying to clarify whole language for teachers. Also, I find that there is a lack of understanding about the developmental continuum of language learning in children. This area, too, needs work. I see a big problem with communication and a misunderstanding about just what it does mean or doesn't mean.

Response to Question 9 by the past primary coordinator with the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board.

I think first when it came in there was a lot of hoopla and the 'whole language' term was held up in such great esteem. In the literature, at the time, and with speakers, at the time, not only did both advocate whole language, but they were very negative about

anything that was not whole language. I think this resulted in a big loss in confidence amongst teachers and they no longer knew where they stood and they no longer felt confident in what they were doing with their kids. Another thing, in this board there was a small group that spear-headed whole language within the district and there was a loss of confidence amongst some of our teachers given the fact that some others were really 'raised' in everybody's estimation. "I'm lousy because I'm not doing the same thing as someone else." I think that was very negative. There was a lot of mixed messages coming from different speakers that teachers had heard and from talking to one another about their perceptions of what whole language was. There were a lot of misconceptions about text materials, workbooks, and worksheets of different types of activities. So teachers were a little demoralized, I think, because they no longer knew what kind of things were in favor. So that was a big obstacle and that's why at the grade level meetings, when I first came, my main thrust was to look at how everybody was doing things and to look at how similar their ways were, to try and raise their confidence and to try to get everyone to share the innovations that they were using in their classrooms. The other obstacle was that it was such a major change in philosophy that it took teachers a long time to understand it, and a long time to trust it. Teachers working with young children don't like to throw everything out and try something that they are not sure of. That was a big obstacle and it took a long time for teachers to totally understand the philosophy and trust in it.

Edited Transcript of Interview Conducted with a Grade Three Teacher

Question 1

What is your understanding of whole language?

Response

I see it as a holistic approach to teaching that begins with the child, begins where the child is, and from there we establish where we're headed. It starts with the child's needs, in terms of language, and it encompasses all areas of language. We look at where the child is with oral language, with reading, with writing and with listening skills and we endeavour to broaden where the child is from those four areas. I also see it as encompassing many aspects of each of those four areas--oral language, reading, writing, and listening. It doesn't teach just the skills involved with those four areas, but it teaches children an enjoyment of all four as well. The other thing which I feel strongly about, as being a positive aspect of whole language, is that it focuses children on more than just reading the words. It focuses them on the authors and illustrators and they begin to view books as being alive and as being a part of their lives. I've seen a difference in the attitudes towards reading and towards books in the twelve years that I've been teaching. Some of it has come from me and my growth, but also I've seen a difference in the children. We now have more books available to us and that's a start right there. But children are reading and understanding more, in terms of what makes a book, how a book is made, what publishing is about, and what authors and illustrators are about.

These aspects are all important to the understanding of books and reading. In addition to that I see a focus on writing more now than I did ten years ago, and not just filling in the blanks on worksheets. Rather, writing is presented in a realistic fashion for the child. I see whole language as being right across the curriculum, for the most part; however, in all fairness I do see some things in science and math as being pure science or pure math and I don't think we can ignore that. But I teach subjects such as social studies and religion from a whole language perspective. All of the subject areas that involve reading, writing, and discussion stem from a whole language approach.

Question 2(a)

In your opinion, what is the role of the teacher in the whole language classroom?

Response

I see the teacher as a facilitator. Although when I first started to teach I was slightly whole language, and my gut feeling was to teach from a whole language perspective, I had very few resources to work with and I found myself more as the classroom leader rather than the facilitator. The children went off and did what was required as I organized it. Now I see myself as more of a facilitator; the children are more involved and have more control over what they are learning, whether that be through the use of centres or cooperative learning groups. I find, the children are more in control. It is far more demanding on me and I have to be "with it more" in the role of facilitator of

learning and in providing the activities, materials, and resources that are needed to guide the learning that takes place.

Question 2(b)

What is the role of the student?

Response

I've seen that change, as I've said. I think students are more in control of what they're doing. I give more choices now. I allow children to choose. It's not just me teaching a lesson. There are times when that's necessary, but I do see more times where the children become the leaders and the choice makers and they report back to the whole class, or teach a part of what they have learned in their groups to the class. I see them as being in a far more active role than before. They are not just passive learners but are actively involved.

Question 3

Can you describe some of the types of activities your students are involved in?

Response

I use centres a fair bit and I allow a lot more choice in centres now than when I first started using them. Children decide which centre they want to do and at what time. I may require students to complete activities in all centres but they choose when and in

which order. In the past I controlled this. I use cooperative learning groups a lot more now. I'm finding that this is far more beneficial to the children; they are using oral language skills more. The children in this class are now able to go off in groups of two, three, or four, and talk about whatever the topic is. They then come back to the large group and one person from the smaller group presents what they have learned, to the class. I don't think I would get from a larger group activity what comes out through the smaller group discussions. As I said earlier writing is a regular part of the day. Also reading for enjoyment, not just reading for skills, which is of course important as well. I try to find some time each day for reading for enjoyment. The children are involved in a mixture of writing activities; sometimes it is for a purpose which I have set, such as constructing a paragraph on Spring, for example. Or it might be poetry writing, and we listen to and read quite a bit of poetry. Often the children are free to go off and use poems, or write poems on their own. In addition to this, there is always a centre set up in our classroom with dictionaries, pencils, and paper that the children can freely go to. Often they go to the writing table independently and then share their stories with the class during carpet time. Also we have a regular journal writing time and often I find out more about the kids through their journal writing than through talking to them, because they will write about things that they may not bring up in conversation. I respond to their journal writing by writing back to them. This does not occur everyday, but it is a regular part of the curriculum.

Question 4

What is your opinion regarding the teaching of phonics, spelling, and grammar?

Response

I do think all three are important and I do think all three should be taught. I fear that some people have felt that whole language means not teaching those three and it bothers me a lot. However, it's how it's taught that makes the difference. When I was in grade one, for example, I felt it was important that children know letter sounds. That's the key to reading and if they didn't have it they were at a disadvantage. But that didn't mean that we had to spend five days one week on the 'b' sound. I taught it throughout the books we were reading and the poetry we were reading and if I found that it wasn't coming out through those things I did intentionally teach it. I wanted to make sure that the children had a good background of word families, letter sounds, and letter-sound relationships. I think spelling, too, is important. Again, I think that some people have gotten on the bandwagon that now we've thrown out the speller we no longer teach spelling. This is absolutely crazy. There are so many things in spelling that children have to be taught. Again I have difficulty with the fact that we have very little guidance on how to teach spelling and I do find myself going back to some of the old resources, because I need that guidance, just for me if nothing else. I don't teach the speller the way it was taught traditionally, but we do set up regular activities in spelling. On Monday we introduce the words, throughout the week there are activities, and on Friday there is a quiz of the words. I think grammar has to be taught also. I don't think we need to go

back to workbooks and textbooks pointing out every grammar rule; however, I do think it is important that children have a working knowledge of grammar. In terms of teaching phonics, spelling, and grammar we try to start from the holistic view and then move out into the parts. For example, we may take a poem, there was one that we took many of our spelling words from. That poem was enjoyed first. We acted it out, we did the rhythm, we talked about it, we did all the fun things with it, and then we took the words from it and looked at the word families, words that were similar, beginning sounds, ending sounds, and so on. From that poem, also, there were some grammar and phonics rules which came through. If, however, there is a particular phonics, grammar, or spelling rule or skill that doesn't come out in the resources that I have, I do intentionally teach it. From there though, I tend to get the children to write something to use that skill, to bring it back to a whole again. We do use worksheets still, in some instances; we haven't thrown everything out. However, I do think that we are attempting to do it in a far more reasonable manner, using the whole language approach.

Question 5

How do you evaluate student growth and progress?

Response

Daily checking on their writing. Their writing, to me, provides more answers than anything else in terms of language growth. I listen to reading regularly, at least one to two times a week. I try to hear every child read. I make jot notes, after they have

finished reading, on what they may have had trouble with. At least three times a year I do a miscue analysis on every child that I teach and that gives r · a general idea of where the children are in terms of grade level and in terms of other children. I keep anecdotal records, on file cards, of where the children are in terms of language. I use checklists, some which I have developed myself and some which I have found in different resources. In terms of spelling we do give a quiz every week, however, the words are much more meaningful, I think. And just watching their day to day work. I keep a file on each child with samples of their work throughout the year so that I can see their growth.

Question 6(a)

Do you consider yourself to be a whole language teacher?

Response

I do. I'll be honest, I do use parts of the traditional style of teaching and I do think that children, from time to time, require that style of teaching, but my inner feelings are towards whole language. I can't say that I've thrown out everything, but I try to create a balance between both.

Question 6(b)

How comfortable are you with this status?

Response

I am very comfortable with it. I don't like going on a bandwagon and say I'll do this and just go off and do it. I do like to try to balance it out and try and take the good from a way we used to teach and from a way we are about to teach. When I try something, if I find it is not effective I don't continue teaching that way just because someone has said I have to teach that way. I have to look at the kids I teach and the needs of those kids. I judge my teaching based on the needs of those children and on the class in general.

Question 7(a)

In your opinion, are you receiving adequate support and assistance in advancing your understanding of whole language?

Response

Am I receiving it, no. Am I looking for it, yes. I think the administration in this school, in the past twelve years, has been very supportive, but there are limits to what they can do. I'm really upset that we no longer have a primary coordinator.I think that is a real detriment in terms of whole language. When we did have a primary coordinator, that person provided us with lots of things that I used over and over. If I was having trouble getting something across, all I had to do was phone her and she would come down within the next week and spend the morning in my classroom and help me out. I just find it so

frustrating that we don't have anyone like that to turn to. The courses I did at the University weren't always that helpful, often it was the readings I did on my own that were helpful and I've just kept up with a lot of things that way. There were inservices when we had the primary coordinator and even the grade level meetings that she coordinated with all the teachers at a particular grade level, in the district, were very beneficial. Now we don't have anyone to coordinate that. In addition, some of the best inservices I attended weren't necessarily in this district but, were from the primary interest council. I have attended some very good inservices there.

Question 7(c)

What types of support do you see as essential in ensuring your successful development as an whole language teacher?

Response

I would like to see more inservicing, even it is just an inservice to boost what you are already doing, or to give you some new ideas. It doesn't necessarily have to be inservice to teach you a new approach but just to give you more ideas about what you're doing. I would like to see someone who is able to coordinate district wide grade level meetings, at least once in a school year, and to know ahead of time that we are going to talk about a certain topic, such as spelling. I certainly would like to see a primary coordinator reinstated in that position. I think it is a real detriment to the primary teachers not to have one.

Edited Transcript of Interview Conducted with a Grade One Teacher

Question 1

What is your understanding of whole language?

Response

I feel that whole language is teaching the child as a whole, where you incorporate all the different subject areas into one. For example, your topic may be 'bears' and you use the many different sources from your resource centre and incorporate, in that theme, such objectives as learning how to spell different theme related words, or you might teach math and health. All the different subject areas come under the one area so that things aren't broken up into small segments. This makes the learning more meaningful to the child. I feel that in whole language you are teaching the basic skills but in a different manner than traditionally. For example, in my classroom each morning begins with the news, where each child has the opportunity to share his or her news for the day. We then pick one piece of news and write it on the chart. From there we might identify one particular word and brainstorm rhyming words for it. Of course the children would see the spelling of these words as they are written on the chart. Or we might talk about compound words, or words with different prefixes, or endings, such as ing, ed, and so on. There are many different things which can be done with words, starting from the whole and moving to the parts.

Question 2(a)

In your opinion, what is the role of the teacher in the whole language classroom?

Response

I think that the teacher is the person who is there to offer information and to assist the children in their learning, and is not there as the person who is all knowing and the absolute head. Of course the teacher is the head of the room but the children can go to other persons as well as the teacher, as sources of information. The teacher is more of a guide or an assistant and learns along with the children.

Question 2(b)

What is the role of the student?

Response

The children, I feel, are there to learn from each other as well as from the teacher. I feel they are there to interact with each other; the social aspect of learning is very important. In the early grades, play is very important. I think the interacting with one another is the most important part. There would be many hands on experiences with one another in a group situation.

Question 3

Can you describe some of the types of activities your students are involved in?

Response

In my classroom we have buddy reading, where a grade three child reads to a grade one child. Also, the grade one child is encouraged to read to the grade three buddy. Everyday in my class we have sustained silent reading. Often during the week we have paired reading, within the class. We do many types of writing, such as journal writing, where they are writing independently about their own experiences. We do writing as a whole class group and we do writing in small groups or pairs. I also do a lot of cooperative learning activities with the children using science or math or whatever area we might be covering at the time.

Question 4

What is your opinion regarding the teaching of phonics, spelling, and grammar?

Response

I think children definitely need phonics, spelling, and grammar to be taught to them. Some children, of course, will gain knowledge of those three areas on their own; they are just intelligent enough to pick it up. However, I feel that it should be taught, not necessarily singled out by itself, but within something else that you're doing. For example, the news that I spoke about earlier, as we write it on the chart we talk about

the spelling of the words, and why we have a capital letter at the beginning, and why there is a period at the end. All these things are discussed in my classroom at the beginning of the day. During journal writing the children write using invented spelling and then they come to me and read their journal entry to me and we will edit usually two or three words, depending on the child, and then they return to their seats and work through what they have written, this time checking the spelling and putting in capitals and periods. This is another way that spelling and grammar are taught in my classroom. Also, we do some research, where the children have to look up facts about a particular topic. They are learning words and about words through their research. There are many ways that spelling, phonics and grammar can come into your classroom without having a separate spelling class.

Question 5

How do you evaluate student growth and progress?

Response

In my classroom I evaluate mainly through observation and I jot notes to myself throughout the day. There is always a piece of paper on my desk where I can jot down the child's name and some comment about him or her, related to whatever is going on. I also keep a file of samples of the children's work from each of the subject areas, for report card time. I also evaluate through use of checklists. For example, at the beginning of each theme I write my objectives across the top of a page and the children's names

down the side. I checkmark as each child achieves the objectives, or I make a note to myself if the objective is not achieved.

Question 6(a)

Do you consider yourself to be a whole language teacher?

Response

Yes I feel that I am a whole language teacher. I feel that children learn best in this manner. I feel that we can't lose sight of the fact that we do have to teach basic skills, as well though. I feel that the children in my class feel free to move and progress at their own rate. I don't think that they are held back by other children in the group. In a more traditional setting, where today everyone does page 58 and page 59 tomorrow, some children are held back and others are forced to move ahead before they are ready. I think the children in my class are all moving ahead at their own pace and I feel that, in this manner, they are able to learn better.

Question 6(b)

How comfortable are you with this status?

Response

This is the way I enjoy to work and this is certainly the best way children learn, in a child-centred environment. I am comfortable with being a whole language teacher.

Question 7(a)

In your opinion, are you receiving adequate support and assistance in advancing your understanding and knowledge of whole language?

Response

No, I don't think so. Within our school board there hasn't been any whole language inservice that I have been able to take part in. The only assistance and support that I am receiving is from other teachers within the school and of course they may not have been inserviced either. Therefore, I don't know if all the information I am receiving about whole language is correct, since I am not getting it from a person trained in this area.

Question 7(c)

What types of support do you see as essential in ensuring your successful development as an whole language teacher?

Response

I think there certainly needs to be more inservice in the area, more training of teachers, so that things such as basic skills are not lost. There are people who believe that whole language doesn't cover that and I don't think that is the case. Also, at Memorial University I found that there was very little done with whole language and the only exposure that I got with whole language was when I went to do my internship at the school. So I think there needs to be more done right from the university level on down

to the schools. Each year, as new teachers are hired, I feel that some inservicing should be carried out in the area.

Edited Transcript of Interview Conducted with a Grade Three Teacher

Question 1

What is your understanding of whole language?

Response

I view whole langauge as an approach, and as a philosophy of language. I see it as being a movement from the whole, the whole text, to the part. Years ago we moved from the part to the whole, in such things as phonics and what not. In whole language you use a great deal of literature. It has a literature base. You take a book, for example, and do various activities using that book, moving from the whole and then breaking it down to teach the kinds of skills that are needed, rather than starting with the skill and finding a story that will go with it. We use a lot of literature and poetry. The children are writers; I see this as being a very important part of whole language. The children's experiences are important. Their experiences from home and their experiences with language are all important. In the whole language classroom you bring together the four components of language--listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They are not treated separately, but each is important in its own right.

Question 2(a)

In your opinion, what is the role of the teacher in the whole language classroom?

Response

I see the role of the teacher changing over the years, quite drastically. She or he has now become a facilitator of the language program. The teacher is a person who leads, who sees something that needs to be taught at the moment and goes for it at the time, rather than having a completely preplanned thing in mind. The teacher facilitates the oral language, the reading, and the writing of the child. The teacher is there to meet with the child on an individual basis often times, rather than as a whole group, and work with the child in this way.

Question 2(b)

What is the role of the student?

Response

This is a much more child-centred approach, I feel. The children have much more command of their own learning. I see them as leading the way, much of the time, in what they are capable of. They have many more choices to make. This is very different from years ago when the teacher decided everything and the child just tried to handle it, or could not. So it is very much more child-centred. The children make decisions on what they are going to do, what they are going to read, what they are going to write

about, and what they enjoy. Of course there is a lot more writing in the whole language approach. Your teaching is determined by what the children need at the moment. At times you don't know what's going to happen and something just crops up and you teach for that skill or that need, or a child can go off on a tangent that you have not expected and that's fine.

Question 3

Can you describe some of the types of activities your students are involved in?

Response

Well, there are so many types of activities in the whole language classroom. It is not centred only on textbooks. Of course we use the program, the Networks reading program, but as a resource only. We use the anthologies. The children journal write. This is an expression of their own experiences. They are very free to choose what they want to write about in their journals, free to share their own experiences. They use inventive spelling in journal writing, and this facilitates more writing because they are not hung up on perfect spelling of each and every word. Years ago children were made to feel that every word had to be spelled correctly and this really cramped the writing. The inventive spelling, I think, has made a tremendous difference in the amount of writing you get from the children. There is a lot of poetry used in the classroom and a lot of literature, books of all kinds. The children write creatively, and functionally; they write letters, lists, and on and on.

Question 4

What is your opinion regarding the teaching of phonics, spelling, and grammar?

Response

When whole language first became a 'buzz word', or people started thinking about it, I think they thought that there were no skills to be taught. This was a very dangerous situation, as far as I am concerned. There for a while we got very creative and we thought that was enough. But I think the realization has been with a lot of teachers all along that phonics, spelling, and grammar are still very important if the children are going to learn to write well. I teach the skills, usually as they crop up or as the need arises with an individual child, a small group of children, or sometimes with the whole class. Sometimes, however, you have to teach a skill deliberately, if it doesn't crop up, and I do that. I have an idea of a set of skills, in grade three, that I want to teach or that I feel should be covered by the end of the year. We have a spelling program, not a commercial program, but certainly a spelling program just the same. We use theme words, as well as functional words, that they need in their everyday writing. Many of the words come from the children's own writing and we as teachers decide on some words which we feel are necessary for their writing. We have set ideas about the skills that we teach every week and this is the means by which we fit in some of the skills that we see as being necessary. I think there is a group of children that have gone through that have lost skills to some extent. I think the emphasis on skills is coming back; I think it is coming full circle so that we will go back to teaching the skills a little more

formally. In the past, however, these skills were taught very separately. Now, in the context of whole language they are taught in the context of what it is we are doing at the time. The skills are not just fragmented, and hopefully it becomes more meaningful for the child and he or she can pull it all together. If something is meaningful, it is going to stay with them and they will hold the skill. In the past, I think, we taught skills and it had no meaning in the context of what we were doing and once taught it was then forgotten.

Question 5

How do you evaluate student growth and progress?

Response

Well, student growth and progress is evaluated continuously; it doesn't stop and start. It's done through various means. For example, we use checklists in some things; we use lists of skills; we keep files of the children's writing; we sometimes tape record their reading; we use miscue analysis, which is a little more formal. As I said, there are many, many ways, but mainly it's the observation technique you do all day long, everyday. Another technique we use is conferencing with the children. Conferencing might be done one on one or with a small group of children who have a similar need. Conferencing is done with both reading and writing.

Question 6(a)

Do you consider yourself to be a whole language teacher?

Response

Yes, I do. This whole language teacher has a connotation that maybe to different people it has a different meaning, but if I were to read articles and literature and sit myself down and say "Am I?", I would have to say yes, judging from what I do on a day to day basis. I use many of the techniques and believe in many parts of the philosophy that would entitle me to call myself an whole language teacher. From my definition of an whole language teacher I would be one. Perhaps someone else would look at me from their definition and say I'm not or say I'm partly. Perhaps you are a mixture of the many philosophies you encounter while teaching for so many years.

Question 6(b)

How comfortable are you with this status?

Response

I guess I could answer that best by saying I'm comfortable with being a teacher. I'm comfortable with the types of things I do, and if you want to call that a whole language teacher then yes I am comfortable with it.

Question 7(a)

In your opinion, are you receiving adequate support and assistance in advancing your understanding and knowledge of whole language?

Response

I guess I'd say yes, with a but. First of all, we did inservices some years ago, when whole language became a popular philosophy and then we moved into this area and probably did more and more things that would be termed whole language. I think at this point in time it would be nice to stop and spend a day thinking about what we're doing, maybe reevaluate a little bit. Teaching is so busy that often we don't have time to stop and reflect on what it is that we are doing. I think a day spent doing that would certainly be beneficial. Sometimes you're so busy doing things that you don't even realize what it is you're doing. So, I think, it is time to sit back and look at it again and maybe say well, "Where am I falling down?" or "What things are working well?". Just having time to reflect on the whole issue and see where it is that you might be able to improve, would be beneficial.

Question 7(b)

What types of support are you receiving and from where is this support coming?

Response

Mainly I see the support coming from the teachers that I work with and from the administration of the school. The principal of my school is very supportive of the

programs and approaches that we use in our classrooms. And, as I said, there was inservicing done in the area of whole language some years back and I was involved in it at that time.

Question 7(c)

What types of support do you see as essential in ensuring your successful development as an whole language teacher?

Response

Well, obviously many things can be learned from working with other teachers and learning from them. Also, reading articles, professional literature, on your own is important. A very important thing would be to have inservices. At this time, having worked in whole language for many years, and having been inserviced initially when it was not as meaningful to us, it would be nice to go to these inservices again, to hear those same speakers again. Now it would be more meaningful to us. Then we could evaluate ourselves as whole language teachers and see where we are and perhaps where we would like to go. I think a refresher, an additional inservice now, would be appropriate. We have some experience behind us and we know some of the mistakes we have made, and know the direction that we don't want to go in, such as with the grammar, the phonics, and the spelling, which I mentioned before, and the role they have to play. I think we are almost in a transition period at this point. This might be a good time to stop and think about what it is we are doing and where we are going.

Edited Transcript of Interview Conducted with a Kindergarten Teacher

Question 1

What is your understanding of whole language?

Response

My understanding of whole language is that it is the instruction of reading with children, whereby the language is whole and it is meaningful. It is not broken up into small parts or segments, as in a list of spelling words or "Today we are going to learn how to read these words". The language and the learning are whole and the children learn things in context.

Question 2(a)

In you opinion, what is the role of the teacher in the whole language classroom?

Response

The teacher in the whole language classroom is seen more as a facilitator, or someone that the children can go to for guidance. The teacher doesn't take a direct approach, as in the lecture method, or the teacher doesn't stand at the front of the classroom and tell the children. The teacher guides the children through the learning experiences.

Question 2(b)

What is the role of the student?

Response

The students in a whole language classroom are very active in their learning; they are active participants. They don't just sit in their seats like sponges waiting to absorb things. They sort of take control and progress at their own rate. So I think the students play a very active role in their learning.

Question 3

Can you describe some of the types of activities your students are involved in?

Response

Well, I'll start by saying that we begin each day with a circle time. I think the circle time is a very important part of my whole language classroom, in that it gives the children a chance to express themselves freely.During the circle time we do various explorations of poetry and children's literature. We have class discussions on related topics and we do such things as the news everyday. We talk about things that are important to the children and record them on our class news chart. I feel that this circle time is very important. The teacher has some control here and the learning is somewhat directed by the teacher. Other activities that my children are involved in include buddy reading, where the children are paired with a grade three child. This is beneficial for both the

kindergarten and the grade three children. I do reading conferences with the children, whereby they read to me an easy reading book, or we discuss the pictures if that is the stage the child is at. These easy reading books are a part of the home reading program and the children always take a book home to practice with their parents before reading it to me. We have set up a reading system where the children read a lot of what they write. We write a lot of group chart stories to go along with whatever theme we are doing. The children dictate the story to me and I write it onto the chart. Afterwards I copy the story and every child gets a copy to take home. They are asked to do various things with the chart story, such as put a circle around a certain word, or put a line under the sentence they contributed to the story. Here the children are reading their own writing and this is very meaningful to them. A lot of our independent writing is done using a centre approach. The children are encouraged to write whatever they can, even if it is just one letter. In my kindergarten class I have children ranging from the point of writing just letters to writing actual sentences, getting their thoughts down, separating words, and so on. The writing activities are meaningful; the children are encouraged to write about things that are meaningful to them. We also do some shared writing where I pair two children; they get to be authors and illustrators. They make little books and share them with each other. When I pair the children I try to put one of lower ability with one of higher ability; both benefit from the sharing. We work with a thematic approach and the themes are selected by considering the needs and the interests of the students. I think that's what makes the classroom so exciting. The topics stimulate the interest of the children. With our themes we have centre activities that evolve from them.

The centre activities cover all the subject areas, such as math, language, art, science, etc. The objectives of the curriculum are covered through the centre activities.

Question 4

What is your opinion regarding the teaching of phonics,spelling, and grammar?

Response

Well, I think a major misconception now is that we don't teach phonics, spelling, and grammar in whole language. But, I tend to disagree. I think they are there, but they are just taught differently. For instance, with phonics we no longer have drills and sheets and sheets of activities, but phonics is taught. In kindergarten, for example, when we teach the alphabet we brainstorm a list of words that begin with a certain sound and record them on a chart. In that sense I am teaching phonics, but not in a drill or isolated way. The same with spelling, when we do the news, such as I mentioned earlier, I go through the words and spell them and model them correctly for the children. When they are writing I encourage them to look around the classroom and find these words. In using the theme approach, many of the words that the children are using in their writing are around the classroom, and if they are there I expect them to spell them somewhat accurately. Invented spelling is encouraged also of course, and this I think really encourages them to get something on paper. They are not hindered by having to spell everything correctly. In kindergarten this is probably the most important way that they write. However, I do model correct spelling with them. ...k phonics, spelling, and

grammar are important and have to be taught, but, as I said, it's the way they are taught that makes the difference.

Question 5

How do you evaluate student growth and progress?

Response

Again, kindergarten is somewhat different, in that all children cannot read. Therefore, giving a written test to see if concepts have been covered is not going to work. Evaluation is a very ongoing thing. I conference with my students, I have reading and writing conferences with them. I sit down one-on-one with them and ask them questions, ask them to read to me, or ask them to print certain letters for me. This lets me know exactly what letters or what concepts individual children know. This in turn helps me focus on what needs to be taught. A lot of my evaluation is through observation and that's why I think the one-on-one conference is so important. As you are moving around the classroom throughout the day you might miss things. I use checklists to record the concepts and objectives that have been covered and understood. Also, I keep a writing file for each child and I take from each theme things that they have written, or words that they can read. This is referred to during reporting time, with parents.

Question 6(a)

Do you consider yourself to be a whole language teacher?

Response

That's an interesting question. Yes, I do. And if anyone were to ask me about my classroom, it is a whole language classroom. But I have to admit, I guess it's like anything, you are never really sure if you are truly whole language. I like to think I am and from what I know about whole language I am, but I'm not sure. There are a lot of areas that I could improve on and probably make myself more whole language.

Question 6(b)

How comfortable are you with this status?

Response

I am comfortable with the whole language classroom. As a matter of fact, when I substituted, before I got the position which I am currently in, in classrooms which were not whole language oriented, I felt very uncomfortable. I am used to a classroom that runs this way, so I am very comfortable with this status.

Question 7(a)

In your opinion, are you receiving adequate support and assistance in advancing your understanding and knowledge of whole language?

Response

No. I would have to say that this is one area that improvements are needed in. Teaching, I think, unlike other professions, is somewhat of a lonely profession. It is lonely in the sense that you often don't get to see what goes on next door and feedback to and from colleagues is often limited. I would like to see what is going on in other classrooms and share ideas with teachers in other schools. And, of course, there is a need for more inservice. I feel that what I know, I have gotten on my own from reading professional literature and from university courses. I've received very little support or advice from, so called, experts in the area.

Question 7(c)

What types of support do you see as essential in ensuring your successful development as an whole language teacher?

Response

Well, first of all I think it is essential to have an administration that is supportive of whole language. I think that it's understood that if your administration is not supportive of this type of teaching, it is very difficult for you as a teacher to go ahead in the way you would like. So that is certainly essential. I think you need to have sharing sessions,

where teachers get together and share ideas. I think this is essential. And I think inservicing is essential. I don't think there is enough inservicing. I think there are trends with inservice; one year you might get inservice on global education and the next year there's another issue. Whole language is such an ongoing thing that, I think, every year there needs to be something to help you reflect on your teaching. This is my fifth year with the board and to my knowledge or recollection there has been little, or no inservice on whole language, during that time. In talking to other teachers about that, apparently prior to that time there was inservicing done on whole language. But for some reason, in recent years, it seems to have slackened off, or as I mentioned perhaps whole language is not the trend now, that the inservice route is taking. I think that with something as important as whole language, there should be something at least once a year. For instance, new teachers coming into the system, somewhat like myself, would have missed the inservice. Also, of course, every year there are new ideas coming out that teachers need to know about and if you don't keep up on the issues, through inservice or professional readings, then you are obviously going to fall behind very quickly. A problem which I see with our board is that because of government cutbacks we no longer have a primary coordinator available. I think this is very unfortunate, especially with whole language as opposed to the more traditional way of teaching, because with whole language where things are changing so much and there are so many new ideas, you need someone, like a primary coordinator, to help run inservices and to inform teachers about various issues. A primary coordinator would be a valuable resource person, which we don't have now.

Edited Transcript of Interview Conducted with a Kindergarten Teacher

Question 1

What is your understanding of whole language?

Response

Well, whole language is basically a philosophy of how children learn language. You know, there are a lot of concepts and a lot of knowledge of how children learn language, but that's basically what it is, how you feel they learn and that in turn should impact on how you teach them. Basically children learn oral and written language in similar ways. They learn it in an approximation type way; they learn it in a functional way; they learn to use it and through using it they refine it. If you look at an infant learning oral language, it is very similar to an older child learning print, and the way print works in reading and writing.

Question 2(a)

In your opinion, what is the role of the teacher in the whole language classroom?

Response

Well, the role of the teacher, basically, is to expose the children to a lot of language experiences; to watch them very carefully; to monitor their progress; to intervene when necessary; to decide at which points to emphasize various aspects of language; to make

sure that children speak together orally; to make sure that they have listening activities; that they listen purposefully; that they are brought to reading; that they develop a joy of reading and learn to read in a very natural way; and that they write and through writing develop their writing. It's a matter of bringing them to it, but watching them very carefully. When you feel that they are not coming along in what you feel is a reasonable pattern for that child, to intervene and assist. You can't just let children learn. You make sure that the right experiences are there and do a lot of intervention with young children, because some children don't listen very well, and you can have very great gaps in the concepts they have to learn about language. It is important not to take anything for granted, to watch them very carefully, and to model and demonstrate everything. The demonstration is extremely important; they have to see you doing it to know what it's all about. You can't tell them, you have to show them, and get them to join in. The role of the teacher is to guide the children through and to bring in all kinds of knowledge through every demonstration. For example, as a kindergarten teacher, in a writing demonstration I bring in vowel sounds and diphthongs and diagraphs and all the phonetics, or more complicated things, and I also bring in more complicated kinds of language. But at the same time I am going over "This is a sentence and there are many words in it" and I'll clap it through so that every child takes something from that demonstration that is appropriate to his or her stage of learning.

Question 2(b)

What is the role of the student?

Response

Well, if you were to watch my students in the run of the day, the role of the students is to enjoy the activities and to learn through them. It is to get an idea that they are learners. They are readers, writers, speakers, and listeners and they take part and enjoy the process. But, they follow and imitate a lot of the teacher's demonstration. Basically their role is to follow along with a lot of the things you are introducing them to. The students' role is to take from the learning, to attend, to enjoy, to take a lot of pride in their learning, and to identify as a language user.

Question 3

Can you describe some of the types of activities your students are involved in?

Response

Well, in kindergarten the big thing I work at is writing and they write everyday. It is all open writing; I don't do any fill-in the blanks or that kind of thing at all. Generally the writing that we do, and there are different types, is a learning log. So we'll do something in science, or we'll do something in social studies and writing will follow immediately after it. I'll say "What have you learned from that?" and "You'll write what you've learned". I'll demonstrate it using one or two of the suggestions that the children will

make. Then they will go and write independently. I think writing is the key to pretty well all the print learning at the early stages. They do a lot of writing. They write together. They talk about what they'll write and the oral language is brought in there. The children read to each other in buddy reading a lot. They take home their little predictable books and the next day there will be time to read their books to their partner and their partner reads to them, and quite often they'll be helping each other. There's a lot of listening to stories and discussion of them. We do strategy reading, whereby I use a "Big Book" in a guided reading process, so that they learn how to approach unfamiliar materials. We look at the cover and the title and discuss what we think it's going to be about. We look at the pictures and study them to try and get a mind set about the book, and then we look at the words. First they skim the words to see if there is anything that they know and then we go through it using a lot of cloze, trying to give them strategies for guessing and figuring out words they don't know. That would be in the last part of the kindergarten year when they have built up a sight vocabulary. There is a big use of poetry for reading, also. Oral language comes through in cooperative learning groups, where they have to work together to figure something out.

Question 4

What is your opinion regarding the teaching of phonics, spelling, and grammar?

Response

Well, they're essential. When whole language came in first, the radicals said well you don't do this, you don't do that, and you don't do something else. I was never in agreement with this. I use phonics very much everyday. When we're doing our calendar we sound out the words and count the sounds. When I introduce any word at all we guess and predict what it is going to be. Spelling, we have obviously the phonetic spelling. The thing about the early spelling, at the kindergarten level, if you go by the stages of spelling such as the scribble stage on up to the initial consonant stage , including vowels and so on, I think that it causes you to teach in certain ways. It has certainly affected me in that I would only introduce them to those kinds of things. But I don't do that anymore. I teach them the short vowel sounds and I teach that there are sounds there. Some of the kids aren't going to get it, but by demonstrating and stressing it a lot some kids will. I think that, as teachers, we have to be very careful and not let the research change the way we teach, but go by our own common sense. I do a lot of spelling. They know there is grown-up spelling and children's spelling, but I always show them how close they are coming and I always show the grown up way. By doing this I am teaching them more difficult skills that the more advanced children are ready to handle. The grammar, certainly in the early grades, is more the use of pronouns, verb forms, and those sorts of things, that you demonstrate to them. Not that you show them

that they're wrong, because a lot of them are still at a very early stage of oral language. But grammar is taught. With sentence expansion, for example, you show them that you are not going to use two or three very short sentences, that you can do it in different ways. You experiment about how you are going to say things. But yes it does come through and it is a very important component. The way you do it depends upon the age level of the children.

Question 5

How do you evaluate student growth and progress?

Response

I think you have to watch the kids very carefully. Evaluation is very time consuming unless you evaluate in a very consistent manner. You go around and listen to them and make notes and be kind of always at it, which is very difficult. You have to be constantly watching them and making little notes. Writing on their books, I find is very helpful. When I write down what they've done I can always go back to this. After the children write I underline the individual words and I write the words I can't read and I also show them the parts that look similar. While I'm doing that I'm getting it into my head where that child is. It helps to show them their evaluation and it helps make it more clear to me. Then when I go back to their writing books I can see very clearly what they've done; I can tell how much I've worked with them. To evaluate young children, in kindergarten, you can't go by their independent work only, because a lot of times they

don't have the maturity to use the knowledge that they have. You have, for the most of them, to take the time to guide them through. You ask them "What do you want to say?", "What's the first word going to be?", "What sound are you going to use?", and so on. In that way you are guiding them through the process, but allowing them to use their knowledge. In that way you can evaluate what they know, whereas if you leave them to write and look at it afterwards you don't always have a clear indication of what they are picking up. They are at that guidance and support stage and in order to properly evaluate you have to work with them. They read to me, and when they are reading to their buddies I go around and listen and I intervene at certain parts. If they are not pointing to the words I ask them to point to the words to see what their matching behaviours are like. If they are making errors I listen and try to determine if they are reasonable or if they have an idea of how to work with unfamiliar kinds of materials. I take them to one side and I ask them sight vocabulary words that we've used a lot, and get an idea of the numbers. With their sounds I generally go by what they're producing and how they're using it. When they're working with me I get an idea. If I find that some child is having a major problem and not really getting beyond a certain point, then I work with that child a good bit more and sometimes talk to the guidance counsellor or the special needs teacher and get them to come in and work with that child, or sometimes take that child out into a quiet room and work one-on-one.

Question 6(a)

Do you consider yourself to be a whole language teacher?

Response

Well, yes I guess so. I don't like the term whole language; I never did. The term came out the first year I came over here, which was eight years ago, and I had been steeped in the philosophy through my thesis before the term ever reached here. And once the term came out teachers made it mean whatever they wanted it to mean and so I don't like the term. My ideas of how to teach language makes me a language teacher and I think it is a whole language teacher, but I don't like the term. I don't tend to think whole language; I tend to think what do I know about children's learning, and what works. A lot of the old has to be brought in with the new and it has to be mixed up, done in slightly different ways, but I don't leave a whole lot out. So, yes I believe I am a whole language teacher in my own framework.

Question 6(b)

How comfortable are you with this status?

Response

Oh, I'm extremely comfortable with what I do. I'm always watching the kids, trying to determine what would come next with this group of children, what should come next in their learning of language, and trying to put myself in their position. They know this,

they know that, now let's see what I can do to put it together, and see what I can do to get them to use it.

Question 7(a and b)

In your opinion, are you receiving adequate support and assistance in advancing your understanding and knowledge of whole language? If yes, what types of support are you receiving and from where is this support coming?

This question was answered from the perspective of what she did as the past primary coordinator with the board.

Response

When I came into this board eight years ago, whole language was just on the scene and for most teachers all they had was the term and no background. I did a fair amount of inservice, as much as you could do. What the teachers were exposed to was on a grade by grade level; we had grade level meetings where everybody shared what they were doing in language. The first year I was here I did a session, with the teachers, on how children learn language. This was the whole language basis of a lot of the researchers at that time. We had sessions on Experiencing Language when that came out, in the early stages. We had sessions with the grade levels when the Networks language arts program came out. When you go to an inservice you go with your own perspective, your own views on things, but what I did was try to show everybody where Networks fit in with the department's philosophy in Experiencing Language. Also, I tried to point out some of the problems with the Networks program, some of the whole language components that were coming through, some of the different things that you could do with it, and

whether or not phonics was a component in it and how that and other skills were handled within the program. So teachers had a full-day session on that. We also had grade level meetings, whereby we showed them some of the new materials that were coming in, such as "The Bookshelf Program" from Scholastic. We showed them how a lot of predictable materials were coming through now and how some of the informational materials were becoming predictable for the younger grade levels. I started to get the teachers to look at the literature and decide what they were going to use with it and how they were going to handle it. There wasn't a lot of time for that, but we did have their ideas typed up and sent back to them. The spelling document was whole language and there was a committee who worked on that. The report card was changed and whole language was the reason for the changes and the reason for anecdotal comments. There were articles on whole language sent out to teachers. There was quite a lot done over a six year period. Teachers, after a while, kind of got fed up with it and wanted to move on to other things. Everybody has to accept their own perception and ideas of whole language, whether or not it mirrors somebody else's. You have to allow people to think. Also, I did a video-tape the last year I was at the board, of one of the new spelling books that came out--a professional resource. I reviewed it on tape, but I'm not sure if it was ever sent out. Another thing, I did up some strategies and ideas and sent those out to teachers. The last thing I did before I left the board was, I did up a list of whole language strategies and all the objectives, under one cover for each grade level. So in grades one, two, and three teachers each had a little booklet with their objectives in it, and I wrote down a lot of writing and oral language objectives to go along with that. For

kindergarten, there was an assessment package done up in 1988, I think. That's all whole language and in it I wrote down checklist items and explained them. But a lot of the work in whole language, too, went through individual reading assessments on kids. Whenever I worked with a child I went back and talked to the teacher; I was approaching it from a whole language point of view, looking at what strategies to use with a particular child and these were whole language strategies. Since I've been in the teaching position, I don't think there's been anything done, because there's no one to do it. I don't think there's been a lot done in the last couple of years.

Question 7(c)

What types of support do you see as essential in ensuring your successful development as a whole language teacher?

Response

I think that teachers have to have a lot of reading materials put in their hands, where the points are made very clearly, in very short fashion, so they don't have to read a technical, jargonized, twenty page article to get the point. They need a lot of that coming to them, where the points are synthesized and put together in an understandable manner, because we don't have time to be students, as well as teachers. We also need a lot more meetings, where teachers get together and share what they are doing. I think that is the critical thing. The questions "What are you actually doing?", "How are you doing it?", "How are you finding that it works?", "How are you working with parents?", "How are

you sharing with parents, what students are doing?", and "How are you asking the parents to help the children?" need to be discussed. I think we need a lot of time to talk and little bits of information that will keep coming at us, done up in a very reader friendly, usable way, that we can take and use. Information such as, ideas of how to take from literature all that it can give you and how you can follow up on it--practical ideas. We need to gather the ideas we pick up from literature and elsewhere and come together in meetings and share these ideas. We need to talk about what we're doing.