USING A READING WORKSHOP TO IMPROVE SEVENTH GRADERS' READING VOCABULARY, COMPREHENSION, ATTITUDES, AND CONCEPTS OF 'SELF AS READER'

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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MAUREEN CROCKER

USING A READING WORKSHOP TO IMPROVE SEVENTH GRADERS' READING VOCABULARY, COMPREHENSION, ATTITUDES, AND CONCEPTS OF 'SELF AS READER'

By

© Maureen Crocker, B.A. (Ed.)

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

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess and evaluate the effect of a Reading Workshop on a heterogeneous group of Grade 7 students' reading achievement, attitude, and concept of 'self as reader'. This study also investigated the effect on students' perceptions of peer and parent relations, as well as general school and general self-concepts.

The three-month study consisted of exposing 21 students to a Reading Workshop for 11 of the 14 one-hour periods in a 14-day cycle. Three main components of the program were mini-lessons, independent reading, and the dialogue journal. A case study design was used to report the results.

Students were administered pretests and posttests in reading achievement, attitudes, concept of 'self as reader', peer and parent relations, as well as general school and general self-concepts. Descriptive data of the process were also collected by the researcher.

Results of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests revealed mean gains in comprehension. An analysis of variance showed gains in comprehension were statistically significant at the .006 level. The Estes Attitude Reading Scale revealed 81% of the students stayed at the same level or showed improvement in their attitude toward reading with a mean gain of 6.2. These gains were statistically significant at the .003 level. The "affective" domain was emphasized in the dialogue journals and

students also showed growth in this area. Marsh's Self-Description Questionnaire - 1 revealed that 85.7% of the students stayed at the same level or showed improvement in their concept of 'self as reader'. Mean gain was 11.9. This was statistically significant at the .001 level. The peer relations scale revealed a mean gain of 2.6 and statistical significance at the .025 level. The general self-concept scale also showed a mean gain of 1.5 and a statistical significance at .036 level. Statistical significance was not achieved on the general school and parent relations scale.

Based on these results, this study indicated that more opportunities for time, ownership, and response in reading, as provided by a Reading Workshop, are required in reading.

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Ms. Steffanie Tuff, replacement teacher for researcher

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of

my father - George Conway

for his love, support, and encouragement

and

my sister - Geraldine Conway

in whose absence life has never been the same

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DEDICATION	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xi

CHAPTER

1.	**THE NATURE OF THE STUDY**	1
	Introduction	1
	Statement of the Problem	6
	Need for the Study	8
	Purpose of the Study	13
	Limitations of the Study	17
	Organization of the Study	18
11.	**REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**	19
	Introduction	19
	Literature and Early Reading Development	21
	Important Role of Narrative	30
	Literature and Language Comprehension and Vocabulary	35
	Literature and Reading Achievement	40

Page

Developmental Patterns of Reading Achievement and Interest 48

Literature-Based Programs 57

Attitudes and Literature 63

Literature and Concept of Self as Reader 76

Reading Aloud 80

Role of the Teacher 84

Values of Reading Aloud 87

III. **DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY** 92

Introduction 92

Subjects 93

Definition of Terms 93

Instruments 94

Assumptions 95

Procedures 96

Introducing the Program 96

Selection of Appropriate Material 100

Creating the Learning Environment 106

Collection of Data 114

Reading Achievement 114

Page

Attitudes towards Reading 115

Concept of Self as Reader 115

Parent Questionnaire 116

Student Involvement 117

Treatment of Data 117

Reading Achievement 117

Attitudes towards Reading 118

Concept of self as reader 118

Parent Questionnaire 118

Student Involvement 118

IV. **EVALUATION** 120

Introduction 120

Reading Achievement 122

Attitudes towards Reading 128

Affective Domain 138

Concept of Self as Reader 151

Effects of the Program in relation to Gender 154

Researchers' Perceptions of the Program 159

Introduction 159

Mini-Lessons 160

Independent Reading 174

Page

Dialogue Journal 183

V. **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS...** 189

Introduction 189

Summary 191

Conclusions 201

Recommendations 204

Research Recommendations 204

Practical Teaching Recommendations 205

BIBLIOGRAPHY 207

APPENDIX A 219

APPENDIX B 220

APPENDIX C 221

APPENDIX D 222

APPENDIX E 223

APPENDIX F 229

APPENDIX G 231

APPENDIX H 233

APPENDIX I 234

APPENDIX J 236

APPENDIX K 237

APPENDIX L 238

Page

APPENDIX M 239

APPENDIX N 244

APPENDIX O 245

APPENDIX P 246

APPENDIX Q 247

APPENDIX R 248

APPENDIX S 250

APPENDIX T 251

APPENDIX U 252

APPENDIX V 254

Page

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 - Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test Raw Scores 125

Table 2 - Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test Grade Equivalents - Vocabulary 126

Table 3 - Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test Grade Equivalents - Comprehension 127

Table 4 - Parent Questionnaire Results 135

Table 5 - Gender Comparison of Mean Gains (Gates-MacGinitie) 159

CHAPTER 1

THE NATURE OF THE STUDY

Introduction

> Developing a literate society will not be accomplished simply by teaching "readin', writin', and 'rithemetic!" It is not enough to develop functional readers. Teachers who recognize the true meaning of literacy will empower their students to use their "basic skills" as a key to unlocking the mysteries of the world to its arcane inhabitants. Literacy is the journey, not the final destination. (Decker, 1985, p. 12)

As Huck (1982) contended, "Increasingly, more and more teachers are beginning to see the goal of teaching reading as making readers, children who can and do read" (p. 318). Much of the earlier emphasis in the teaching of reading had been on the acquisition of skills assuming that, once children learned to read, they would automatically want to read and, of course, for a lifetime. Little thought was given to what actually happened once those skills were acquired. We know, however, that having the necessary skills for reading does not always guarantee they will automatically be used (Koeller, 1981; Chall and Snow, 1982; Lehr, 1985; Kozol, 1985; Decker, 1985; and Venezky, Kaestle, and Sum, 1987). Cullinan (1987) discussed the problem of the alliterate - "a person who knows how to read but who doesn't choose to read" (p. 11). She believed, as does Lamme (1987), that if you know how to read

but choose not to, then you are really no better off than someone who cannot read at all. The importance of practice and using what has been acquired is further supported by Decker (1985) who stated: "People who have the skills necessary for reading but read very little, eventually become poor readers" (p. 2). As Trelease (1989) indicated, "Reading is an accrued skill: The more you do it, the better you get at it; the better you get at it, the more you like it; and the more you like it, the more you do it" (p. 202).

Rossman (1987) referred to the concept of "reading automaticity" - the ability to read with "...greater speed, more accurate performance, with attention freed from basic skills and focused on higher-order aspects of the task." He indicated that "There appears to be a very strong relationship between automaticity and the amount of time children spend reading." This skill is acquired through simple practice and results in the "ability to learn from printed material, and to benefit from and enjoy reading." According to the authors of Becoming a Nation of Readers (1985), "...average minutes per day reading books was the best predictor of reading comprehension, vocabulary gains, and gains in reading achievement between the second and fifth grade " (p. 77). In Rossman's own study, "...by fifth grade, the average automatic readers scored impressively in the 79th percentile on a speed test and the 90th percentile on a test of reading accuracy,

compared to the 27th and 34th percentiles respectively for the average nonautomatic reading fifth grader." Since we know reading is "...the ultimate, prerequisite skill on which all other school skills are based" (pp. 28-32), it is important that children have time to read in order to develop automaticity.

Recently in the reading literature, there is a shift in not only viewing how children learn to read but in viewing what happens once the skill is acquired. It is a shift away from the "bits and pieces" of hierarchical instruction of the basal reader to an approach that immerses children in the world of literature, stories, and books. Here, research, testimony, and authors show that literature can foster positive attitudes, increase reading achievement, and impact upon early reading and language development (Irwin, 1960; Durkin, 1961; Cohen, 1968; Clark, 1976; Butler, 1979; and Trelease, 1989). It is a world that can foster positive attitudes and have an impact upon the reading achievement of the older student as well (Greaney, 1980; Gatheral, 1981; Huck, 1982; Atwell, 1987; Trelease, 1989; Tunnell and Jacobs, 1989; McWhirter, 1990; and Swift, 1993).

Doake (1992) has commented on the process of beginning reading by stating, "Learning to read, like learning to talk, is also a language learning process. As such, given similar conditions, children can and do go about learning to read in

pretty much the same way as they learn to talk" (p. 124). Such conditions, however, require that children be active participants in their own learning in an environment that not only nurtures but encourages such development. It is an environment where they are read to as well as given opportunities to read and respond. Books become identified as a source of fun and pleasure and children soon grow to develop positive attitudes toward them. If we want to develop the habit of reading for a lifetime, it is important we do this for children of all ages.

From this perspective, the "affective" (i.e., wanting to read) is just as important as the "cognitive" (i.e., learning how to read), especially when one considers the decline in reading achievement, attitude, and the amount of time children currently spend reading as they move away from primary into the higher grades. That decline is well documented and will be discussed later in this thesis. In the opening introduction to Becoming a nation of readers (1985, p. 1), the authors stated, "Reading is a basic life skill. It is a cornerstone for a child's success in school. Without the ability to read well, opportunities for personal fulfilment and job success inevitably will be lost" (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985, p. 1).

The importance of not only knowing how to read but of using the acquired skill to read cannot be underestimated. If

the ultimate goal of education is to create individuals who are independent, can think critically and reason, as well as read for themselves, then being literate is important. Wells (1990) discussed three different modes of engagement when encountering different texts. He stated:

> In our Western culture, the most frequently encountered types of text are those that are fairly directly linked to action; for example, the advertising copy that influences our choice of goods to purchase, the forms we fill in for a variety of bureaucratic purposes, or the notes we leave on the refrigerator reminding a family member to buy more milk. A second major category included texts whose primary purpose is the transmission of what is taken to be factual information: reference books, work-related memos, instruction manuals, and so on. A third category includes texts that offer the author's considered interpretation of some aspect of experience, either real or imaginary: expositions of scientific theory, history, and biography, as well as novels, poems, and plays. (p. 13)

However, as Wells goes on to say: "... unless individuals develop strategies, as readers, for constructing and critically evaluating their own interpretations of text ...they remain dependent on others to do their thinking for them" (p. 14). According to the author, this can only result in impoverished lives where individuals are unable to contribute as fully as they might to the "affairs of the workplace and to those of the wider society" (p. 14).

This researcher believes that providing for the

motivation to read for intrinsic reasons can be accomplished through the use of literature. Often there is not enough time provided in the curriculum to read to children and to provide them opportunities to read independently as well. Children can develop, as Koeller (1981) referred to it, "the hobby of reading." More specifically, this researcher believes this can be accomplished through a Reading Workshop where attitudes and reading achievement can improve, as well as the student's concept of 'self as reader'. In the Reading Workshop students are not only read to, but are given the time to select their own literature and then read independently with opportunities to think, reflect, and write about their own learning. As Atwell (1987) has indicated, "Readers need time and ownership, but they also need help deciding what they'll choose to do with the time at their disposal. Readers need response" (p. 164).

Statement of the Problem

> Children do not retain what they do not practice or find relevant in their lives. Learning the essential skills necessary for becoming a reader are only tools and just as owning a hammer and saw does not make a carpenter, knowing how to read does not make a reader. (Decker, 1985, p. 11)

Teachers often assume that by the time children leave Elementary School to enter Junior High School, they not only

know how to read but want to read and in wanting to read, they are now lifelong readers, not just schooltime readers. As indicated earlier we know this is not always the case. Children often do not read for either information or pleasure. Again, classroom attention is often given to the cognitive domain of reading - teaching children how to read, while little attention is placed on the affective domain - teaching them to want to read.

In addition, while there is ample research showing the many benefits of exposing children to quality experiences with literature, Cosgrove (1987) contended that the literature:

> ...is limited to studies of reading aloud in the home, reading aloud to pre-primary and primary age children or reading aloud to reluctant and/or disadvantaged readers. The studies also measure only one variable - attitude or reading habits or comprehension - with one group of subjects within one location. (p. 5)

Although the researcher was unable to find more recent information since Cosgrove wrote this, it is believed that the older reader in Junior High School can benefit from the same experiences with literature as children who are younger and has designed a teaching program for Grade 7 students. This study will assess the effects of a Reading Workshop on children's reading achievement in vocabulary and comprehension, attitude, as well as their concepts of 'self as reader'. In addition, it will assess whether the program

affects males and females differently. Finally, it will also assess the effects on students' perceptions of peer relations and parent relations, as well as general and academic or school self-concepts. Descriptive data will also be collected on a daily basis throughout the study in the form of the researchers' perceptions and observations overall, as well as those specifically based on the dialogue journals.

Need for the Study

> Teaching children how to read is not enough; we must also teach them to want to read. Forty years of programmed learning proves it. We have produced a nation of schooltime readers where the objective should be lifetime readers. (Trelease, 1989, p. 205)

The Program of Studies (1992-93) from the Department of Education for schools in Newfoundland and Labrador states that, at the intermediate level, the English Program:

1. develops student's language knowledge and skills (reading, writing, listening, and talking).

2. through literature, deepens and extends students' awareness of the richness of life, expands their imagination, exercises their intellects, and matures their emotions. (p. 85)

In addition, the Program of Studies indicates that the content "includes an independent reading component (the junior novel) and appropriate library resources" (p. 86). An examination of the teacher's guide, English: The Intermediate

School, revealed that these novels "...are meant to be the core of a saturation program designed to get intermediate students reading as many novels as possible...to get all students involved in wide, independent reading" (p. 71). The "literature" referred to above is the literature outlined in the basal program.

Although these novels are not meant for any in-depth study and the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education has intended "wide" reading by students, there are obstacles that inhibit this worthwhile goal. First, in evaluating the Program of Studies for Junior High students and in trying to cover the curriculum prescribed, there is little time left for both students and teachers to pursue independent activities with literature. Second, when one considers all the other factors that compete for students' time outside the classroom, it appears from the literature that reading aloud to them and providing time to read in school may be critical. Goodlad's (1984) question is pertinent when he asks, "If our young people are not reading in school, where are they reading, and how much?" (p. 107). In two studies of the after-school activities of fifth graders, Fielding, Wilson, and Anderson (1984) found that half the children read from books only four minutes a day or less and 30% read two minutes a day or less. Almost 10% did not read at all. For the majority of children in the two studies,

1% of free time or less was used reading books.

In Ireland, Greaney (1980) noted that over a three-day study investigating the relationship between the amount of time devoted to leisure reading and a number of home, school, and personal variables among fifth grade students, they devoted an average of 5.4% of available leisure time to reading with 22.2% of students who did not read at all (p. 353). It is obvious from these studies that children do not spend a great deal of their leisure time in reading.

Third, another obstacle to students reading independently is the fact that the novels prescribed by the Department of Education are limited in numbers and are not always ones students will select to read on their own. The result often is students who have little opportunity to read for pleasure or to read materials of their own choosing.

The promotion of "wide" reading for learning an appreciation of books and love of reading (assuming the skills have been acquired) is not always guaranteed. Burton, as early as 1956, as quoted in Pfau (1966, pp. 13-14), recognized the necessity of building children's interest. He stated:

> The problem of promoting wide reading interests among children is largely a problem of dealing with individual differences, with differences in abilities, interests, and needs. As soon as children get an adequate start in their developmental program, they should be encouraged to read simple materials outside their readers, materials of their own choosing, to experience the satisfaction and joy of reading on their own. Then as they achieve greater reading power, they should be encouraged to read more and more materials outside their readers, again materials of their own choosing, to extend their reading explorations. (Burton, 1956, p. 380)

In addition to the problems both in and outside the classroom concerning students' reading in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, there is also the problem of the basic skills that should be acquired as children move through the system. According to PROFILE '92 Educational Indicators (1993, p. 31), the overall results of the Canadian Test of Basic Skills for Grade 8 students, in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador from 1980-1986, show that, in terms of achievement, the scores on subtests in Vocabulary, Reading, and Language "regressed substantially to approximate those of the mid-seventies." In 1989, however, the testing indicated a "reversal of this downward trend." In 1992, the testing showed results were the same as previous levels of testing for 1989 (Appendix A).

Mean vocabulary achievement scores of students are still low at the 33rd Canadian percentile, having shown no overall

improvement since 1989. The areas of reading and language show that students in this province remain at the "lower end of the average range at the 40th percentile" on standardized test performance (Appendix B). An overall breakdown of achievement by subtest and gender for Grade 8 students is given for Fall, 1989 and 1992 (Appendix C).

Problems of literacy and illiteracy become more pronounced when children leave high school. According to Perrin (1992), Statistics Canada reported that "16 per cent - 2.9 million adults - cannot cope with the written words in everyday life.... A further 22 percent - four million Canadians can read simple materials in familiar contexts" (p. 21).

The Conference Board of Canada, an independent research organization with relations in Europe and the United States, as quoted in Perrin (1992), reported that "70 per cent of Canadian businesses report they face problems because of limited literacy skills of their workers" (p. 21). This Conference Board further listed skills which provide "the basic foundation to get, keep and progress on a job and to achieve the best results." One of those critical skills included "Read, comprehend and use written materials, including graphs, charts and displays" (p. 3).

According to the results of a survey by Statistics Canada titled Adult Literacy in Canada: Results of a National Study

(1991), "The majority (62%) of Canadian adults have sufficient reading skills to deal with most everyday reading requirements (level 4)" (p.19). The four categories or levels used in reading are given below:

> Level 1: Canadians at this level have difficulty dealing with printed materials. They most likely identify themselves as people who cannot read.
>
> Level 2: Canadians at this level can use printed materials for limited purposes only, such as finding a familiar word in a simple text. They would likely recognize themselves as having difficulties with common reading materials.
>
> Level 3: Canadians at this level can use reading materials in a variety of situations, provided the material is simple, clearly laid out, and the tasks involved are not too complicated. While these people generally do not see themselves as having significant reading difficulties, they tend to avoid situations requiring reading.
>
> Level 4: Canadians at this level meet most everyday reading demands. This is a diverse group which exhibits a wide range of skills. (pp. 17-18)

A further analysis of the results by province revealed that: "...Newfoundland, with 24% of its adult population at reading levels 1 and 2 ..., registers the lowest estimated skill levels" (p. 27).

Purpose of the Study

> ...whether it is labelled as free reading, individualized reading, directed individualized reading, or reading workshop, the emphasis has always been on reading for pleasure. (Lesesne, 1991, p. 62)

Huck (1992) contended that a comprehensive literature-reading program is one where literature "permeates" the curriculum in an effort to produce children who not only know how to read but "who also become **readers.**"

> Teachers read aloud to children; they give children a choice of real books for their own reading; they make use of the fine informational books that we have today to use literature in every area of the curriculum; and they encourage children's response to books....(p. 524)

According to Lesesne (1991), free reading was developed by Lou LaBrandt in the 1930s and "focuses not on reading skills but on reading habits" (p. 62). The basic elements included:

- a teacher who believes that students are capable of developing taste and skills using their own reading materials
- a teacher who knows books and students' interests in reading materials
- a teacher who is committed to reading books students like and recommend and want to talk about
- a teacher who creates a climate for reading in the classroom
- a teacher who works unobtrusively for growth in taste, skill, and level of reading. (p. 62)

Holdaway (1979) credited Jeanette Veatch for her work and determination in this area and indicated she:

> ...pioneered the techniques of individualized reading and fought the reading establishment with tremendous energy and skill. It could be said that her approach to learning to read was the first clear cut statement of developmental principles in reading growth that was worked out in detail and tested rigorously in classrooms. (p. 31)

Veatch (1958) indicated, "In individualizing reading by using free choice of material, we have at least a way of keying learning more closely to the specific levels of each pupil" (p. 6). Specific benefits he included were exposing children to the values and tastes of talented artists and writers, as well as exposure to the classics of literature. Other benefits for children and reading he discussed were: gifted children progressing at their own pace; slower children not being stigmatized; a close relationship developing between child and teacher serving psychological needs; reading at children's own interest and level of ability that results in acquiring skills only as needed and at own pace and development; genuine audience for oral reading; and reading for its own reward (Veatch, 1959, pp. 14-34).

Greaney (1980) highlighted a longitudinal study by LaBrandt (1936) where students who had completed a six-year free reading program were still, 25 years later, " doing significantly more reading than most other groups with which they were compared" (p. 341).

Atwell (1987) developed what she called a "Reading

Workshop" that did not involve the use of a basal reader or a literature series but free reading by students. The workshop usually began with a mini-lesson that was based either on strategy lessons or a read-aloud. This was followed by a sustained silent reading period where students selected their own reading material. Time was also given for the students to share their thoughts and feelings in a dialogue journal. All students were required to write at least one letter a week in their journal sharing their thoughts about what they had read. Atwell was to be the recipient of a letter at least once every two weeks.

The purpose of the present study was to develop and implement a Reading Workshop based on Atwell's (1987) work for a heterogeneous group of Grade 7 students to create the "love" and "habit" of reading. This Reading Workshop was conducted during the regular English periods over a three-month time span.

Five major research questions used for this study are:

1. Will the experience of a Reading Workshop increase students' reading achievement in vocabulary and comprehension?

2. Will the experience of a Reading Workshop improve students' attitudes toward reading?

3. Will the experience of a Reading Workshop influence the students' concepts of "self as readers"?

4. Will the experience of a Reading Workshop affect male and female students differently?

5. What are the researcher's overall perceptions of the Reading Workshop with specific reference to students' progress as a result of interactions around the mini-lessons, independent reading, and dialogue journals?

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations existed in this present study.

First, the researcher recognized that since the study was carried out with one group of students in one school and with no control sampling, generalizations to other groups are inappropriate.

Second, the researcher was also the teacher of the class. However, every effort was made to ensure objectivity in the measurement of the outcomes of this program. All measurements were given on paper pencil tests with objective scoring procedures and standardized norms.

The researchers' perceptions, included as a qualitative description of events, were informed by students' comments and reactions on a daily basis, parent questionnaire. letters in the dialogue journals, and other interpretive activities that the students were involved in.

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter 1 includes the introduction, statement of the problem, need and purpose of the study, as well as the limitations of the study and organization of the thesis.

Chapter 11 reviews the literature pertaining to the study.

Chapter 111 includes a description of the subjects and definition of terms, an explanation of the instruments used, assumptions, procedures used for the study, and an explanation of the collection and treatment of data.

Chapter 1V includes the treatment of the data and findings of the study.

Chapter V includes the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further research and practical teaching.

The final section includes the bibliography and appendices.

CHAPTER 11

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

There can be little doubt among parents and educators of the value and important role of literature in the early life of children. Many parents begin reading to their children at birth seeing the act not only as another means and form of communication for creating a close bond with their child, but also as another means of extending and enriching their world. Through research we are learning that this simple act of reading extends far beyond the simple pleasures and delights of entertainment. The effects are extensive in terms of the impact upon early reading, language development, reading achievement, interest, attitude, and on how children view themselves as readers (Irwin, 1960; Durkin, 1966; Pfau, 1966; Cohen, 1968; Chomsky, 1972; Artley, 1973; Clark, 1976; Hall, 1978; Briechle, 1984; and Thomas, 1984).

For many children, however, these experiences are not part of their early life. As Mayfield and Ollila (1992) pointed out:

> At one end of the spectrum are children who begin school socially confident and verbally adept. They are able to recite stories from memory, print a number of alphabet letters, or know how to read and write. At the other extreme are children who have poor language development, lack social and emotional maturity, and have little knowledge of print materials and their functions. A few children do not understand the concept of book or what it means to read. Most beginning school children fall somewhere between these two extremes in terms of literacy development. (p. 255)

As children enter into the educational system, it is the role of the primary teacher to not only introduce these children to the world of books and reading, but to help them develop the positive attitudes and interest they will need, so they will read for a lifetime. If such experiences are not part of the early school life and books are used only for the "drills and skills", then children soon become "turned off" instead of "turned on" by reading. For the child who has had early, positive experiences with books, what has been initiated in the home, becomes consolidated and reinforced, if positive experiences with literature continue in school. If these experiences continue as children move through the system, the early love and learning with books is merely extended to include learning and reading for a lifetime.

The purpose of this review is to look at the important role and impact that literature has in the life of children of all ages. Specifically, it will focus on:

1. Early reading and the important role of narrative
2. Literature and Language Comprehension and Vocabulary
3. Literature and Reading achievement
4. Developmental Patterns of Reading Achievement and Interest
5. Literature-Based Programs
6. Attitudes and Literature
7. Literature and Concept of Self as Reader
8. Important Role of Reading Aloud

Literature and Early Reading Development

> We must provide children the necessary experiences which will push them past the mechanical skills extrinsically imposed into an intrinsic desire to read for pleasure, information, and decision-making. They must be exposed to the aesthetic rewards of reading at an early age...for the quality of their future depends on it. (Decker, 1985, p. 12)

In the past couple of decades, the emphasis in the primary grades on teaching reading based on a hierarchy of skills has been challenged in favour of an environment where children learn to read as naturally as they learn to speak. Harkness (1981) sees this as a difference between the two main protagonists in the field of reading, the "psycholinguists" who see reading as an extension of natural language learning which the child has been immersed in from infancy and "from

the whole learns to differentiate the parts, abstract rules, and create his [sic] own expressions" (p. 39). The "subskillists", on the other hand, believe that certain subskills have to be mastered first before the whole can be dealt with.

Goodman (1973) sees reading as a psycholinguist guessing game involving an interaction between thought and language. With this view, "Skill in reading involves not greater precision, but more accurate first guesses based on better sampling techniques, greater control over language structure, broadened experiences, and increased conceptual development" (p. 37).

Goodman (1974) stated "Literacy can become an extension of the existing language competence of the learner if we understand it and encourage children to rely on their language strength in learning to read" (p. 823). He argued that language instruction based on a hierarchy of skills are not necessary and contended, "All they need to become as effective in reading as they are in listening is meaningful written language which they need and want to understand" (p. 826). Furthermore, he stated, "No researcher has ever been able to support any particular sequence of skill instruction as having any intrinsic merit which derives from linguistic or psycholinguistic analysis" (p. 826). Smith (1984) contended that "Learning to read is a complex and delicate task in which

almost all the rules, all the cues, and all the feedback can be obtained only through the act of reading itself." In other words, "children learn to read only by reading" (p. 23).

Studies of preschool children who have been read to and in turn learn how to read support Goodman's view in showing that formal instruction is not necessary when children are exposed to quality literature on a regular basis where they have an opportunity to be active participants in interacting with the reader and text (Durkin, 1961; Clark, 1976; and Holdaway, 1979). According to Gatheral (1981), children who have been read to at home "...are more interested in stories, more able to anticipate events in stories, and understand more of the vocabulary in stories" (p. 34). From a 15 year longitudinal study, Wells (1986) observed the many benefits for young children from listening to stories read aloud and stated that children:

> ...gain experience of the sustained meaning-building organization of written language and its characteristics rhythms and structures. So, when they come to read books for themselves, they will find the language familiar. Second, through stories, children vicariously extend the range of their experience far beyond the limits of their immediate surroundings. In the process, they develop a much richer mental model of the world and a vocabulary with which to talk about it. As a result, as the content of the curriculum expands beyond what can be experienced firsthand in the classroom, children who have been read to find themselves at a considerable advantage.

> This is clearly apparent in the assessment made of our 10-year-olds by their teachers.... Stories can also provide an excellent starting point for the sort of collaborative talk between children and parents...as the parent helps the child explore his or her own world in the light of what happens in the story and to use the child's own experience to understand the significance of the events that are recounted. Such talk and the stories that give rise to it also provide a validation of the child's own inner storying - that inner mode of meaning making which is probably as deep rooted in human nature as is language itself. (pp. 151-152)

As Holdaway (1979) stated, "Essentially, the psycholinguists insist that reading is not a matter of perceiving or recognizing words first and then getting to the meaning but rather that meaning guides and facilitates perception" (p. 87). To maintain membership of the " 'literacy club' ", Smith (1988) believed:

> ...children develop their theory of the world and competence in language by testing hypotheses, experimenting in meaningful and purposeful ways with tentative modifications of what they already know. Thus the basis of learning is comprehension. Children learn continuously, through engagement in demonstrations that make sense to them, whenever their natural sensitivity for learning is undamaged. Learning is a social activity. Children learn from what other people do, and help them to do. (p. 197)

As Teale (1984) noted "Virtually unquestioned by researchers is the premise that reading to children

contributes directly to their early literacy development" (p. 110). This is well-documented and supported in the literature (Durkin, 1966; Clark, 1976; Butler, 1979; Holdaway, 1979; Teale, 1984; Wells, 1986; Applebee, 1987; and Doake, 1987). Lamme (1987) noted that children with early experiences of being read to usually "come to school loving books; they possess a storehouse of solid concepts about reading" (p. 42). Silvern (1985) noted the relationship between positive attitudes and higher achievement and children who come from homes where there is a wide range of reading materials available (Sheldon and Carillo, 1952; Durkin, 1966; Smith, 1971; and Teale, 1978).

Teale (1984) contended that in terms of reading to children, we "need to attend carefully to the nature of the activity itself." Various factors such as "the type of text, the number of times the book has been read, ...the number of children involved in the reading, and the temperamental characteristics and sociocultural backgrounds of the participants, as well as the age or developmental level of the child, affect what happens when parents read to their children" (p. 113). In a well-known study by Heath (1982), for example, we saw "In the early reading stages, and in later requirements for reading to learn at more advanced stages, children from the three communities respond differently, because they have learned different methods and degrees of

taking from books" (p. 72). In her study, three communities in the Southeastern United States - Maintown, Roadville, and Trackton - were studied, focusing on "literacy events" such as the bedtime story. From as early as six months of age, children in Maintown homes:

> **...give attention to books and information derived from books**...from the age of six months, **acknowledge questions about books**.... From the time they start to talk, children **respond to conversational allusions to the content of books; they act as question-answerers who have a knowledge of books**.... Beyond two years of age, children **use their knowledge of what books do to legitimate their departures from 'truth'**.... Preschool children **accept book and book-related activities as entertainment**.... Preschoolers **announce their own factual and fictive narratives**.... When the children are about three years old, adults discourage the highly interactive participative role in bookreading...and children **listen and wait as an audience**. (pp. 52-53)

As Heath (1982) noted, by the time these children enter school, "They have had years of practice in interaction situations that are the heart of reading - both learning to read and reading to learn in school" (p. 56).

In Roadville homes, on the other hand, "Bookreading time focused on letters of the alphabet, numbers, names of basic items pictured in books, and simplified retellings of stories in the words of adults." As well, if the plot seemed too difficult, the story was told in "short, simple sentences,

frequently laced with requests that the child give what-explanations" (p. 59). Literacy events were not extended beyond bookreading. When these children entered school, they did well initially in the first three grades. However, this gradually faded "As the importance and frequency of questions and reading habits with which they are familiar, decline in the higher grades..." (p. 64).

Finally, in Trackton bedtime stories did not even exist, "in fact, there are few occasions for reading to or with children specifically" (p. 71). Owing to this, Heath concluded, that when these children enter school, they must not only learn the "skills of taking meaning from books...but also **retain their analogical reasoning practices** for use in some of the later stages of learning to read" (p. 72).

Reading to children "has been found to have beneficial effects for each of these four aspects of preschool children's literacy development" (Teale, 1984, p. 115). While Teale (1984) believed there are four aspects of literacy development: assumptions about the functions and uses of written language; concepts of print, books, and reading, and the form and structure of written language itself; attitudes toward reading; and reading strategies, he believed an essential concept was that "the child first must come to understand that print is used to convey meaning" (p. 115).

In the following studies presented here, the children

were not formally taught to read. They learned to read in environments where they were exposed to positive and meaningful experiences with books that resulted in their learning to read in ways that were natural to their development. One of the earliest studies of young readers was done by Dolores Durkin. A review of the research literature in 1957 on early reading indicated very limited information was available (Durkin, 1966, p. 11). As a result of this, Durkin (1961) initiated a longitudinal study in 1958 to look at the factors that seemed relevant to a heterogeneous group of children. A look at the families revealed a high regard for reading since all the children had been read to regularly at home. Durkin indicated, "In all of these 49 families there was at least one person who took the time and had the patience to answer the children's questions about words and reading" (p. 164).

A second longitudinal study was initiated by Durkin (1966) to examine the preschool years of both early readers and nonearly readers involving 30 children. Again she found that all children had been read to regularly and noted "...the presence of parents, who spend time with their children; who read to them; who answer their questions and their requests for help; and who demonstrate in their own lives that reading is a rich source of relaxation, information, and contentment" (p. 136). In addition, the parents were avid readers

themselves.

In a similar study, Clark (1976) looked at 32 children from similar home environments who were already reading fluently and with understanding around age five, some began reading as early as 18 months. "These homes were providing rich and exciting experiences within which books were indeed an integral part" (p. 45). Not only were many parents avid readers who enjoyed reading to their children but, "An interest in their children's progress coupled with encouragement of independence of choice was a feature of most of the homes" (p. 102). It should also be noted, "A number of the fluent readers had available an interested adult with time to devote to them at the stage when they were interested in reading - either to read to them, talk with them, or answer their questions" (p. 102).

In CUSHLA AND HER BOOKS, Butler (1979) gave an in-depth study of her grandchild who had been read to from four months of age. She reacted differently to different types of books at eight to nine months, and could tell when a book was upside down at 11 months. Coming from a home where reading was an everyday occurrence, "Cushla's mother turned to books naturally" (p. 18). Cushla was read to everyday with the number of books gradually increasing as she got older.

What is remarkable in this study is that this child was born with several physical disabilities and was still

diagnosed as mentally retarded at two years of age. However, the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale administered at the age of three years, eight months indicated she performed above average IQ range. She was also reported as a happy and relaxed child and at the end of the interview, she "read" two picture books, "...these being only two of many with which she is conversant" (p. 84). As Butler (1979) stated:

> Cushla was not 'taught' to read, unless the provision of language and story, in books and out of books, can be called a method.
>
> I believe it can, and that it is the best method of all. It produces children who experience reading as a joyous process, natural to the human state; children who absorb ideas as sponges absorb water. That this eager ingestion helps children to find meaning in the complex and contrasting experiences that constitutes life is self-evident. (p. 105)

Important Role of Narrative

> Good narratives provide the reader a chance to discover what it might be like to be someone else. Such reading encourages readers to reflect on their own experience, to think about who they are and what they might become. (Johnson, 1992, p. 80)

In a review of the research on literature and literacy, Sawyer (1987) looked at the important role that "narrative" plays in the reading development of children. The work of the "influential theorist", Margaret Meek, is noted for "She has

advocated the teaching of reading through reading stories because 'it is most natural to let them learn by means of the imaginative drive to cognitive function - by reading stories'." She attributed the success of early readers to discovering that stories are like play in that they "teach the rules of narrative organization" (p. 34).

Rosen (1992) saw storytelling as "a basic form of communicating meaning." He stated, "All storytelling is an essential part of the functioning of the human mind. It is a major means of thinking, and communicating our thoughts" (p. 81). Rosen goes on further to say "Of all the genres learned through language...narrative is the genre we are most comfortable with." We gather a "rich experience of stories" at a young age helping us understand better how they work (p. 33).

In a collection of essays entitled, The Cool Web (Meek, Warlow and Barton, 1977), the importance of stories is reiterated. As the authors noted, "In listening to stories or reading them, the child moves outwards from himself into a world of action, or inwards into his thoughts and feelings" (p. 9).

Based on a study of children from early infancy to their elementary education, Wells (1986) found that among several home activities only early experiences of listening to stories were significantly related to later language ability. He

believed that for children listening to stories read aloud at an early age, they "...are already beginning to gain experience of the sustained meaning-building organization of written language and its characteristic rhythms and structures..." (p. 151). This author contended that by the time children come to read for themselves, they are already familiar with the language of books. In addition, he believed "...children vicariously extend the range of their experience far beyond the limits of their immediate surroundings" whereby a "much richer mental model of the world and a vocabulary with which to talk about it" is developed (p. 152). He reaffirmed the importance of stories by stating: "Such talk and the stories that give rise to it also provide a validation for the child's own inner storying - that internal mode of meaning making which is probably as deeply rooted in human nature as is language itself" (p. 152).

In a longitudinal study by Meek et al. (1983) of adolescents learning to read, a group of teachers recorded their experiences of working with older students. A point made by these teachers is that "...extended texts for inexperienced readers should be narrative" (p. 223). It was felt:

> They learned best when...they **composed** the text...when an inexperienced reader reads what he has written he discovers the vital secret - that readers tell themselves what the author says. The basic knowledge or skill is not the ability to decode print, but literacy competence in the written language - an extension of the primary socialization into speech - the ability to make it mean. (Meek et al., 1983, p. 224)

In reference to Cushla's story discussed earlier, for example, "pretend read" was not an uncommon activity for a child who had been read so many stories. Like Butler, Pappas (1986) contended that other observers (Holdaway, 1979; Crago and Crago, 1983; Taylor, 1983; Schickendanz and Sullivan, 1984; and Sulzby, 1985) have noted: "...that when young prereading children have been read storybooks, they frequently and independently have "re-enacted" or "pretended to read" their favourite books" (p. 6). The importance of this "pretend read" or as Pappas referred to it "protoreading" was further evident in a research study of 47 kindergarten children who were read picture storybooks and then asked to "pretend read" what they heard. The study revealed that their "pretend reading" was not simply rote memorization and that "...children use constructive cognitive/linguistic strategies in their efforts to pretend read a book" (pp. 7-8). Overall, research findings suggest that the message level of written language provides an important continuity from prereading to reading.

Holdaway (1979), also, noted the importance of this "reading-like behaviour" as a surprising and significant aspect of preschool book-experience (p. 40). In the work of Heath (1982), mentioned earlier as well, the important role that the bedtime story played in the literacy development of the Maintown children was evident.

Teale (1984) drew upon the work of Vygotsky (1978, 1981) and his notion of "development as a process of internalizing social relationships" to be relevant in the early literacy development of preschool children. Teale saw "book-reading episodes" as one type of "social interactional activity from which the child can internalize features necessary for reading and writing." He further contended that early experiences with stories can make the "link between home and school a stronger one." As well, it can "help the child develop a specific way of taking from text" and familiarize the child "with certain literary conventions and serves to develop the child's schema for stories, or his or her story grammar." Finally, storybook reading, gives the child the opportunity to develop a response to literature (Teale, 1984, pp. 118-119).

The problem for the older child in the educational system trying to learn how to read and the important role "narrative" plays is pointed out as well. Meek et al. (1983) stated, "Yet the reading demands of school leave him [sic] little time for

stories. Information comes less and less in narrative form as he [sic] goes up the school" (p. 180).

As Sawyer (1987) concluded:

> We can no longer afford to underestimate the importance of the role of narrative in reading. Narrative is a fundamental mode of meaning making through language for humans, and probably **the** main mode for children. We cannot present them with material that is too simplistic.... (p. 37)

He poignantly stated: " 'Reading' ought not to be a school activity while 'reading stories' remains a home one - 'reading' cannot be 'real work' while reading stories is 'just fun'" (p. 37).

Literature and Language Comprehension and Vocabulary

For over 30 years research has shown the relationship between reading aloud to children and children's linguistic development. Vail (1977) believed that a child can "catch" language by being read to and stated, "There is no greater way to expose a child to language than to read aloud to him [sic]" (p. 5).

Cullinan (1987) pointed out that language is used "...to interpret and organize our experience; it helps us understand our world and our place in it." The implications for the use of literature are obvious when one considers this statement. She cited research by Cazden (1972), Chomsky (1972), and White

(1954, 1984) which states that "...children take over the language they hear and read and use it as part of their own." As Cullinan affirmed, "Literature educates the imagination, provides language models, and molds the intellect" (pp. 4-6).

According to Williams (1986, p. 4)), psycholinguists apply the language emersion theory to learning to read. Harkness (1981) indicated the prerequisites for reading based on assumptions that included:

a) a child must be able to form rules about the structure of language

b) a child must be motivated to respond to print

c) a child must find reading pleasurable and useful

d) a child must develop insight that print is meaningful

e) a child must develop linguistically (pp. 41-42)

A study by Irwin (1960) tested the effect systematic reading of stories for 15 to 20 minutes each day would have on the phonetic production of 24 infants. This began when the infants were 13 months and ended at 30 months. As the mother read from illustrated story books, she pointed out pictures and talked about them and generally enriched the speech sound environment of the babies (p. 187). In the control group of 10, the parents were not given books nor told to read to their infants. The "spontaneous speech" of children in both groups

was recorded at two-month intervals. The mean scores showed little difference for both groups until about the 17th month. Then the difference "increased consistently with the experimental group having higher scores than the control group" (p. 190).

Bailey (1969) conducted a study using one experimental and two control groups to determine the effects of an organized library program using children's books and literature upon the language abilities of a group of disadvantaged first-grade urban children. The experimental group and one control group contained children disadvantaged; one control was nondisadvantaged. The experimental group participated in the program for one hour each day for a three-month period while the control groups did not participate.

Results showed a significant increase in the total language ability of the experimental group when compared with the disadvantaged children who had no program. The area of language encoding, and in particular the ability to express ideas orally, was the one in which they showed greatest gain when compared with two control groups. On several tests the nondisadvantaged group showed a significant gain when compared with the disadvantaged group who also participated in the traditional curriculum; there was no significant increase when the nondisadvantaged group scores were compared with the experimental group. On the test of ability to understand

spoken words, the nondisadvantaged group increased significantly over the experimental group (pp. 155-7). Chomsky (1972) looked at the language acquisition of 36 children between the ages of 6 and 10 and the relationship between the children's exposure to written language and the rate of linguistic development. Her study showed that hearing books read, and reading books, were important factors in linguistic development for all ages. The researcher pointed out that "The child who reads (or listens to) a variety of rich and complex materials benefits from a range of linguistic inputs that is unavailable to the non-literary child" (p. 23). It is interesting that Chomsky (1972) noted that from the point of view of exposure to written language,

> ...it may matter little whether the child has the book read to him...or reads it himself....It is possible, perhaps even likely, that in both situations the contents, style, and language usage of the book are made available to the child with little difference in effectiveness. (p. 23)

The reading results indicated "that exposure to the more complex language available from reading does seem to go hand-in-hand with increased knowledge of the language" (p. 33). It seems incredible that the simple practice of reading aloud to a child from a variety of literature can have so many benefits.

Butler (1979), discussed earlier, noted as well that Cushla's vocabulary "reflects this conversance with books." Her speech reflected the language of books with "words and phrases of increasing complexity and expressiveness" (p. 93).

Wells (1986), as discussed earlier, indicated that "...as the content of the curriculum expands beyond what can be experienced firsthand in the classroom, children who have been read to find themselves at a considerable advantage" (p. 152). He stated further:

> Children who had been read to were better able to narrate an event, describe a scene, and follow instructions. But perhaps what was most important in accounting for the teachers' higher assessment of these children's oral language abilities was the greater ease with which they appeared to be able to understand the teachers' use of language. (p. 157)

Cohen's study (1968), discussed later, showed progress in the acquisition of vocabulary and comprehension when children were read a story everyday.

While the practice of reading aloud tends to decline after primary grades, Fisher and Elleman (1984) proposed 10 reasons for reading aloud:

1. Reading aloud introduces pupils to new words.

2. Reading aloud introduces children to more complex sentence structure.

3. Reading aloud exposes students to more standard forms of English.

4. Reading aloud exposes students to various styles of written language.

5. Reading aloud develops a sense of story in children.

6. Reading aloud motivates children to refine their reading skills.

7. Reading aloud provides structure and motivation for creative writing.

8. Reading aloud can serve as a springboard to discussion or creative activities.

9. Reading aloud can enrich students' general knowledge.

10. Reading aloud adds pleasure to the day. (p. 67)

Williams (1986) summarized the value of reading aloud when he wrote: "Reading aloud not only bridges the gap between written and spoken language, but it familiarizes children with language patterns of literature... expands vocabulary, adds to the child's knowledge of the world, and is a means to develop schema" (p. 4).

Literature and Reading Achievement

That the use of literature has an impact upon reading achievement is also well documented. The results of the studies reviewed by Purves and Beach (1972) at all grade levels support this finding. Although the studies on reading interest were the largest in number, the possibility of bias was noted due to the instruments used (p. 62). There are

still quite a variety of studies spanning all grades and age levels, also various approaches using either the literature-based approach totally or some combination of literature and the basal. Overall, the use of literature is positive (LaBrandt, 1936; Cohen, 1968; Durkin, 1974-75; Briechle, 1984; Wells, 1986; and McWhirter, 1990).

In a landmark study by Cohen (1968), second-grade children were selected because of their academic retardation, low socioeconomic population, and high number of ethnic and racial minorities. Along with regular instruction using the basal series, 155 children in an experimental group were read to everyday for an entire year followed by a suitable follow-up activity from types suggested in a manual that had been provided. This was then compared to 130 children in a control group who were taught using the basal readers. The control group used story reading occasionally, if at all. Results of the study indicated the experimental group showed an increase over the control group in vocabulary, significant at the .005 level; in word knowledge, significant at the .005 level; and in reading comprehension, significant at the .01 level. Quality of vocabulary narrowly missed at the .05 level of statistical significance. When an examination of the achievement of the three lowest classes in the experimental and control groups was considered separately, the experimental group showed an increase over the control group in the

following areas: Word Knowledge, significant at the .05 level; quality of vocabulary, significant at the .05 level; and Reading Comprehension, significant at the .005 level. Huck and Kerstetter (1987) indicated that when Cohen's study was repeated in kindergarten through Grade 3 by Cullinan, Jaggar, and Strickland (1974), the results were similar.

A study by Durkin (1974-75) reported the reading achievement during grades 1-4 of children who participated in a 2-year prefirst grade language arts program. Although the reading achievement in the experimental group exceeded that of the control group for each of the four years, the differences in grades 1 and 2 were large enough to be significant beyond the 0.05 level of statistical significance; in grades 3 and 4, they were not.

From a discussion of the available research, reviewed at the time (McKee, Brzeinski, and Harrison, 1966; Shapiro and Willford, 1969; Sutton, 1969; Gray and Klaus, 1970; Reid [Undated]; and Beck, 1973), Durkin indicated at least one conclusion was warranted, "...earlier starts are not likely to cause reading problems later on...on the basis of the few studies that have been done...groups of early readers maintain their lead over groups of nonearly readers in subsequent years" (p. 58).

A study by Fearn (1971) looked at the effect of listening to taped readings of stories on 112 fourth graders in two

middle-class urban schools. Each school had a control and an experimental group. After listening to taped readings of stories for 12 weeks, the results showed that although the model was effective for the whole class, it was least effective for pupils scoring at the upper extremes in achievement tests and most effective on variables of comprehension and total reading for those at the lower extreme (p. 205).

Briechle (1984) did an eight-week study of 20 upper middle-class Grade 6 students divided into an experimental and control group to see if a teacher's reading for 25 minutes, three times a week to the experimental group would affect their reading comprehension. The control group worked on reading activities in a separate room. The results indicated a significant gain in comprehension for the experimental group. This study showed that children from an upper middle-class community with varying levels of achievement can benefit from being read to as well.

McCormick (1977), cited research by Porter (1970), which indicated that younger children may benefit from being read to more than older children. While all the children showed significant progress in reading achievement after a program of reading aloud, fourth graders' scores were more positively affected than were the scores of fifth and sixth graders.

Sirota (1971) looked at the effect of a planned program

of daily oral reading for 20 to 30 minutes on the voluntary reading of Grade 5 students. She found it can have significant effects.

Cosgrove (1987) looked at the effect of regular listening to oral reading by teachers on the comprehension, attitudes, and time spent doing independent reading of 221 students in fourth and sixth grades in six school systems in Connecticut. The students were read to for 20 minutes, three times per week, for 12 weeks. On all three measures, the students exposed to oral reading scored better than those who were not with a significant difference. Student interviews and logs confirmed the results.

Swift (1993) conducted a study of four classes of heterogeneously sixth-grade students using the Reading Workshop approach based on the work of Nancie Atwell (1987). The Reading Workshop basically consisted of a 10- to 15-minute mini-lesson during which books and authors were frequently introduced. This was followed by sustained silent reading and the use of a dialogue journal in which each student had to write a minimum of once every two weeks. The teacher responded in their dialogue journals. Two of the classes did Reading Workshop four days per week in the fall and followed with the basal program in the spring (Group I); the other two classes did the reverse following the basal program in the fall four days a week and Reading Workshop in the spring

(Group 2). When the groups used the basal program, they were divided into three ability groups - below level, at level, and above grade level.

Results indicated that Group I improved more than did Group 2 in the fall but regressed when they switched back to the basal program in the spring. When the performance of students in the Reading Workshop was compared directly with the basal program, the difference was highly statistically significant at .01. The Reading Workshop students outperformed the students in the basal program. As well, comprehension scores improved more for students in the low achieving end as compared with students in the high achieving end. Qualitative data collected on a few students showed positive results as well.

McWhirter (1990) also described her experience using a Reading Workshop based on Atwell (1987) with a Grade 8 class. A survey of her eighth-grade students revealed that 97% of them did not read for pleasure. McWhirther cited research by Reed (1988) which emphasized the importance of self-selection since it enabled students to move forward and develop a taste for more mature kinds of literature (p. 563). The dialogue journal was used for response. She found that a Reading Workshop did encourage her students to enjoy learning from reading and writing by providing time for them to read and respond.

Several studies were carried out in Newfoundland investigating the effects of literature on students' achievement, as well. All of them, with the exception of one, involved primary children. Hayden (1991) looked at the effect of a literature program on the reading and writing abilities of 29 students in Grade 4 over a 14-week period with an additional analysis in two case studies. The children were exposed daily to quality children's literature in the form of read-alouds and independent reading sessions and, as well, they were given time for response. Mean gains of 0.7 of a year in vocabulary and 0.9 of a year in comprehension were achieved on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests and, as well, there was growth in students' written expression. Increases were made in positive attitudes and the two case studies supported the effectiveness of the program.

Both Strong (1978) and Boutcher (1980) looked at the impact of a literature program on remedial students. Strong's eight week program looked at the effect literature had on the attitudes of nine children who experienced difficulty learning to read. The results indicated the program was successful in its selection of reading materials and challenging activities for the development of interests and habits, as well as in fostering positive attitudes toward reading.

Boutcher (1980) examined the effect of a literature program on seven remedial children, four in Grade 2 and three

in Grade 3 over a six-month period during which the intern met with the students four times a week for 30 minute sessions. Literature was read aloud to the children and they participated in a variety of language activities including use of the language-experience approach. Students self-selected their books and kept a record of their selections. Results showed that the Grade 2 students made an average gain of 0.9 years in reading comprehension and 1.1 years in vocabulary; the grade 3 students made an average gain of 1.2 and 1.4 years respectively. Improvements were also noted in listening ability, creative writing, and attitudes toward reading.

Greene (1988) looked at the effect of a literature-based reading/writing program on the reading achievement, self-concept and attitudes of a group of Grade 2 students. The study investigated whether such a program would improve students' performance in reading, self-concepts as learners, attitudes toward reading and writing. Results indicated growth in all areas. On standardized reading pre and posttests, the mean gain in both vocabulary and comprehension were greater than the Canadian national mean gain. Eighty-eight point five percent of the students showed an improvement in self-concept. Eighty-four point six percent showed improved attitudes toward reading and 92.3% showed improved attitudes toward writing.

The next section of this study will look, first, at the

developmental patterns of reading achievement and interest. Then it will examine the literature-based approach.

Development Patterns of Reading Achievement and Interest

According to Chall and Snow (1982): "A major problem confronting educators is the decline in the acquisition of literacy after about fourth grade" (p. 1). Chall (Testimony, 1979) further contended that although the National Assessment showed an increase in the late 1970s in reading achievement in grades 1-4, the higher grades show no improvement and decline (p. 1). Findings from their 18-month in-depth study of home factors that influence the comprehension of second-, fourth-, and sixth-grade pupils revealed that in the development of reading, writing, and language, "All seem to start off well...They show growth between grades two and four, and then decelerate...after grade four. The same trends are found for Grades three, five, and seven" (pp. 10-16).

In a study by Tunnell and Jacobs (1991), an 18-item questionnaire was administered to 508 students in grades 2 through 6. The results showed that children's attitudes toward reading become poorer as they move through the grades. A study by Johnson (1965) is cited and discussed showing that children in the lower grades had better attitudes toward reading than older students in each successively higher grade. As well, a study by Neal and Proshek (1967) is cited and

discussed showing increasingly negative attitudes from grades 4 to 6. Indeed, as Tunnell et al. (1991) stated, "...reading attitudes are as significant as a student's ability to read" (p. 242).

Atwell (1987) cited statistics from the National Assessment of Educational Progress that reported that 13- and 17-year-old Americans read less, especially of fiction, than do nine-year-olds (p. 156).

Lehr (1985) reported that according to a study commissioned by the Book Industry Study Group, a nonprofit organization of publishers, librarians, and others associated with the book industry, the "nonreaders" in society are young. The study showed that while adults are reading more, young people age 16 to 21 are reading less with a drop from 75% in 1978 to 63% in 1983 of this age group who were readers (p. 171). Trelease (1989) also cited research from the Book Industry Study Group, showing 24% of U.S. adults do not read a book in the course of a year with young adults again showing the largest decline (p. 7).

According to Kozol (1985), McGraw-Hill experienced a steady decline throughout the 1970s in selling and publishing hardcover books. He further indicated, "Growth in sales is caused by greater use of books by only one third of the population. Thirty-seven percent of adults under 21 do not read books at all" (p. 17).

Decker (1985) also referred to a major five hour TV documentary in 1984 in which noted researchers and commentators felt that literacy "has already replaced illiteracy as the major threat to our society...reaching epidemic proportions...crossing all socioeconomic and educational boundaries" (p. 2).

Greaney (1980) cited research by Maxwell, (1977) and Whitehead, Capey, and Maddren (1975) which indicated that, as children get older there is a decrease in the time spent in leisure reading, particularly book reading (p. 340). Further, Greaney's own study, as quoted earlier, showed that little time is spent in leisure reading among Grade 5 students.

In reference to the results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for young adults mentioned earlier, a further analysis by Venezky, Kaestle, and Sum (1987) led them to conclude, "...we are not a nation of careful readers nor are we highly competent information processors. In an information age, these deficiencies of young adults should be viewed as particularly troublesome" (p. 29). The NAEP Reading Assessments also showed that "Higher-level reading skills of 9-, 13-, and 17-year-olds have shown no real improvement between 1971 and 1984..." (p. 45).

According to Reed (1988), 12 is the age when the peak of reading usually occurs. However, it is also the age when many readers lose interest in books. According to the author, this

happens for several reasons:

> Young readers are required by schools or pushed by parents to read books for which they are not emotionally or intellectually ready. Many adolescents have difficulty finding books with young characters who face the problems of adolescence. Some parents, teachers, and librarians are unaware of appropriate books to recommend. Such adults discourage adolescents from selecting books on certain topics or themes of interest...For some adolescents, reading is not accepted by their peer group. (pp. 13-14)

Koeller (1981) looked at a review of The Reading Teacher for 25 years. He found that although many leaders of the profession have been advocating the use of children's literature for years, "children are still taught by the single text approach" (p. 554). Their recommendations for "wide, interesting experiences...related reading, and...instruction in reading skills with the free selection of children's literature" have never been implemented despite the fact that "...these leaders have never disagreed about how to develop lifetime habits in reading and have never been proven wrong, and that there has been ample research evidence to support their recommendations" (pp. 552-554). These recommendations include self-selection of books by the children, an enthusiastic teacher who models own beliefs and values about reading and who reads aloud to the children, quality literature that is accessible in the classroom, opportunities

for children to share their responses, and closer ties with the home. It seems "Many reading practices shown to be limited in the 1950s are still with us" (Koeller, 1981, p. 553).

Research by Gates and Sheldon (1958), as cited by Koeller, showed that in the 1950s, 95-99% of American elementary teachers relied on the textbook as the major resource for instruction.

Research by Pieronek (1980), also cited in Koeller, showed that in 1980 basal readers were still used in one form or another by 80-90%. Anderson et al., (1985) noted that in the United States "...basal reading programs account for from 75 percent to 90 percent of what goes on during reading periods in elementary school classrooms" (p. 35).

Bettelheim and Zelan (1982) felt there are several reasons why children do not enjoy reading, two of which point to the basal reader for its reduction in the number of words used in the primers which make them dull and boring, as well as the text of the preprimers and primers that consists of words "combined in sentences that no one would ever say" (p. 4). As the researchers pointed out, such text often makes it more difficult for children to read. Anderson et al. (1985) also pointed out that:

> Regrettably, many stories for the early grades do not have a predictable structure. This is especially true of the stories in primers and first-grade basal readers. In fact many of the selections do not actually tell a story....This makes the selections less comprehensible, less interesting, and probably slows progress in learning to read. (p. 66)

Not only are the basals being questioned for the ability to teach children how to read, but they are also questioned for their ability to teach children to value reading as a lifelong process. According to Heilman (1961), as cited in Pfau (1966, p. 15):

> There is no denying that pleasurable and purposeful reading is dependent upon the development of mechanical and comprehension skills. Yet millions of individuals attain satisfactory proficiency in these skills without ever finding a deep personal satisfaction in reading. Persons who love to read find this fact difficult to believe.

Tunnell and Jacobs (1989) noted, "...primary grade basals have fewer plot complications, less character development, and less conflict among and within characters. They lack the richness in vocabulary, sentence structure, and literary form found in children's books" (p. 476).

Giddings (1992) discussed studies by John and Ellis (1976) and Cairney (1988) which showed that children who were exposed to basals did not see meaning as important in reading, focusing instead on classroom procedures or educational value

or on decoding, vocabulary, or accuracy. Eckhoff (1983) found children exposed to the language of basals tended to write "short choppy sentences" (p. 23).

In Weaver and Groff (1989), Weaver believed that in order for basals to deliver their promise of teaching all children how to read the guiding principle becomes "control". She stated that "virtually everything" is controlled including the reading curriculum, teachers, students, the sequence in which the skills will be taught (if not learned), the language of the texts, and, finally, what she considers as "most damaging of all...what counts as 'reading'" (pp. 5-6). Weaver (1992) believed the alternative to basal instruction was to "replace the external control with responsibility and choice, with decision making on the part of both teachers and students" (p. 22). This researcher believes that such control is empowering to both teachers and students who read for the pleasure and information that quality literature brings.

Koeller (1981) believed, "The problem comes after the basic skills are mastered in the primary grades, when children continue to be subjected to one textbook rather than many books of their own choosing"(p.554). He indicated that what has been suggested is following the practices of book publishers, "...who are concerned with habits, not skills, because people with adequate reading skills are not necessarily the people with the enduring habit of reading" (p.

554).

Butler (1981), like Giddings (1992), expressed concern over the lack of time for independent reading. From Butler's (1981) point of view, "The worst thing about total reliance on a basic reading system is that it may not allow children to sit quietly and read something they like" (p. 553). All too often, it seems, learning how to read becomes an end in itself. Throughout the grades, teachers and students are so busy trying to cover the basal program there is little time left either for the teacher to read to the children or to let the children read on their own.

Butler's view on the lack of time children have to read is confirmed by Goodlad's (1984) statistics. They gave a dismal view of the state of reading in classrooms:

> Exclusive of the common practice of students taking turns reading orally from a common text, reading occupied about 6% of class time at the elementary level and then dropped off to 3% and 2% for junior and senior highs, respectively. (pp. 106-7)

As children move through the system, the use of the basal persists with little opportunity for reading in real and meaningful situations where the student has some control over selection, time to read, and time to respond. As they move through the system, it seems they have little time to simply read for pleasure. Ecroyd (1991) saw the study of literature as having value and felt it should not be neglected, "... but

unless we somehow instill ... the motivation to learn through reading, our students will be learners and readers in school only, not lifelong learners and lifelong readers. And as their teachers we will have failed them" (p. 76).

Lesesne (1991) reiterated a similar view when she asserted, "The love of reading is not innate; it is a habit which must be cultivated....If we rely too heavily on textbooks, then we cannot expect to nurture the reading habit" (p. 60).

In 1986, the National Assessment of Educational Progress in the United States published major findings of a survey that assessed the literacy abilities of young adults, ages 21-25. The conclusions of Venezky et al. (1987), as reiterated throughout the report, were that, "...the literacy skill levels found in the NAEP survey are not adequate, on average, for maintaining world leadership in a changing, technological society...the levels achieved by many minority and poor respondents were disproportionately low" (p. 7). Far more troublesome were their comments about basal programs:

> A far deeper schooling issue relates to the basal reader approach to teaching comprehension skills. The current partitioning of reading skills into inferential and literal classes, with the further subdivision of the former into cause-and-effect, time sequence, enablement, and the like, while logically appealing, may be part of the cause for poor performances on higher level reading skills.... The complexity of real reading tasks depends less on the differences among these classifications than it does upon the number of text features that must be processed, the presence of irrelevant or other distracting information, vocabulary difficulty, and the match between task statement and text wording. Yet basal readers show little awareness of the importance of these latter factors. (p. 45)

If the above studies and surveys of reading habits give a realistic picture of the use that is made of the reading skills that have been acquired, then it is obvious we need not only be concerned with merely teaching children how to read. A different approach to the way we teach literature needs to be considered as well.

Literature-Based Programs

The use of trade books, or some combination of this and the basal program, as opposed to a basal reading approach only, is becoming more and more popular as an alternative not only to teaching children how to read but instilling in them a desire and love of reading as well. Tunnell, Calder, Justen

111, and Phaup (1991) stated: "We have long been convinced that an affective approach to reading, emphasizing art, reading, and children's trade books is more effective both in teaching reading and improving attitudes than most current skills approaches" (p. 242). Giddings (1992) noted, in his analysis of the research, that the "Information which provides a theoretical base for the literature-based reading instruction movement focuses largely on the whole language philosophy, psycholinguistics, and cognitive psychology" (p. 27). Advocates, such as Goodman (1974) and Smith (1988), believed:

> Children become literate...by being immersed in a literate environment and by being encouraged and supported in encounters with literacy....As an integral aspect of literacy, reading ability develops as children are supported in meaningful engagement with print and whole texts, and as they are nurtured in an environment that values literacy. (Giddings, 1992, p. 27)

In this view, the emphasis is not on skill development and "understanding of exact textual meaning." It focuses instead on "comprehending passages and relating textual information to personal experience and prior knowledge" (p. 19).

Cohen's (1968) study, for example, resulted in significant gains for an experimental group who used a literature component along with regular instruction in their

study. Tunnell and Jacobs (1989) cited research by Eldredge and Butterfield (1986), who studied 1,149 students from 50 Utah classrooms in Grade 2. They compared a traditional basal approach to five other experimental methods, two of which used variations of a literature-based program. The researchers found that "...14 of 20 significant differences among the instructional methods favoured the literature approach teamed with a series of special decoding lessons....The other literature-based group also placed highly" (p. 471).

New Zealand's literature-based program for children in first grade called "Shared Book Experience" met with such success that such programs have "taken over on a national scale" (Tunnell and Jacobs, 1989, p. 471). An American version called the "Ohio Reading Recovery Program" which targets children in first grade experiencing difficulty has met with considerable success as well. Tunnell and Jacobs (1989) cited the results of a controlled study that matched those of New Zealand: " 'After an average of 15 to 20 weeks, or 30 to 40 hours of instruction, 90% of the children whose pretest scores were in the lowest 20% of their class catch up to the average of their class or above and **never need remediation again**' " (p. 471).

For speakers limited in their knowledge of the English language, the success of literature-based programs has been documented as well. Again, Tunnell and Jacobs (1989) cited

research by Larrick (1987) where "Immersion in children's literature and language-experience approaches to reading and writing were the major instructional thrusts" for students in a school on New York City's west side where "92% came from non-English speaking homes, 96% lived below the poverty level, and 80% spoke no English when entering school" (p. 471). At the end of the year, all 225 students "could read their dictated stories and many of the picture books shown in class. Some were even reading on a second grade level" (p. 472). The following year reported similar results.

Finally, Tunnell and Jacobs (1989) documented the value of literature-based programs for older students who have failed and those at risk, but pointed out "In the studies by Eldredge, Holdaway, and Tunnell, the average and above average reader made progress equal to and most often better than students in traditional programs..." (p. 473).

As literature-based programs become popular, their validity is no longer questioned. As Zarrillo (1989) stated: " Indeed, the question was no longer **if** their classrooms should be literature-based, but **how** to develop the best literature-based program possible" (p. 27). Fuhler (1990) asserted that teachers and students have a greater interest in the curriculum when they have some say in it. She believed, "The classroom curriculum must be molded around the strengths, needs, and abilities of individual students taught by the

professional in charge, not by the scope and sequence chart or the basal teacher's guide" (p. 313). The author believed the advantages of such an approach included the opportunity for self-selection, the learning of essential reading skills and vocabulary, and the development of critical thinking (Fuhler, 1990, p. 314).

As Strickland (1992) noted, however, switching to a literature-based program is not simply a matter of changing the materials used in the curriculum; it is a change in the beliefs and philosophy about how children learn. "For many, this change means shifting away from classrooms dominated by teacher-directed instruction, prepackaged materials, and strict teacher control to classrooms characterized by variety and balance in the materials and methods used and where responsibility and control are shared by teacher and students" (p. 111).

From Zarrillo's (1989) examination of 15 teachers who successfully met his definition of successful teaching using children's books, he observed that different approaches were used such as the "Core Book" approach, the "Literature Unit", and "Self-selection and self-pacing". However, the following activities were shared by all approaches - reading aloud, students responding to literature through interpretive questions, individualized time during which students read self-selected books, teacher-directed lessons, and groups of

children working cooperatively on projects (p. 27).

Tunnell and Jacob's (1989) noted the following "commonalities were overtly employed or subtly implied in all of the literature-based reading programs: "children learned to read naturally as they learned to speak by being read to and allowed to handle books, with the process continuing in school; there was use of a natural text "written in natural, uncontrolled language"; a variety of the neurological impress method was used such as children "reading" by following along; there was reading aloud, sustained silent reading, self-selection of reading materials and teacher modelling; an affective approach to reading instruction was evident with an emphasis on changing attitudes; and finally, skills taught in meaningful contexts as they relate to books and writings and follow-up activities with reading experiences (pp. 474-476).

According to Gidding (1992) literature-based reading instruction means different things to different people as evidenced by the various definitions and practices discussed in the literature. Hiebart and Colt (1989) concluded after examining three patterns of literature-based reading instruction that a total reading program involved various combinations of teacher and student interaction with literature so children develop as "thoughtful, proficient readers....Lifelong reading depends on children having numerous opportunities to participate in authentic reading

situations within the classroom community" (p. 19). They noted, however, that, "The ultimate test of an effective literacy program is the ability of children to read independently" (p. 17).

Attitudes and Literature

> Certainly, how students feel about reading is as important as whether they are able to read, for, as is true for most abilities, the value of reading ability lies in its use rather than its possession. (Estes, 1971, p. 135)

As McKenna and Kear (1990) pointed out, "The recent emphasis on enhanced reading proficiency has often ignored the important role played by children's attitudes in the process of becoming literate" (p. 626). Athey (1985) further supported this view indicating: "There is probably little disagreement today, even among the most fervent advocates of a cognitive-linguistic view of reading, that affective factors play a role both in reading achievement and reading behavior" (p. 527). However, she pointed out "...affective factors receive little elaboration or explication...they must be shadowy variables" (p. 527). Mathewson (1985) felt that such neglect toward studying these factors may also "...reflect a perception that affective concepts are difficult to define" (p. 841).

In previous studies discussed earlier, such as

Durkin's (1961), we were informed of children who entered school "...with strong, positive attitudes about books and about their abilities to read, which virtually insured further success in becoming fully literate" (Tunnell et al., 1991, p. 237). What this and similar studies show is that children who enter school knowing how to read or who learn to read easily come from homes where they are read to regularly with interaction and discussion. They have more positive attitudes and higher achievement levels in reading than children whose parents do not read to them. As Bond and Wagner (1960), quoted in Pfau (1966, p. 22), stated:

> Attitudes toward reading as a part of life begin very early in the setting of the home. Some children enter first grade with a conception of reading as a useful and pleasant pursuit; others literally have never seen reading used and never have seen another gain information or enjoyment from reading. Thus, before children have read a word of print and have come under the influence of a school teacher they display differences in their attitude toward reading. (p. 296)

Leila Berg (1977) as well, as cited in Harkness (1981), hypothesized that "the motivation to read and enjoy books is achieved through reading to the child from the earliest possible age so that it becomes natural to him (sic)" (p. 45).

Many researchers, as well, believe we need to be concerned with more than just teaching children how to read, we need also be concerned with children's attitude toward

reading (Pfau, 1966; Briechle, 1984; and Cosgrove, 1987). Much time, effort, and energy in the curriculum are spent on trying to find ways to teach children how to read assuming that once they have acquired these skills, they will automatically use them. As Saks (1981) indicated, "A child's attitude toward reading...determines the kind and amount of reading they do" (p. 1). Tunnell et al. (1991) discussed a recent research report by Anderson et al. (1987) which concluded that "interest in the reading material is thirty times more powerful than readability in determining or predicting a student's ability to comprehend a passage" (p. 238). Unfortunately, it seems many schools produce students who read for school related activities only but not for their leisure time.

Singer (1965), as cited by Athey (1985), analyzed power of reading (or comprehension) in elementary school children and found that:

> cognitive-linguistic variables could account for 66 percent of the variance at Grade 3, 71 percent at Grade 4, 69 percent at Grade 5, and 73 percent at Grade 6, leaving approximately 30 percent of the variance in comprehension among elementary school subjects unexplained by such factors. (p. 527)

As Athey (1985) stated, "We would venture to suggest that learning may be inadequate for motivational reasons and instruction may be inappropriate because it fails to appeal to the values and interests of the learner" (pp. 527-528).

However, in developing positive attitudes toward reading among early adolescents, Alvermann and Muth (1990) also pointed out the importance of the emotional development of this age group since "Students' affective responses toward reading...are contingent on their emotional development" (p. 100). George and Lawrence (1982), as cited in Alvermann and Muth (1990), summarized three general criteria for teachers to consider based on the emotional needs of these students. These include:

> 1. Providing opportunities for peer recognition is essential at the middle school level.
>
> 2. Setting realistic goals is essential to minimize the chances of gaps occurring between transescents' (or adolescents') idealized selves and their actual performance.
>
> 3. Channeling emotional energies into creative activities is especially important. (p. 99)

In a review of the research for the past 50 years, Lesesne (1991) noted that several "key points" have emerged as significant in contributing to students becoming lifetime readers. The first includes not relying too heavily on textbooks. Lesesne cited research by Livaudais (1986) that looked at which reading activities students from Grade 7 to Grade 12 found interesting and motivational. Students indicated teacher read-aloud, freedom of choice in reading materials, and owning a book as motivating. Second, he

pointed out that children and young adults need role models to emulate. He indicated that telling children they have to read is not enough. Parents and teachers have to be readers themselves. Third, children and young adults need time in school to read for pleasure. In Lesesne's study referred to earlier, less than one hour was spent daily reading for pleasure. Fourth, free reading can be used to develop lifetime readers because it "focuses not on reading skills but on reading habits" (p. 62). Finally, another key point in developing lifetime readers is a curriculum rich in response. He indicated, "Students, therefore, need the opportunity to respond to materials with their own personal reactions" (p. 63).

Cullinan (1987) believed there were at least two goals for every school reading program: (1) to teach students how to read and (2) to make them want to read. She stated: "We have been reasonably successful with the first goal; less so with the second" (p. 2). The following studies highlight some of the factors that impact upon the attitudes of students toward reading. Of particular importance are the factors that develop positive attitudes so students read because they want to, not because they have to.

When Mason and Blanton (1971) looked at the reading interests of 183, 4-, and 5-year-old children by interviewing each child individually and asking three questions dealing

with reading interests: "Do you like to have stories read to you?", "What stories do you like to hear best?", and "What stories would you read if you could read all by yourself?", the results showed that a substantial number of children expressed an interest "for the same story or type of story whether it was to be read to them or read by them" (p. 795). The researchers concluded that exposure to a good story increases one's desire to read it on his own.

Schickedanz (1978), as cited in Briechle (1984), gave an explanation for the observed relationship between story reading and later reading achievement which blended, as Briechle indicated, "affect with cognition and suggest an interaction of the two":

1. Identification and social learning modelling: If parents read in the presence of their children, their children will try to read also.

2. Direct reinforcement: The attention, physical contact, and praise children receive as they are being read to will help them approach reading situations with positive attitudes.

3. Emotional security and confidence: The positive atmosphere created by parents when they read to their children supports the children's emotional well-being and gives them confidence.

4. Language development: The language learned from the stories read aloud by parents will make it easier for children to read.

5. Book knowledge and knowledge of reading: Children who are read to learn that print is read from left to right, that books have a beginning, middle, and end, etc.

Pfau's two-year study (1966) of the effect of a recreational reading program supplementing the basal in first and second grade showed that a "combination of readily available, appealing trade books; additional time for reading and sharing these materials through appropriate activities; and a concerted attempt to create an atmosphere conducive to enjoyment of reading provided the means for bringing about greater interest in reading, more reading activity, and greater library usage in the experimental group than in the control group" (p. 165).

A longitudinal study by Smith (1990) looked at the stability of reading attitude from early childhood to middle adulthood and adulthood amongst 84 individuals, many of whom were followed for nearly 40 years. The attitude measures were given first in 1st, 6th, 9th, and 12th grades; second, 5 years after high school graduation; and third, either 21 or 26 years after high school graduation. The results suggested:

> ...that reading attitude is a stable construct over time, although early childhood measures of reading attitude are poor predictors of adult attitude. Positive attitudes about reading that are fostered - particularly during the later school years - will remain positive in adulthood....The findings indicate the importance of developing good reading attitudes among children. (p. 219)

A study by Hampton (1972) looked at the effects of a teacher reading aloud on the attitudes toward reading and on the amount and type of voluntary reading of Grade 6 students in Missouri. The experimental and control group each included 14 boys and 14 girls. During the first 4 weeks of the study, both groups were taught regular language lessons daily for 30 minutes. In the last 4 weeks of the eight-week study, the experimental group received 30 minutes of reading aloud while the control group did language activities. Although no statistically significant differences were found between the control and experimental groups on voluntary reading, the experimental group had more positive attitudes toward reading.

Herrold and Serabian (1989) investigated the effect of a listening-to-literature program on the attitudes toward reading of 1,712 students in grades 6 through 8. Selected teachers read 10 to 15 minutes, four to five days a week for six months, from a preselected list of classics they then discussed with their students. The results "contribute to and corroborate the findings of other studies" and add to the body of "reading-related affective knowledge" which indicated that "the attitude of adolescents, particularly those of those of boys, can be made more positive through the use of teacher reading and follow-up teacher student discussion activities" (pp. 45-6).

A similar study by Suhorsky and Nuzzi (1989) looked at

the attitudes of 272 middle-school children in grades 6, 7, and 8 in an effort to determine if there were any differences in the attitude between males and females toward reading. This study revealed that female attitudes were more positive than were males.

Carbone's study (1991) as well showed that the attitudes of 60 delinquent boys improved as a result of an eight-month practicum whereby "the cottage was literally inundated with reading material" (p. 37). As well, "The immediate effect on cottage life was dramatic and was so noted by staff" with a decrease in disciplinary reports (p. 38).

Heathington (1979) questioned 254 students in grades 5 through 8 about their attitudes and habits associated with reading. The survey included students with differing achievement levels, from both urban and rural schools, and from upper, middle, and lower socioeconomic levels. The following concerns were mentioned specifically and the author contended any reading program should include, "a sufficient amount of time devoted to reading during the school day, time free from interruptions and confusion, reading materials that appeals to students of this age group, individual assessment and development of reading skills, and student freedom to choose their reading material." Heathington stated that "These conclusions relate strongly to recent theories regarding the role of motivation in the reading process" (p.

710).

Still, another study by Artley (1973) involved approximately 100 junior and senior high education majors. The purpose was to attempt "to show a positive correlation with pupil achievement and interest" (p. 2). Students were asked three questions: "From what you can recall, what did your teacher (on any level) do that you feel promoted your competence and interest in reading?", "In the same manner was there anything that your teacher did that detracted from your interest in reading?", and finally, "Was there someone or something besides your teacher who contributed to your competence and interest in reading?" (pp. 3-4). The study indicated that reading aloud to the class or group by the teacher was the thing they remembered most. The students also indicated this was done on all levels, even Junior High. Another factor mentioned was the free time given for the students to actually read during which conferencing took place. Artley noted, "This activity, reported by the students as being so conducive to reading interest as well as to personal development, is one so rewarding that no teacher should by-pass its use" (p. 7).

Finally, in response to the third question, the major influence was the parents or family who read to them, even as young children. As Artley pointed out, "Many of the students confirmed what one would expect - that stimulation of reading

grew out of the sheer fun of experiencing an abundance of good things to read" (p. 8).

A recent study by Lesesne (1991) asked approximately 500 middle-school students two questions: "How much time do you spend reading for pleasure daily?" and "How many books have you read for your own enjoyment in the last six months?" His study indicated that almost 75% reported reading less than one hour daily on a regular basis; 20% had read only one book for their own enjoyment in the last six months.

Still other studies, such as Hall (1978), looked at over 300 fifth grade pupils in three urban schools and three rural schools in East Tennessee who participated in a study of relationships among attitudes toward reading, reading achievement, socioeconomic status, and sex. The Heathington Attitude Scale was administered to measure attitudes toward compulsory and recreational reading and the Hollingshead Two-Factor Index of Social Position was used on information gathered on the fathers. The Metropolitan Achievement Test was used to determine achievement level.

Results indicated that neither social class nor sex is a reliable indicator in determining students' attitudes toward reading. However, attitudes and reading achievement are highly correlated - "When ability improves, attitude often improves. When attitudes improve, ability often improves" (p. 7).

Still other studies, such as a study by Saks (1981), looked at 178 students and 12 teachers who were part of a reading attitude survey to determine the relationship between the reading attitudes of seventh-grade high achievers and their teachers' perceptions of those attitudes. The teachers responded as they believed a high achieving student would answer. Students who scored 8.0 on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test were selected and then given the Estes Scale to Measure Attitudes Toward Reading. The results indicated that the students had a positive attitude toward reading. There was no significant difference between the students' scores and their teachers' perceptions of those attitudes.

The following studies were reviewed "based on the assumption that attitudinal factors are important for cognitive achievement" - (Groff, 1962; Healy, 1963; Greenberg and others, 1965; Ransbury, 1973; Askov and Fishbach, 1973; Engin, Wallbrown and Brown, 1976; Roettger, 1979; and Summers, 1979). Saks concluded that the available data in this area was limited and often "contradictory" and from the studies reviewed listed some insights "into the relationships that may exist between attitudes and achievement" (pp. 13-15). These included:

1. Some children may perceive their ability to read is responsible for their attitude, thus making reading improvement programs a high priority for some underachievers.

2. The attitudes of the reader toward the material may affect his level of comprehension of that material.

3. The development of more favorable attitudes may result, for some students, in increased achievement and more reading that may be maintained over time.

4. For some students, a positive attitude toward reading in the lower grades may not be self-maintaining and may lessen over time. Attention to attitude development and maintenance is important at all levels.

5. Although relationships are sometimes found between achievement and attitudes, there is not always a positive correlation between high achievement and favorable attitudes. (p. 15)

Saks pointed out that the results show that an inconsistent relationship between attitudes and achievement existed and the fact that "the development and measurement of reading attitudes is more complex than assessment in the cognitive domain" (pp. 15-16).

In a similar study by Mikulecky (1978), 15 high school English teachers and 544 of their students participated in a study to determine how well teachers assess student reading habits and attitudes and to compare the accuracy of their judgments with those of student peers in their classes. As Mikulecky pointed out, "It is often assumed by teachers and school administrators that if students can be taught to read more fluently, the positive growth of reading attitude and habit will follow" (p. 2). This study also showed that

assuming "increasing reading ability will lead to increases in positive reading attitudes and habits appears to be inaccurate" (p. 9). Mikulecky goes on further to say that:

> The implications of these findings for teachers are great. If the goals of education are to develop capable readers who are likely to continue reading once out of school, then teachers must directly address a student's reading habits and attitudes as well as his or her reading abilities. (p. 10)

A study by Roettger, Szymczuk and Millard (1979), as cited in Saks (1981), also concluded that attitudes cannot be used as a predictor of academic achievement.

Sak's (1981) contended there is still a need for research looking at the relationship between attitudes toward reading and reading achievement since few have been done in this area. This points out the need for such a study in this area.

Literature and Concept of Self as Reader

While the previous studies have looked at the importance of such factors as motivation, attitude, and interest and their impact upon reading, another important factor is the student's concept of 'self as reader'. Due to a paucity of research in this area, this thesis proposes to do such a study.

Thomas (1984) noted that concept of self as a reader is one of the factors important in reading comprehension. She

pointed out that "An individual's awareness of his/her own cognitive processes, defined as metacognition, and the development of that awareness in readers seems a relevant and timely topic for investigation" (p. 3).

Her study looked at the relationship between reading attitudes and awareness of certain parameters of reading and their performance on a measure of reading comprehension of 100 grade 6 students. She studied students' views of self as reader and asked four questions that required them to evaluate their own reading skills. A significant correlation was found on the tests confirming the relationship between attitude, knowledge, and self-concept and reading comprehension, as well as differences in the way good and poor readers view reading. An unawareness of reading as a search for meaning or of strategies necessary for proficiency in reading were found in poor readers. As Thomas noted, "That a positive self-concept is essential for achievement has long been a tenet central to education." As well, she noted that in view of the relationship found between view of self as reader and the measure of reading comprehension, "this study lends strong support to the idea that one performs as one perceives oneself able to perform" (p. 6).

An ethnographic study by Bonby (1985), as discussed in Lamme (1987), revealed that children in high and low reading groups in first grade have different concepts about reading.

While the high reading group thought reading was a "way of learning, a private pleasure, and a social activity", the low reading group thought reading was "saying the words correctly, doing schoolwork, and a source of status" (p. 42). The latter group could not view themselves as readers since they did not understand that we read for meaning not to "crack the code".

Lamme (1987) outlined some important distinctions between good and poor readers:

> . When they come to an unfamiliar word, good readers use many different word analysis strategies, while poor readers "sound it out". If sounding it out fails, poor readers have no alternatives.
>
> . Good readers self correct if they make a mistake that does not make sense; poor readers ignore their reading errors.
>
> . Good readers read for meaning; poor readers read to pronounce words correctly.
>
> . Good readers reread favourite books and become fluent readers; poor readers seldom reread and thus rarely experience fluency.
>
> . Good readers seek out books by favourite authors; poor readers don't notice who wrote the books they read.
>
> . Good readers read for their own pleasure; poor readers read because it is a school assignment.
>
> . Good readers discuss books with their friends and exchange opinions on good books to read; poor readers do not discuss reading. (Lamme, 1987, pp. 42-43)

Vail (1977) contended, "Encouraging a child to confuse

some vague mental meandering with real reading is dealing a potentially deadly blow to the child's self-concept" (p. 4). Bettelheim and Zelan (1982) pointed to children's experiences in learning how to read and stated they "may decide how he [sic] will feel about learning in general, even about himself [sic] as a person" (p. 4).

Whether children view themselves as readers probably depends upon the invitation being extended to "join the literacy club" as Smith (1984) says. A study that related this to the older reader is Meek's (1983) longitudinal case studies of adolescents learning to read. In a discussion of the current view of reading as advocated by Goodman and Smith, the author pointed out that reading is a "process taken in hand by the users of language." The shift, therefore, is on the learner with the teacher's role being one of understanding "the linguistic processes that work for the pupil in reading." From the very beginning, the learner is invited to "behave like a reader and to take on the task for himself." The author contended, "The notion that children who cannot read cannot handle language and the ideas expressed in language is firmly rejected." The author further pointed out that "...this invitation - to behave like a reader - had never actually been extended to our pupils" (p. 53).

Meek's study referred to the importance of the "invitation" and its later impact upon the child's own

motivation and concept of self as reader. As one of the teachers involved with the study pointed out, "I think for me the hardest thing at the time was to avoid colluding with Trevor's defeatist view of himself as reader" (p. 153). The story of Trevor was significant in that he believed that "reading is fun only if somebody else is doing it." When joined by another student in his reading lesson, however, the teacher noted "The amount read by Trevor...is almost exactly double that of the previous session...More significantly, there is much less dependence on me and the beginnings of a very real excitement as he steps into the world of the reader" (p. 163).

The way children view reading and themselves is critically important in determining whether or not they will become readers. The teacher's view of reading and how children learn is central to this process as well.

Reading Aloud

> The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children. (Anderson et al., 1985, p. 23)

Silvern (1985) noted that " 'Reading to the child' " is the best-known, most researched and most frequently recommended practice that is significantly related to positive attitudes toward reading and reading achievement" (p. 44).

Indeed, research now provides evidence of the direct relationship between reading aloud to children and reading performance, language development, and the development of positive attitudes and reading interests (McCormick, 1977 and Silvern, 1985).

In a review of the research on parental involvement and achievement, Silvern (1985) noted "that the factors associated with a child's parents, family or home environment have a greater impact on achievement than do school-related factors" (p. 44). One important factor included reading aloud to the child. Though reading aloud is often seen as a worthwhile and enjoyable activity, however, it seems that many teachers, as well as parents, either do not know, understand, or fully believe the important role it plays in the lives of all children. There is research evidence, testimony, as well as a number of theorists who support the value of reading aloud to children of all ages (Chomsky, 1972; Chambers, 1973; McCormick, 1977; Butler, 1980; Koeller, 1981; Kimmel and Segel, 1983; Fisher and Elleman, 1984; Silvern, 1985; Trelease, 1989; and Fuhler, 1990).

While reading aloud to children in the primary grades would seem to be a common practice, it seems that, as children get older, this worthwhile activity fades. All too often, it seems it is not taken seriously as an effective teaching method and is left to be carried out only if there is "enough

time" or the regular curriculum is "completed".

Reed (1988) noted the value of reading aloud from another perspective. For older children and their parents, its benefits can be more than academic.

> Reading aloud as a family and discussing topics based on reading can improve communication between parents and adolescents. Communication gaps are caused by lack of time spent communicating rather than by inherent differences. Parents who keep the lines of communication open by sharing common interests are likely to better understand the problem of the young and to narrow the generation gap. (Reed, 1988, p. 87)

Possibly the strongest and best known advocate of reading aloud in the United States, Trelease (1989), indicated that while this daily practice is increasing, it is still far from universal. Trealease discussed a study by Lapointe (1986) in which only half the fourth-grade teachers estimated they read aloud regularly. He estimated that "only 20 percent of the parents and 30 percent of the teachers regularly read aloud to children" (p. 11).

Hoffman, Roser, and Battle (1993) described a large study of reading instruction by Austin and Morrison (1963) which reported that primary grade teachers tended to have read-aloud time but did not consider it part of "reading instruction". Intermediate-grade teachers, on the other hand, did not even feel they had enough time for it (p. 497). Hoffman, Roser, and Battle (1993) reported other investigations by Hall (1971)

as well as Langer, Applebee, Mullis, and Foertsh (1990) which yielded similar results (pp. 497-8).

In their own 17-item questionnaire directed to preservice teachers who were assigned to classroom field experiences, Hoffman et al. (1993) summarized the read-aloud experience representing the 537 classrooms, from K - Grade 6, that responded from the 24 different states in this manner:

> The classroom teacher reads to students from a trade book for a period between 10 and 20 minutes. The chosen literature is not connected to a unit of study in the classroom. The amount of discussion related to the book takes fewer than 5 minutes, including talk before and after the reading. Finally, no literature response activities are offered. (p. 500)

The authors contended that although more reading aloud is occurring than has been reported in previous studies, the quality is questionable. Because these classrooms were identified as placements for prospective teachers, the authors also cautioned that "these data are more likely representative of the best, as opposed to typical, teaching models" (p. 500).

Butler (1980) contended, "The classroom teacher should provide this experience (reading aloud), be it for the beginning reader or the older child, for the disabled reader or the competent student" (p. 883). Studies, discussed earlier by Cohen (1968), which were later replicated by Cullinan, Jaggar, and Strickland (1974), all point to the important benefits of reading aloud to the development of

readers. As well, Clark's study (1976) of young fluent readers who learned to read prior to school, and the story of a multihandicapped child who was read to from infancy, provide evidence of this worthwhile activity. Wells' (1986) longitudinal study of children's literacy achievement again affirmed the importance of this practice.

That the older reader values the practice of reading aloud is noted in two studies reviewed by Frick (1986). In a survey by Bruckerhoff (1977), 101 high school students "most often mention the activity of being read aloud to as one which initiated positive attitudes toward reading." In addition, in a more recent survey by Mendoza (1985), "approximately 74% of the later elementary students questioned admitted that they enjoyed being read to" (p. 300). Indeed, Frick's own testimony of her Grade 6 class verified the enjoyment of this worthwhile activity as she believed the most important reason for reading to the older student was motivation. "Students have listed reading aloud as a positive activity in their reading experience, and oral reading, when it is done well, conveys the teacher's interest in not only the book, but in the joy of reading itself" (p. 301).

Role of the Teacher

Rasinski and Fredericks (1990) concurred that for teachers "...the best reading advice that could be given to

parents regardless of grade or ability level of the child - advice that could be presented effectively in an informal way....Parents should read to their children" (p. 344). Indeed, Silvern (1985) pointed out the research (Becher, 1983) that showed that "parents are more likely to more seriously value reading to their child if teachers point out the specific benefits to be gained from this activity." He indicated the limited research available on the amount of time to read to a child shows that children who are read to on a regular basis - at least four times a week and preferably daily for 8-10 minutes "exhibit more positive attitudes and higher achievement levels in reading than do children whose parents do not read to them" (Henry, 1974; Hoskins, 1976; and Romotowski and Trepanier, 1977).

As well, a small number of studies (Smith, 1971; Flood, 1977; Teale, 1978; and Snow, 1983) revealed that effective practices significantly related to "learning to read and reading achievement" included: "asking, 'warm-up' questions before beginning the book; asking a variety of questions such as informational, anticipatory, inferential, evaluative, etc., while reading the book; asking follow-up questions at the end of the book; and participating in general discussions with their children about the books they had read." Silvern (1985) pointed out the importance of teachers noting to parents that reading is a "cognitive or 'thinking' activity...rather than

a 'listening' activity" (p. 46).

It is not enough for teachers to tell parents to read to their children. Often they need help in finding appropriate resources to use with their child. Silvern (1985) recommended that teachers should " ...actively encourage and assist parents (not just children) in making greater use of libraries and their resources"; for working parents, to read "while their children are awake" so their children see them read (p. 48).

Silvern (1985) listed three implications from the research important for teachers:

1. Teachers can provide information to parents about high-interest, worthwhile reading material. They also can provide a list of resource materials on children's books which parents can use as a reference and guide in assisting their children in selecting books.

2. Teachers can consider the purposes of homework for their students and the potential roles parents can play in assuming its completion. Parents can be specifically encouraged to assist their children with homework...the active involvement of parents, rather than an expectation that they play a passive supervisory role, would be emphasized.

3. Teachers can assist parents in developing effective reading instruction techniques, including appropriate ways of 'listening' to their child read.

Again, he noted:

> While some may argue that 'reading instruction' is the domain of the school, the fact remains that many parents are instructing their children and those children are benefiting as indicated by their higher achievement scores and more positive attitudes toward reading. (Silvern, 1985, pp. 48-9)

Lamme (1987) noted that,

> While reading aloud, the teacher models reading behavior. Reading aloud also whets the appetite for good stories. It exposes children to literature they would not be able to read themselves. It shows them what real readers do and gives them a goal for learning to read.
>
> If books that are read aloud are placed in the classroom reading collection, children can learn to read by rereading familiar books....Reading aloud creates a community spirit surrounding books; it gives children something to talk about....(Lamme, 1987, p. 43)

Values of Reading Aloud

Reading aloud to children gives the teacher the opportunity to read books they could not read themselves, thus motivating children to read on their own. Butler (1980) felt it gave renewed pleasure from old favourites as well and "provides a standard for measuring books in the future" (p. 883). As Butler (1980) indicated, "Children can understand, indeed need, books on a reading level beyond their ability" (p. 183). It is interesting to note that our provincial English: The Intermediate Guide suggested, "Read aloud occasionally to students and have them read aloud as well" (p.

72).

Based on his analysis, Hillman (1975) contended that reading aloud allows the "modelling of language patterns and an identification with models." It provides listeners of diverse backgrounds with a common experience, promotes listening and reading comprehension skills and motivates children to want to read.

With regard to the last reason, Hillman (1975) stated, "...many children do not come to school valuing the written language, and because the demands of a technological society are such that an illiterate person can hardly survive, motivation of this type seems to be justified" (p. 5).

There are many who believe that reading aloud benefits children of all ages (Gatherall, 1981; Briechle, 1984; Trelease, 1989; and Swift, 1993). Vail (1977) believed the following benefits are for all children but especially for the poorer reader:

1. Concept development and the intake of new information.
2. Awareness of the existence of, and difference among, biography, adventure, poetry, propaganda and romance (to name a few).
3. The comfort of bibliotherapy when needed.
4. The opportunity to feel empathy.
5. The opportunity to share feelings and experiences with a group, be it a family group or a class. (Vail, 1987, p. 5)

As Briechle (1984) contended "Surely, it would appear, reading aloud can have positive effects on reading on all levels" (p. 3).

In addition, Abrahamson and Carter (1991) and Dorion (1994) also noted the importance of nonfiction in the read aloud component. According to Dorion (1994, p. 623), "The same reasons for providing children with a rich read-aloud experience based on fiction hold true for including nonfiction material in the read-aloud program." He cited Sanacore (1991) who summarized the "benefits in balancing the read-aloud component of literacy programs with a variety of texts:

1. Variety allows children to develop flexibility in their reading.

2. Critical thinking and problem solving are supported.

3. Ease and facility in reading for information are nurtured with an early exposure to expository text.

4. Increasing the use of expository text balances discourse types used in reading.

5. We develop the concept that all types of texts can be functional, enjoyable, and challenging.

The older student is not often a candidate for being read to because it is felt they already know how to read and reading to them will make them "lazy" or that they should be practising their skill. Vail (1977) noted, "A child whose personal lexicon is filled with words of texture, strength and

nuance not only has many ways of expressing his (sic) own thoughts, but many ways to meet the writer when he (sic) comes to later, more sophisticated reading" (p. 6). Indeed, research quoted earlier by Frick (1986) confirmed the fact that older students like being read to.

From their own survey study of current read-aloud practices, as well as their review of the literature looking at the crucial elements of reading aloud, Hoffman et al. (1993) made seven recommendations for a "model" read-aloud program which included:

1. Designating a legitimate time and place in the daily curriculum for reading aloud.
2. Selecting quality literature.
3. Sharing literature related to other literature.
4. Discussing literature in lively, thought-provoking ways.
5. Grouping children to maximize opportunities to respond.
6. Offering a variety of response and extension opportunities.
7. Rereading selected pieces.

Based on this review of the literature, the researcher initiated a literature-based program based on the principles of Atwell's (1987) Reading Workshop. The main components of the program consisted of a 10- to 15-minute mini-lesson during which books were read-aloud and authors were introduced, as

well as different strategy lessons on reading were presented. This was then followed by sustained silent reading for the remainder of the period where self-selection of literature was emphasized. A dialogue journal was used for response. Each student was required to write a letter to the researcher at least once a week talking about the book(s) they were currently reading. The researcher responded in their dialogue journals, as well as encouraged them to write to their classmates.

The main purpose of the Reading Workshop was to investigate its effect on students' reading achievement in vocabulary and comprehension, attitude, and concept of 'self as reader'. The program also investigated the effect on students' perceptions of peer and parent relations, as well as general and academic or school self-concepts. The researcher also recorded her own observations and perceptions of the process based on the dialogue journals and other activities, as well as comments and reactions throughout the program.

CHAPTER 111

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to implement and evaluate a Reading Workshop in a Grade 7 classroom. Its main components were mini-lessons, independent reading with self-selection of literature, and dialogue journals as a response activity. Like Smith (1984), a premise of this study is that "children learn to read only by reading" (p. 23). This study was designed as a case study since a method was needed to explore the outcomes of a Reading Workshop on reading achievement, attitudes, and students' concepts of 'self as reader'. It was felt that a case study design provided the best way of investigating these outcomes for education.

This chapter describes the sample of children in the study as well as a definition of the terms used. A description of the instruments is given and also the four main assumptions to the study. Finally, there is an explanation of the procedures used in the design and implementation of the Reading Program, as well as a description of the collection and treatment of data.

Subjects

This study was conducted with a group of Grade 7 heterogeneously grouped students in a denominational high school in rural Newfoundland. The class consisted of 21 students, 10 girls and 11 boys, with an average age of 12 years. The school has an approximate enrolment of 670 students, spanning grades 7 to Level 4.

Definition of Terms

Oral Reading is defined as the teacher reading aloud to students.

Sustained silent reading refers to uninterrupted silent reading by the teacher and students.

Attitude is defined as the liking or disliking of a subject.

Concept of self as reader refers to whether on not a student will see him/herself as a reader as a result of the study.

Reading Achievement refers to students' scores achieved on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests in Vocabulary and Comprehension. Level E, Form 3 was used before the program was underway, and Form 4 was used after the program was concluded.

Literacy refers to the combination of the ability to read but the choice not to read.

Instruments

Gates-MacGinitie Standardized Reading Tests

The Second Canadian Edition of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests was used to obtain scores in vocabulary and comprehension, as well as grade equivalents for each student. A pretest, Level E, Form 4 was administered in early February. A posttest, Level E, Form 3 was administered in late April.

Estes Reading Attitude Scale

Estes (1972) developed a Likert-type scale for use in grades 6 through 12. This scale consists of 20 items and has the respondents check a five-point scale ranging from "I Strongly Agree" to "I Strongly Disagree." There are 12 stated positive items and 8 items stated negatively. Because summated ratings are possible in using the scale, it is useful for pre and post comparisons. The scale was administered to the students before the program began and, again, after the program was completed.

Self-Description Questionnaire - 1

The Self-Description Questionnaire - 1 is a 76-item questionnaire which assesses four areas of nonacademic self-concept, three areas of academic self-concept, and a general-self scale. A child's self-ratings in different areas of self-concept are given in the eight scales. This scale

requires the student to respond to simple declarative sentences and then check one of five responses ranging from False (1 point), Mostly False (2 points), Sometimes False/Sometimes True (3 points), Mostly True (4 points), and True (5 points).

The assessment was administered before the program began and, again, after the program was completed. For the purposes of the study, five sections of the questionnaire were used: Peer Relations, Parent Relations, General School, General Self, and Reading. Raw scores from the pretest and posttest were tabulated in these areas.

Parent Questionnaire

A questionnaire designed by the teacher/researcher was used to assess parents' reactions to the program. This was administered during the last week of the study (Appendix D).

Assumptions

It is assumed that the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test is a valid tool for measuring vocabulary and comprehension.

It is assumed that the Self-Description Questionnaire - 1 by Marsh is a valid tool for measuring concept of self as reader, students' perceptions of peer and parent relations, as well as general school and general-self concepts.

It is assumed that the Estes Attitude Scale by Estes is

a valid tool for measuring students' attitudes toward reading.

It is assumed that students tried to do their best on the pre and posttests for the above instruments.

Procedures

Introducing the Program

The researcher met with the students' parents for one meeting before the study began. Owing to weather conditions and other factors such as lack of transportation, it took almost two weeks in January to meet with 18 of the 21 parents. Although the researcher was unable to meet with three parents due to transportation problems, the letter that fully explained the program and was presented to parents at the end of the meeting, was also sent home to these parents. All parents supported the program.

During the initial meeting, the philosophy of the program was explained as well as some of the research on the decline in reading by adolescents. As Cullinan (1987) noted earlier, it was emphasized that the goal of any school reading program is not only to teach children how to read but to help them want to read. The format of the Reading Workshop was then presented beginning with an explanation of the mini-lessons, the importance of time and ownership in independent reading, and finally, the use of the dialogue journal as a form of response. How the students would be evaluated was also

discussed.

The study began on Friday, January 28, 1994, and ended on Friday, April 29, 1994. During the first few days, the students were administered the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (Level E, Form 4), Self Description Questionnaire - 1, and the Estes Attitude Scale. At the end of the study, the students were administered the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (Level E, Form 3), the Self Description Questionnaire - 1, and the Estes Attitude Scale. Parents were also administered a questionnaire at the end of the study.

Since the school operated on a fourteen-day cycle with one-hour periods, all periods assigned to English were used for the Reading Workshop. This amounted to 11 periods out of 14 for the study.

The workshop period usually began with a mini-lesson of approximately 10- to 15-minute duration. Based on the work of Atwell (1987), these mini-lessons consisted of three categories of presentation. The first was procedural and letters explaining and describing the procedures and rules of the workshop were passed out. Literature that was read aloud, as well as other aspects of literature such as authors and their works, was the second category of mini-lessons. Although "Book Talks" by both the researcher and the students were the main feature of these mini-lessons, units on topics such as realistic and historical fiction as well as science

fiction and fantasy were also presented. Finally, the last category dealt with **skills**, or as Atwell explains, "I'm using the word **skills** to describe the things good readers do" (pp. 199-221). This included the teaching of skills that students required to read on their own. One third of their evaluation for the school term was based on the letters written each week to the researcher. Another one third was based on the assessment and goals written approximately every two weeks. The final one third was based on their following the Reading Workshop rules and completing their home/school reading incentive program, Read to Succeed, on the required nights.

At the beginning of the program, sample letters written to Atwell (1987) were photocopied and shared on the overhead with the class. Although the students had used buddy journals prior to the study, they did not have any experience with writing about books they were reading. The researcher encouraged them to move away from mere plot summaries to more personal involvement and critical thinking where the 'talk' allowed them to respond both emotionally and intellectually to what they were reading. The emphasis was on the depth in thinking and growth in response, as this was the main writing activity used to encourage the students' responses.

Initially, the researcher was the recipient of a letter students wrote in their journals once every two weeks. Eventually, this was changed to every week due to the short

duration of the study. These letters could be written both during and outside Reading Workshop and the journals were then numbered and placed in a trolley next to a bookcase in the reading corner (Appendix E). Although the students were encouraged to write to their buddies once a week, as well as to the researcher, the former letters were not evaluated as part of the study.

The students did a great deal of "dialoguing" in the dialogue journals with the researcher and with other students. Thus, part of the audience needed for their thoughts and ideas was created. As Atwell (1987) suggested, the purpose of the dialogue was to "**affirm, challenge,** or **extend** the reader's thinking" through comments and questions that were made on what had been written. Atwell's own journal comments took the form of "gossip, questions, recommendations, jokes, restatements, arguments, suggestions, anecdotes, instruction,and 'nudges'" (p. 275).

Independent reading time was of approximate 45 minutes duration with students having the opportunity to select and read their own books. If a mini-lesson went beyond the 15 minutes duration, more time was given next day for independent reading since this was a priority in the program. The students not only read in school, however, but they read at home as well. The Read to Succeed program, a home/school reading incentive program, had been implemented into the

school system several years earlier. This program, developed by a schoolteacher in St. John's, Newfoundland, Annette Coultas, required students to read for 10 minutes each night for four nights a week. At the end of the week, individual record keepers were checked, and at the end of each month, certificates were passed out to those students who had successfully participated in the program for the month.

The record keeper provided a convenient location for students to record the name and type of books they were reading each night, as well as a place to keep a summary of the books they were reading (Appendix F). Not only did this serve as a record of what they had read, it was also used at the end of the study to record the books students rated as number one - a list that would be used in helping select books for next year's Grade 7 students. At the end of the study, students were asked to go through their lists and write the title of their favourite "number one" book (Appendix G).

Selection of Appropriate Material

The books that the students read could be chosen from the classroom, school, or public library, as well as from their friends and own personal collections. A group visit was made to the public library halfway through the study and all students registered and received their own cards. Many of them went prepared with the names of preferred authors and

several made trips back to pick up books the librarian had ordered through interlibrary loan. Previously students were unaware of interlibrary loan and it seemed to entice students to visit the library since the selection available in the library for this age group was, not only limited, but mediocre. Several students had ordered books through this service.

Quite a range of books had to be selected for the classroom library due to the varied ability and interest in the class itself. In our High Schools, there is a need to have reading materials to accommodate all reading levels, since not all students who enter high school read at an appropriate instructional level. The library collection included picture books and chapter books, since, for many of the students, this was the level at which they were reading and these books served as a transition to the longer novels. As Harste, Short, and Burke (1988) noted:

> We have found that the books in a Classroom Library at all grades should range from picture books to chapter books and from highly predictable books that provide easy reading experiences to more difficult and challenging books. Teachers need to look closely at their students and provide the kinds of books they need to support their current levels of reading deficiency. (pp. 129-130)

Books were added to the classroom library each week culminating, at the end of the program, with approximately 300

books from the researcher's own collection. The students contributed books, as well as loaned them to the library. In addition, the researcher did not change the books in the class library during the program since a great deal of effort was put into selecting them and it took time for students to read and become familiar with what was there. The collection was also supplemented with approximately 100 books specially selected from the school library. In addition, the class made periodic visits to the school library with the researcher to select books for themselves. The students were encouraged to develop the "habit" of visiting both the school and public library since time was not given during Reading Workshop to return or sign out books.

A number of standard bibliographic books and creditable selection aids were used in the selection of books for the researcher's own collection as well for the selection from the school library. Literature For Today's Young Adults (Donelson and Nilsen, 1989) and Elementary Language Arts: An Annotated Bibliography of Children's Literature (Department of Education, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador) were used considerably. Almost all the titles listed on the latter handout were selected for the class library because of their reading level, quality, and that only a few students were familiar with the books. Other resources referred to included The New Republic of Childhood (Egoff and Saltman, 1990),

Children & Books (Sutherland, Monson, The New Read-Aloud Handbook (Trelease, 1989), and Arbuthnot, 1981), and For Reading Out Loud. A guide to sharing books with children (Kimmel and Segel, 1983). Sixteen: Short Stories for Young Adults by Outstanding Writers (Gallo, 1985) was used in the selecting of short stories for read alouds during some of the mini-lessons since several of the authors of these short stories complemented those selected for the program. Resources such as Books One and Two of Famous Children's Authors (Norby and Ryan, 1988) and MEET THE AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS 60 Creators of Favourite Children's Books Talk About Their Work (Kovacs and Preller, 1991) were indispensable as resources when introducing various authors and their books (Appendix H). The researcher also had her own collection of information on different authors gathered from various sources such as Book Clubs which was kept in a binder in the library. Consultation had also been made with the librarian at the Curriculum Centre at Memorial University on the literature selection for this study and the learning resource teacher at the school.

The selection of material for the read-aloud component had been based, in part, upon trying to develop units having a common theme. One of the recommendations Hoffman et al. (1993) made in working toward a model of read-aloud was to present literature connected by topic, theme, or genre, in an

effort to allow "readers and listeners to explore interrelationships among books, to discover patterns, to think more deeply, and to respond more fully to text" (p. 501). According to Hoffman et al., these units have "been shown to greatly enrich the read-aloud experience and add to the potential for student interest, independent reading, and personal connection" (p. 501). One such unit, discussed earlier, was developed by Dianne Monson (Cullinan, 1987). It was titled "Characterization in Literature: Realistic and Historical Fiction" and proved invaluable. The format of this presentation was typical of how these lessons were conducted when presenting different genres. Several mini-lessons had been based upon this unit, beginning with the reading of Sarah, Plain and Tall by Patricia MacLachlan. This was then followed by various activities that involved the students emotionally, as well as intellectually in order to "...notice techniques good authors use to create believable, well-rounded characters" (p. 110). As Monson (1987) noted:

> In the upper elementary grades, students should begin to have both affective and intellectual interactions with literature....The most important and basic response to a story involves the emotions....A story that evokes laughter, wonder, sadness, curiosity, or fear invites a reader to have a genuine interaction with characters and the events in their lives. (Monson, 1987, p. 98)

A series of questions on "Getting to Know a Character in

a Book" were taken from the unit and posted on a chart in the classroom. These were used for discussions as well as for point of view, conflict, and setting. Other books from historical fiction suggested in the unit were presented to the class and put on display as well. These included The Sign of the Beaver, True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle, A Gathering of Days, A Question of Loyalty, One Proud Summer, Island of the Blue Dolphins, Sarah Bishop, Shadow in Hawthorn Bay, and The First Four Years. This was then followed, as suggested, with a sharing of other novels "that offer readers opportunities to experience the lives of others who bear burdens or have dreams" (p. 102). These included Eighteenth Emergency, Good-bye, Chicken Little, The Great Gilly Hopkins, Julie of the Wolves, One-Eyed Cat, and The Summer of the Swans. Introducing historical fiction was a natural extension as:

> Characters in both types of books share the same universal feelings - hope, love, hate, fear, joy. Both genres reveal personal, social, or political conflicts. Furthermore, reading historical fiction allows students to recognize the importance of an author's treatment of time and place and the description of a story setting. (Monson, 1987, p. 106)

The opportunity to present a variety of books and authors was presented in other units as well.

One activity the students were involved in as a result of the unit on "Characterization in Literature: Realistic and

Historical Fiction" by Dianne Monson was the creation of a "jacket cover" for a favourite book they had read. Although students were encouraged to use art in their journals, followed with a written description of its purpose, only a couple of students illustrated. However, designing a jacket cover encouraged all of them to participate.

Creating the Learning Environment

The learning environment for this program was planned. It was a "structured classroom" designed in "cooperation" with the students. As Graves (1991) noted, "learning how to become a community" is important, for "communities function well when the members take on the many responsibilities involved and use them to learn from each other and to help each other learn" (p. 34). Different responsibilities were delegated to the students since the researcher believed that part of the ownership necessary for students to become both independent and responsible as learners happens when teachers "share power".

Fractor, Woodruff, Martinez, and Teale (1993) believed that "...just having books available in a classroom library is not enough. A classroom library must be well designed to entice children to read when given the opportunity of selecting from a variety of classroom activities" (p. 477).

To determine the quality of classroom libraries, Fractor

et al. (1993) designed an observational study which collected data in 183 regular classrooms from Kindergarten through Grade 5 in 12 public school districts in the metropolitan area of a large city in south Texas. According to their criteria, only "...4.8% or 10 classrooms had **good** or **excellent** libraries available to the children" (p. 480). Reference was made to the work of Morrow, 1985; Morrow and Weinstein, 1982; as well as Routman, 1991, in highlighting different physical features of the classroom library that encourages children's reading. These included:

- Focal area: The area is attractive and highly visible. It is obvious that the library is an important part of the classroom.
- Partitioned and private: Boundaries set apart the library area from the rest of the classroom and afford a quiet place to read.
- Comfortable seating: Without seating, children are less likely to use the library. Seating may be carpet, chairs, beanbags, or other creative options.
- Five to six books per child: This enables book variety, and duplicate copies can be read and discussed by children.
- Books that provide a variety of genres and reading levels:....For older children, teachers can offer picture books and chapter books, including fiction, nonfiction, and poetry.
- Room for five to six children: This promotes the building of a community of readers who enjoy and discuss literature.

- Two types of shelving: Open shelves entice the reader by displaying attractive covers. Shelves with books displayed spine out offer the capability of providing more books using minimal space.

- Literature-oriented displays and props: ....Intermediate grade children are attracted to an area that has book jackets, bulletin boards, and posters related to literature and reading.

- Organized into categories: Books can be categorized by genre, theme, topic, author, reading level, content area, or some combination of these features (p. 478).

The criteria above were used in creating the classroom library. One corner of the classroom was selected near the window side and new toppers (curtains) were made to allow as much natural lighting as possible while reading. A large chalkboard on wheels was used as a divider for one side with the cork side being used for displaying authors, various book medals, and to display books on its ledge. The chalkboard side was used to write some of the key points from some of the mini-lessons and could be left posted for students to read at their convenience. A bookcase was used as a partition for the other side and on top was placed the class library book for recording the titles of books borrowed from the class library as well as a file box containing copies of poetry read aloud in class. Next to this bookcase, as well, was the trolley used to store the journals and "Read to Succeed" record

keepers when not in use.

In order to have the library operate as efficiently as possible and to give ownership to students, they were responsible for signing out and returning their own books. Students' names were posted on a class list. They worked in pairs and were responsible over a 2-week period to see that book cases were kept tidy, plants were watered, mats were put back in the right places, and all were basically following rules.

Since the classroom floor contained tiles, a new carpet mat was placed in the Reading Corner and each student was given a carpet end donated from two local companies so they would be able to sit wherever they wanted to in the classroom and not have to worry about the cold floor when they read independently. Some students preferred to sit in their desks, while others sat under tables or in different corners of the classroom.

Considering the various sources of books contained in the classroom library, over 400 books were in the collection. This averaged over 20 books per student. In addition, where possible, duplicate copies of some titles were available in the library although this was limited. As their journals show, many did encourage their "buddies" to read a particular book but this usually occurred after they read the book themselves.

As already discussed, the classroom library contained quite a variety of books ranging from picture to chapter books, as well as fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Poetry was an important component of the Reading Workshop. Kimmel and Segel (1983) stated: "Any program of reading aloud should include poetry, for poetry more than any other form of literature is written to be heard" (p. 210). Poems shared aloud in class were copied and placed in the filebox on the bookcase. As in Atwell's (1987) class, students were invited to take copies of poems for their own collections. Poetry books were always on display on window and board ledges. Appendix I contains a list of the poetry books used during the study from the researcher's own collection.

When the Reading Corner was first created, there was often a 'race' for a particular spo . Although it could comfortably hold 5 - 10 students, depending on whether they were in a sitting position or stretched out on the floor, there were times when upwards of 15 students squeezed in the corner. They were not bothered by their close proximity except for one or two students who were asked to sit elsewhere since they were being easily distracted and, in turn, sometimes distracted others.

Two bookcases were used to display books with spines facing outward, while another two were used to stand the books on a ledge in order to advertise their covers. One of the

open-faced book displays, designed by the researcher's husband, was shaped in a triangular pyramid form so new books could be placed and shown from three sides. The researcher observed that books were selected and read from this area, more than any other part of the Reading Corner. Since the inside of the bookcase was used as storage for posters, it proved quite beneficial.

Apart from the books from the school library, the books were categorized by genre with a coloured sticker in the form of a small circle being placed on the outside cover. A small poster indicating the colour and genre was posted next to the bookcase. Because the number of poetry and nonfiction books was limited, they were placed on separate shelves as well.

According to Anderson et al. (1985): "Analyses of schools that have been successful in promoting independent reading suggest that one of the keys is ready access to books" (p. 78). They cited research that noted, "Children in classrooms with libraries read more, express better attitudes toward reading, and make greater gains in reading comprehension than children who do not have such ready access to books" (p. 78). In the case studies of early readers referred to earlier (Durkin, 1966; Clark, 1976; and Butler, 1980), the children usually had access to books in their homes. Extending this accessibility to the classroom is critically important, especially for children who do not have such benefits in their

homes.

Koeller (1981), who had been cited earlier for her 25 year review of the literature in The Reading Teacher on the use of children's literature, also affirmed the importance of "...many books in the classroom, displayed invitingly and accessible to children" (p. 555). Koeller (1981) cited research by Bowen and Bissett which indicated that student reading increases significantly when students have access to a variety of reading material and when they have an opportunity to discuss these materials.

It is interesting to note the prominent role the library played in Clark's (1976) study, mentioned earlier, as well. Although the parents encouraged the children initially to visit the library, the fact that children later went on their own showed its value as a source of enjoyment and pleasure (p. 102). The researcher hoped that the enjoyment experienced from the Reading Workshop would encourage students to visit other libraries as well.

A reading mobile created by several students displaying the various genres hung over one of the book cases and various posters promoting reading were placed on the walls as well as the divider (referred to above). As well, charts related to the study were hung and a border created by the computer with the word 'Read' was taped to the walls and served to outline the corner itself. A separate bulletin board in the Reading

Corner was used to display student's own work such as the jacket covers mentioned above.

Book Talks were a major part of the program by both the researcher and students. Johnson (1992) presented a variety of ways for students to share their reading and these were given to students on a Book Talk form which included space to note title, author, and whether the book was fiction or nonfiction was shared. Students could use either one or some combination of the following for their presentations. These included:

- retell all or a portion of the story;
- express opinions regarding the story;
- compare the story to previous reading;
- tell one thing you liked, one thing you disliked and one thing that puzzled you;
- compare the story with another by the same author;
- compare an expository text with another on the same topic;
- read aloud a favourite portion of the text;
- read aloud a section to support your judgment.

These forms were then placed on the bulletin board. In addition, a maximum time of 10 minutes was set aside for students to share their book in a special "Sharing Chair" that was created and based on the "Author's Chair" as described by

Graves and Hansen (1983). Students presented their Book Talks in the Reading Corner and when they were completed, students were invited to comment or ask questions on the presentation. Again, based on Johnson, students were encouraged to:

- express genuine interest in what the person had said;
- ask questions to which you don't know the answer and would truly like to know;
- treat the speaker with courtesy and dignity.

It took several days to listen to all the Book Talks and the researcher had tape recorded the presentations with the purpose of having each student preview for self-evaluation.

When the Reading Corner was completed, the students decided it needed a name. Suggestions were taken and written on the board and then a vote was taken to decide on the most popular submission. The winning suggestion was "Home Sweet Home" submitted by one of the more reluctant readers in the class. It was inspiring to see how their new corner conjured up warm thoughts and feelings of home.

Collection of Data

Reading Achievement

The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Level F, Form 4 was administered as a pretest to all students in early February. During the last week of April, Level E, Form 3 was

administered as a posttest. This test had been selected because it was believed that a Reading Workshop, such as the one devised for this study, can positively affect reading achievement. The test was used to measure the growth and progress of the students' reading achievement in vocabulary and comprehension. It was administered according to the publisher's manual requiring two separate days - one for the vocabulary and one for the comprehension. A scoring mask was used to evaluate.

Attitudes towards Reading

The Estes Attitude Scale, developed by Estes, was administered during the first week of February and the last week of the study to measure objectively how students felt about reading. This is a "Likert" or "summated rating scale", containing 20 items that can be hand scored and analyzed using quantitative data from both testings. It was believed that a Reading Workshop can influence students' attitudes toward reading in a positive way.

Concept of Self as Reader

During the first week of the study, an assessment of the students' concepts of 'self as reader' was made. The instrument that was used was the Marsh's Self-Description Questionnaire - 1. Again the scale was selected because it

was believed that a program such as this can positively affect a student's concept of 'self as reader'. The questionnaire contained 76 items and assessed four areas of nonacademic self-concept, three areas of academic self-concept, and a general-self scale. For the purposes of this study, five of the eight scales were used. These also included students' perceptions of peer and parent relations and general school and general self-concepts. As with the Estes Attitude Scale, this test required no special administration training and no significant amount of time. At the end of the study, the test was administered again. The researcher looked for changes in students' concepts of 'self as reader' as a result of the Reading Workshop, changes in students' perceptions of peer and parent relations, as well as changes in general school and general self-concepts.

Parent Questionnaire

A parent questionnaire had been distributed at the end of the study to seek parents' perspective of the program. It consisted of four statements related to the study and parents could respond "yes", "no", or "uncertain". A section for comments was also provided. It was believed that parents would have valuable insights into the program as their children read at home.

Student Involvement

Students' comments and reactions were noted throughout the study as records were kept of all mini-lessons and presentations. The dialogue journal was the form of response used as they 'talked' about the books they were reading or had read. They also used it to assess their progress and set new goals for reading. Other interpretive activities included a form which was completed for their Book Talk and a jacket cover created in response to one of the mini-lesson units already discussed. The "Read to Succeed" program was used to keep a record of their reading outside the classroom. As well it served as a portfolio of the books they had read during the study. A tape recording had been made of their Book Talk presentation with the purpose of having each student view and evaluate them for their own learning. Unfortunately, time was unavailable in the study to complete this activity.

Treatment of Data

Reading Achievement

Data obtained from the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, Level E, Forms 3 and 4, are presented and analyzed to show change or determine whether there was significant improvement in vocabulary and comprehension knowledge.

Attitudes towards Reading

Results of the pre and posttest of the Estes Attitude Scale were used to note any changes in attitude toward reading as a result of the Reading Workshop.

Concept of Self as Reader

Raw scores for the Self-Description Questionnaire -1 were calculated for five of the eight scales. A comparison of the pre and posttest scores was made to see if any changes in concept of 'self as reader' occurred. A comparison of the pre and posttest scores were also made to see if any changes in students' perceptions of peer and parent relations, as well as general school and general self-concepts occurred.

Parent Questionnaire

The parent questionnaire presented at the end of the study is analyzed as well. This included an examination of their comments at the end of the survey.

Student Involvement

Students' comments and reactions throughout the program were noted. An analysis of the dialogue journals is presented since this was the main form of written response used as students continually assessed their progress and set goals as

they read and discussed various books. In an effort to look at the student's involvement with the literature, these discussions attempted to evaluate the "affective" domain of learning and whether students now wanted to read. These discussions also attempted to assess the range of thinking processes and whether their responses had increased beyond simple recall. In addition, an assessment of the "Read to Succeed" program was made since the booklets were used to record the reading accomplished at home as well as served as a record and analysis of the types of books read. Other interpretive activities are also discussed.

CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION

Introduction

A Reading Workshop was implemented in a Grade 7 classroom with 21 students. The main purpose was to describe the effect of a Reading Workshop on students' reading vocabulary, comprehension, attitudes, and concepts of 'self as reader'. The study also examined the effect on students' perceptions of peer and parent relations, as well as general school and general self-concepts. The evaluation of this study was also based on the investigators' observations overall, parents' opinions, students' reactions and comments in their dialogue journals and throughout the study, responses recorded in the "Read to Succeed" program, as well as other interpretive activities such as the Book Talks and jacket covers.

The following five questions served as the major research base for this study:

1. Will the experience of a Reading Workshop increase students' reading achievement in vocabulary and comprehension?

2. Will the experience of a Reading Workshop improve students' attitudes toward reading?

3. Will the experience of a Reading Workshop influence students' concepts of 'self as readers'?

4. Will the experience of a Reading Workshop affect male and female students differently?

5. What are the researcher's overall perceptions of the Reading Workshop with specific reference to students' progress as a result of interactions around the mini-lessons, independent reading, and dialogue journals?

This chapter is divided into five major topics. The first three topics explore the findings related to the major research questions beginning with an examination of the results of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests to determine students' reading growth in both vocabulary and comprehension during the study. The second topic examines the effect of a Reading Workshop on student's attitude toward reading. Results of the Estes-Reading Attitude Scale, administered to students both before and after the study are discussed, as well as the parent questionnaire completed after the study. In addition, the students' comments and reactions, as explored through the dialogue journals, are examined as well as the researcher's observations throughout the program. Through the use of the Marsh Self-Description Questionnaire - 1, administered both before and after the study, the third topic focuses on the effect of a Reading Workshop on students' concepts of 'self as reader'. The questionnaire also measured the effect of the Reading Workshop on students' perceptions of peer and parent relations, as well as general school and

general self-concepts. The fourth topic describes the effects of the program in relation to gender. The final topic looks at the researcher's perception of the process and students' growth on a daily basis as a result of the program. This discussion centres around the three main components of the Reading Workshop: the mini-lessons, independent reading, and dialogue journals, and includes an examination of the home/school reading program, Read to Succeed, Book Talks, and jacket covers.

Reading Achievement

To examine the growth in reading achievement, parallel forms 3 and 4 of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, Level E, were administered as a pre and posttest as explained in Chapter 3 in an effort to determine if the experience of a Reading Workshop increases students' reading achievement in vocabulary and comprehension. Since the study had no control group, growth in reading achievement by the students in the study was compared with the results of the standardization group. The collected data was then analyzed and showed that the students had improved in both the vocabulary and comprehension tests. As well, the pre and posttest scores were used to perform an analysis of variance which showed gains in comprehension were statistically significant at the .006 level and gains in vocabulary were noteworthy at the .076

level. Table 1 shows the raw scores for students' reading achievement as well as a comparison of the group mean scores for both the pre and posttest in vocabulary and comprehension with the standardized norms for the tests. It should be noted that in trying to compare the raw scores of the study group with the national mean, discrepancies existed between the Grade Equivalents and sometimes it was difficult to assess the average raw score. However, as can be seen, the mean vocabulary score in this study increased from a position of -4.8 below the Canadian national mean to -3.2 below it. The comprehension mean ranged from -2.1 below to +0.2 above the Canadian national mean.

Grade equivalent (GE) scores for the vocabulary and comprehension tests were also calculated. This score tells the grade level for which the score would have been the median score if the test had been taken at that grade level. Scores above grade 12 are labelled PHS (Post High School). A GE of 7.5, for example, means that the student's score is about the same as would be expected from an average seventh grade student in February, if that student had taken the same test. In a GE, the whole number represents the grade and the decimal fraction represents a month in a school year.

Table 2 shows the gains in vocabulary on the reading tests. The pretest data showed 7 students at or above the national average (7.5) and 14 students below the national

average. The posttest data showed 9 students at or above and 12 students below the Canadian national average (7.7). A comparison of the GEs for the comprehension in Table 3 also showed improved reading achievement. The data showed 6 at or above and 15 below the national average on the pretest while the posttest showed 9 at or above and 11 below the national average. The latter scores came close to that of a "typical class" according to the authors of Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests who state that: "The nature of averages dictates that about half the students in a typical class will have scores that are above the national average, and about half will have scores that are below average" (p. 37).

TABLE - 1

Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test - Level E

Raw Scores

Student	Vocabulary		Comprehension	
Number	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1.	18	20	21	29
2.	13	9	15	17
3.	24	26	34	33
4.	14	26	26	23
5.	17	17	23	19
6.	27	25	32	37
7.	28	34	36	42
8.	20	23	27	33
9.	12	13	19	23
10.	25	28	26	32
11.	13	13	15	21
12.	21	25	26	26
13.	10	12	10	15
14.	42	43	44	45
15.	20	22	21	25
16.	10	9	14	14
17.	14	8	23	23
18.	37	38	20	37
19.	15	22	26	25
20.	35	37	40	44
21.	10	8	20	--
Mean	20.2	21.8	24.9	28.2
Normed Group	25	25	27	28
Difference	-4.8	-3.2	-2.1	+0.2

TABLE - 2

Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test - Level E, Forms 4 and 3

Gains in vocabulary on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test in years using Grade Equivalent Scores (GE)

Student Number	Pretest	Posttest	Difference (in years)
1.	6.1	6.6	0.5
2.	4.6	3.5	-1.1
3.	7.5	7.9	0.4
4.	5.0	7.9	2.9
5.	5.7	5.9	0.2
6.	8.1	7.7	-0.4
7.	8.3	9.5	1.2
8.	6.6	7.3	0.7
9.	4.4	4.7	0.3
10.	7.6	8.3	0.7
11.	4.6	4.7	0.1
12.	6.8	7.7	0.9
13.	3.8	4.5	0.7
14.	12.8	12.8	0
15.	6.6	7.2	0.6
16.	3.8	3.5	-0.3
17.	5.0	3.3	-1.7
18.	10.6	10.8	0.2
19.	5.3	7.2	1.9
20.	9.8	10.5	0.7
21.	3.8	3.3	-0.5
Mean Score	6.5	6.9	Mean Gain 0.4

* Since no GE was given for Post High School (PHS), the highest GE was used.

TABLE - 3

Gates MacGinitie Reading Test - Level E, Forms 4 and 3

Gains in comprehension on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test in years using the Grade Equivalent Scores (GE)

Student Number	Pretest	Posttest	Difference (in years)
1.	5.7	7.9	2.2
2.	3.7	4.4	0.7
3.	10.0	9.3	-0.7
4.	7.4	6.2	-1.2
5.	6.4	5.1	-1.3
6.	9.3	11.0	1.7
7.	10.8	12.7	1.9
8.	7.6	9.3	1.7
9.	5.2	6.2	1.0
10.	7.4	8.9	1.5
11.	3.7	5.6	1.9
12.	7.4	7.1	-0.3
13.	2.5	3.6	1.1
14.	12.8	12.8	0
15.	5.7	6.7	1.0
16.	3.5	3.4	-0.1
17.	6.4	6.2	-0.2
18.	5.5	11.0	5.5
19.	7.4	6.7	-0.7
20.	12.8	12.8	0
Mean Score	7.06	7.84	Mean Gain 0.9

* Since no GE was given for PHS, the highest GE was used.

Attitudes Towards Reading

The Estes Attitude Reading Scale was used to determine if the experience of a Reading Workshop improved students' attitudes toward reading. This scale was administered to all students according to the guidelines stated in Chapter 3. The assessment consisted of 20 items to which students had to respond on a five-point scale ranging from A, meaning I STRONGLY AGREE to E, meaning I STRONGLY DISAGREE.

There were 12 negative items and 8 positive items that were scored quantitatively. The negative items included numbers 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, and 20. This included simple declarative sentences such as "Books are a bore." The positive items included numbers 2, 5, 7, 10, 14, 15, 18, and 19. This included simple declarative sentences such as "Reading is rewarding to me." The highest possible score was 100 and the lowest possible score was 20. For negatively stated items, I WILL STRONGLY AGREE scored one point, I AGREE scored two points, I AM UNDECIDED scored three points, I DISAGREE scored four points, and I STRONGLY DISAGREE was given five points. For positively stated items, I STRONGLY AGREE scored five points, I AGREE scored four points, I AM UNDECIDED scored three points, I DISAGREE scored two points, and I STRONGLY DISAGREE scored one point.

In examining the results of the pre and posttest, 17 out of 21 students or 81% remained at the same level or showed

improvement in their attitude toward reading with a mean gain of 6.2. An analysis of variance confirmed that these gains in attitude toward reading were statistically significant at the .003 level. Appendix J contains the raw scores for each student on the Attitude Scale, as well as the difference in each student's score.

In addition to the statistical data that confirmed the growth in positive attitudes as a result of the program, the student comments that follow support this finding as well. During the study, the researcher observed and heard on a regular basis how much the students enjoyed the freedom of reading the books they wanted to read and having the time to read them in class. During recess and lunchtime the typical comment was, "I hope we got Reading Workshop next!" The student journals consisted of two main parts: the first section or front of the journal was used for the letters they wrote to their "buddies" and the researcher; the back of the journal was used to assess and evaluate their progress in the program and to set goals for learning based on this. This will be discussed more in depth later in the study. In any case, the following excerpts are taken from the assessment/goals aspect of their journals and indicate not only the positive attitude and interest toward the program but, also, the growth in reading and writing. Even though the assessments they often reported were negative in tone, they

were encouraged to look at the need for self-improvement as being an opportunity to learn and grow, as they set new goals that were specific and realistic for them. The following are students' comments related to this aspect of their journals.

> March 21 '94
> I have been doing pretty good I fill in my read to succeed every night and I get my journals complete, but I don't think that I have been writing enough journals to a friend but I have enough for Mrs. Crocker. I am answering some of the questions from the sheet and I'm getting better at writing journals.
>
> My goals for this week are write one journal to Mrs.Crocker and <u>two</u> to my buddy. I'm also going to also try and read a different kind of genre.
>
> I like the reading Workshop because it's a nice change from the Out and about program and more enjoyable than doing english questions and tests.

> March 21, 94
> Dear me,
> I am not reading alot but I sill read every night. I am sill going to try to read more at home. My goal for this week is try to wright to my buddy more because I need to tell people what the books are like.
>
> I think reading worked shop is fantascite (fantastic) because I didn't really know what books were like on tell this started.

> 4/11/94
> Some goals for me for this week would be to:
> 1) read at least 3 books
> 2) visit the school library and take out some (2) books.
> 3) visit the public library and take out some (2) books.
> 4) Try to read them all.

I am feeling very happy with myself lately because I have been filling in my RTS (Read to Succeed) every night. I am still happy with myself because I am writing to everyone (including you Mrs. Crocker) on the right times. I'm also happy with myself because I am achieving most of my goals and reading, alot.

3/21
Dear _____,
I think the reading workshop was a great Idea and it really incourraged (encouraged) people to read more like me because (since) this program st:rted I didn't read much but that changed.

3/3
Dear me,
I really like doing this program. Through this program ive found out that (I) enjoy reading real life stories. I enjoy writting the letters to Miss Crocker, and to my friends, it gives me a chanche to tell about a book and how I feel about what im reading or have read. This program has really got me into reading. I'm so now I can't go to bed at night without picking up a book to read.

3/21
Dear me,
My goals were to read more than twenty pages per night, I am reading over twenty pages every night.
This week I am going to talk about my books more easier so you can understand.
I feel that this reading workshop is going good. No problems are going on yet. It helps people to read faster and easier, and it will help you to understand what you are reading.

During the last week of the study, the researcher asked the students how they felt about the Reading Workshop overall and if they could change any part of it, what they would

change and why would they change it? All of the responses reflected positive attitudes towards the program with the only 'change' being to continue with it:

> 5/6
> Mrs. Crocker,
> The reading workshop was EXCELLENT! I loved it. I would certainly reccomed (recommend) it for next year. I wouldent change anything. Expect that I would like to have reading workshop for a perment (permanent) course. I found that after I started to read more each day I could understand better what I read. Reading workshop was a break from one book straight. It was a chance for us to read what we wanted. Mrs Crocker overall I really enjoyed it. I would like to see it back in our school next year.

> 5/6
> Dear Mrs. C.
> This year I loved English period (after Christmas). Usually every year I couldn't stand having to read stories by a certain time and do a big load of questions on them. Most of the stories we'd have to read were the most boring stuff I ever read. That's why I wish we could carry on with Reading Workshop instead of going back to the Out & About and stuff. I really did like reading workshop and I really loved having you as a teacher. Our class is losing 2 great things at the one time.
>
> I think that having reading periods was a great idea now I am reading more good books than I ever had before. I don't think we should stop having reading periods because if we go back to regular english periods we won't hardly have any time in a school day to read only when our work is done. I think Mrs. Tuff would do a great job of taking over Reading Workshop.

5/6
I really enjoyed reading workshop and just because we are finished reading workshop I am still going to read every night. That is all I have to say about Reading workshop.

5/6
Some of my final thoughts or opions (opinions) for Reading Workshop would be that I enjoyed it, (so did everybody). I never knew how much I enjoyed until now. I feel sad about going back to the curicklame (curriculum) because reading workshop was so much fun. I hope the next class you have gets to have it. I would so that they would love it "too"....

5/6
My final thoughts on reading workshop is that it was really good, you got to choose the books that you really wanted. And I hope it goes on next year.
Now I feel about going back two our book's are not very good because it is bad that we can't get to read very often in class.

5/6
I really, really, really enjoyed the reading Workshop. I would recomend the reading Workshop to another teacher in the future. It was very nice to be able to read for everyday for three months. It was really a great program and I'm sorry to see it go. I wish it could have gone on all year. Well, it's really bad it's gotta go.

5/6
I really loved that reading centre. I wished we were able to have it English period like we had it when you were here....

> 5/6
> I never use to read as much as I did this year and I'm more interrested in reading now. I lke the fact of being video taped and also taking pictures when we read....
>
> 5/6
> About reading workshop I loved it and I think you should do it next year again. I've learned alot from it! I can read faster and better befour you started this I never read a book but now I start and can't put it down. I think we could go back to the out and About but also we could do this as well....
>
> 5/6
> Reading workshop is great. I would recomand the same program for all the grade seven classes next year.
>
> 5/6
> Reading work shop is the Best program ever. I even was interested in read. Now going back to out and about I think I would do alot better.
>
> 5/6
> ...I think it (Reading Workshop) is a wonderful program and has helped me read more. I would like to keep reading because the Out and About book is boreing and some stories in it do not even make sense....

The parents, as well, were asked at the end of the study to answer a questionnaire pertaining to their perceptions of the program. A summary of the results of the 17 questionnaires returned is in Table 4 on the following page.

TABLE - 4

Parent Questionnaire Results

Question	Response		
	Yes	No	Uncertain
1. My son/daughter appears to enjoy the Reading Workshop.	17	-	-
2. My son/daughter reads more as a result of the Reading Workshop.	15	1	1
3. My son/daughter's interest in reading has increased.	15	-	2
4. I would like to see the program continued next year.	17	-	-

With regard to questions 2 and 3, although the responses appear negative, they were really positive ones in that in both these cases the students read avidly and enjoyed reading. Comments from both these parents on the questionnaire after the study validated this interpretation since both parents felt it almost impossible for their children's interest and quantity of reading to improve, since they already read a great deal. The two comments are included below:

> "_____ has always enjoyed reading and reads a lot at home, however she has enjoyed the reading workshop and would like to continue with it next year."

> "_____ is an avid reader. he enjoys the new program very much but its almost impossible for his reading to increase as he usual reads every free minute." (This parent wrote "almost impossible" between numbers 2 and 3 above.)

Other comments from the parents' questionnaire strongly supported the parents' perceptions of the worthwhileness of the program and reflected a positive attitude toward their children's experience as well (Appendix K).

During several mini-lessons, the researcher discussed different genres with students and shared several books she had read during Reading Workshop on historical fiction. The Slave Dancer by Paula Fox and Underground to Canada by Barbara Smucker focused on slavery and several students became interested in the topic and read the books. However, one student not only read the books herself, but, reported her mother reading what she was reading as well. On the questionnaire, the mother commented:

> "_____ really enjoyed the program. It really helped her alot & myself also."

The following comments from the student journals are also indicative of the rapport that developed between students and their families and showed that many of them were enjoying the books that the students were reading as well:

Dear _____,
Hi, whats up? Not much here. I really like my book that I am reading now. It is very interresting and good. My mom wants to read my book when I am finish it! She thinks it will be good and will help her alot. She can't wait until I am finish it.

4/25
Dear Mrs,
I mean that a book could be popular because of its moral and its style of writing. I want to tell you that the book of the Titanic is educating. Mom, Dad, and my sister loved the writings and pictures.

The substitute teacher who was to replace the researcher while on leave, visited the class on several occasions during the study and also read during independent reading time. She commented that she "...had never seen a class like that before. They took reading seriously." She indicated that both the Grade 8 class she had taught the previous year and the Junior High students she had substituted during the present school year did not settle down and read when a reading period was assigned. Her perception was that the students looked upon a reading period as a "slack period" and figured "...you wouldn't have to do anything." She commented that the students in this study seemed to take seriously what they were doing because it was a "real program" - counting toward their overall evaluation in English; it was not just a reading period they were given periodically, or reading they did to "fill time" when they were finished work.

Affective Domain

As already discussed in Chapter 2, studies have shown not only a decline in the amount of reading children do but a decline in the positive attitudes toward reading as they get older and move through the grades (Greaney, 1980; Chall and Snow, 1982; Lehr, 1985; Reed, 1988; and Tunnell et al. 1991). As discussed earlier as well, we need to be concerned with more than the cognitive - teaching children how to read; we need also be concerned with the affective - teaching children to want to read (Atwell, 1987; Trelease, 1989; and Swift, 1993). Athey (1985) pointed out "...that affective factors play a role both in reading achievement and reading behavior" (p. 527). To reiterate an earlier quote: "We would venture to suggest that learning may be inadequate for motivational reasons and instruction may be inappropriate because it fails to appeal to the values and interests of the learner" (pp. 527-8). Atwell (1987) also noted:

> In their letters readers most often connect stories about others' lives to their own feelings and experiences. Although this response to literature isn't often encouraged or accommodated in school, I think it's one of the surest signs of a reader's involvement. (Atwell, 1987, p. 171)

In addition, Wells (1990) noted earlier the importance of creating literate individuals who are independent, can think critically and reason, as well as read for themselves. He

noted that individuals need to "...develop strategies, as readers, for constructing and critically evaluating their own interpretations of text" (p. 14) in order for this to occur.

An analysis of the dialogue journals used during the study indicated gains and growth in the "affective" side of reading as well. The students identified personally and responded emotionally to what they were reading; they also responded intellectually and the 'talk' often included comments on the author's writing style.

Based on Atwell's (1987) work, the researcher required students to write a letter once a week in which they shared their reactions and feelings about the book(s) they were reading. Initially, this occurred once every two weeks but, owing to the short duration of the study, the researcher felt it necessary to change it to every week. During the first half of the study, the most frequent type of response was "Making judgments or evaluations". (This analysis will be discussed later.) Usually this involved a comment rating a book such as it being "really good" or "interesting". Often this response occurred in combination with the next frequent type of response, "Recalling or remembering what happened", or a simple plot summary, as the following quote shows:

> 2/18
> Dear Mrs. Crocker,
> I had read a book called Old Yeller. It is 117 pages long. It is about a dog which used to help this kid. He helped him get away from boys. The dog got in a fight with a wolf. The dog almost got killed, so they locked him up in a place so he won't get hurt. Two weeks later, he got nasty, so the boy had to shoot him. Then they had a puppy to grow up just like Old Yeller. I give it a 2 rating.

Although students were encouraged to write as they read, with no set response as correct as there was no right topic or answer, a series of questions, based on the work of Kletzien and Hushion (1992), were stapled into the student's journals at the beginning of the program. These questions were meant to provide a focus for the students' writing and they were encouraged tor reflect on them rather than to simply recall what the book they were reading was about. Gradually students started answering the questions and, contrary to what Kletzien and Hushion found, the researcher noticed that there was evidence of "...personal reaction, emotional involvement, and critical thinking" (p. 446).

During the second half of the study the students' answers moved away from simple recall. The student mentioned above had given several plot summaries of books he had read but as he was encouraged to use the questions in his letters, his focus changed. The following entry shows his movement toward involvement and critical thinking as he tried to answer some

questions on an information book on polar bears that he had read prior to its introduction in a Social Studies class. His evaluation of how the author uses action to make the book exciting and create suspense, as well as the comment pertaining to the shortage of "interesting facts" in the book shows his analysis of the author's writing style and evidence of his involvement.

> 4/19
> Dear Mrs. Crocker,
> I read a good book on Polar Bears and other animals. It tells about how they catch seals for food. They hibernate all winter, until spring. When they sleep in caves, they keep themselves warm by their body heat. Cubs usually stay with their mother for around two years, because they cannot hunt too good yet. Yes, there is a little action in this book. The author makes this suspenseful by telling the different ways they does things, like they will stay on the ice without moving so the seal will not hear him on the ice. The polar bear will also wait by an air hole until the seal will pop up for air. I can't seem to make the book different, it is good the way it is. Yes, the title fits the story because that what it is about. I think the book is too short because you can still put alot of interesting facts into it. I would like to recommend this book to someone else, expecilly _____, because he likes nature. It could be nice to be friends with a bear, if he don't hurt you. I like the part where the bear standed up next to the "Tundra Buggy". If I was there, I would of took a lot of pictures. I like the way the author wrote this book.

These next entries reflect the class variety in thinking. The responses sometimes ranged from predicting to analyzing an author's technique, to making inferences, and to expressing feelings or personal involvement.

> 3/24
> Dear Mrs. Crocker,
> Today I read the book called The Weirds by Theodore Taylor it is a fairly long book of 221 pages and is really good so far.
> I think that Samantha with the help of Chip (Weirdo) will track down who is killing these people and dumping them in the swamp.
> I also think that the author writes very well because he is very descripitive, but not to the extent that it becomes boring.

> 3/15
> Dear _____,
> Hi! How are you? I'm fine. I almost done reading the book baby Alicia is dying and I really feel sorry fore her don't you. I think that Alicia will pull through. I also think that desi's mother is worried because her son died and I think he died with aids. Well write back soon!

The "affective" side of literature continued to be evident as students became involved with the stories they were reading and with the act of reading itself. Not only did they identify with the characters they were reading about but they compared the stories to their own lives. The following entries illustrate this:

2/28
Dear Mrs. Crocker,
I have dropped my book and picked up a knew one. It is called the Video Kid. I really can relate to this boy, the main charactor because we have things in common. The boy has a sister that bugs him. I can picture that because its the same with me. He also has moved to a new area. I have moved from a place too. Not far, but its a big difference. I will try my best to finish this book.

3/28
Dear Mrs. Crocker,
Ive started the book you recommended yesterday. I love it! In this book too, the accident could have been prevented. I5 year old Izzy was in a car with her date. And he was drunk. Izzy is only 15 and not old enough to drive or drink. There are a couple Cynthia Voight books in our classroom libary. I think I may try some of them. Right now in the book, Izzy cant rember (remember) much about what happened. All that she feels is the ache of her head, and her tired looking parents, and legs she can' even feel. I can also react to this book because a couple years back my cousins family were on their way back from the Xmas holidays when a drunk driver on the rong side of the road hit them in his Trans port truck. My 3 cousins were in the hospital for some time. They had some pretty serious injuries. My aunt still suffers back pain now and then. This book relates to an old saying I heard once, "everything you gain there's something loss." Izzy went drinking and had her fun, but now she may lose her right leg, or even her ability to walk. It makes you wonder why people still drink and drive? I guess they think it only happens to other people. I will probally finish this book in a couple of days and I'll let you know how it turns out. I'm sorry to hear about your cousin, I hope he finds a kidney soon. Miss when you

leave will we still write buddy journls to our new teacher? If we do I'll bet it won't be the same.

P.S.

No, I haven't thought about voletring (volunteering) for the BPHCC. I would but I don't know if I'm old enough.

Finally, there was sometimes strong emotional involvement:

4/13

Dear Mrs. Crocker,

I'm currently reading a very, very good book (and that's an understatement). The name of the book is Anne Frank and it's one of the best books I've ever read. It is truley a great book. Have you ever read it? Well, I'll tell you one thing, I would recommend this book very highly. Even (if) you have read it before, I would say read it again. This book really makes you stop and think. It makes me think that we are so lucky to have what we do compared to this girl. Sometimes we can really act like we are always needing something, that we really don't need anyway. I mean this girl and her family were in hiding. In content (constant) fear that something bad would happen like they would wonder if there would be enough food or water or money or about being caught ...etc. But, Anne Frank and her family were some of the luckier Jewish people at this time. Most of the Jewish people were rounded up by the germans and put in prison camps without very much food or water, and you were very, very lucky if you were with your family. Alot of people were murdered, and some of the people were used as slaves. Miss, I never thought I would say this to eneyone and really mean it, but I for one am glad Adolf Hitler is dead for all the pain he caused the entire Jewish people, Mrs. Crocker, I would (recommend) that you should definetly READ THIS BOOK!

4/13
Dear Mrs. Crocker,
I have started reading the book Go Ask Alice which was written anonomously. It is a young girls diary she is at the age of 15 and writes of meeting with the wrong kinds of friends and uses drugs. This book is a true story and a girl's real diary.

In the book I felt great emotion for Alice, love, pity, and hate The love was just the way it was wrote and who she was. I pittied her for using drugs but I also hated or felted annyned (annoyed) she had decieded to use drugs.

This book is good and has it's sad and happy moments, although (if I) met Alice I feel like I know her personally and she is now a part of me that I will never forget.

Based on the work of Kletzien and Hushion (1992), a brief discussion of the different ways students could express their thinking and responding occurred half-way through the study. No great emphasis was placed on this since the researcher felt the journal entries would lose some of their spontaneity if the students were aiming to answer a certain way. Based on the symbols used by Kletzien and Hushion, however, analysis of the letters during the first half of the study revealed that the five major types of entries were "Making judgments or evaluations" (41%) followed by "Recalling or remembering what happened" (33%). "Using personal identification", "Metacognition, writing about your own thinking or reading", and "Analyzing author's techniques" each scored equally at 7% each.

An analysis of the student entries during the second half of the study revealed that the major type of response was "Making judgments or evaluations" (37%) followed by "Recalling or remembering what happened" (20%). "Metacognition, writing about your own thinking or reading" scored 17%, "Using personal identification" scored 11%, and "Analyzing author's techniques" scored 9%.

A small number of responses were not included for analysis since they did not reflect a response to the literature as such. For example, some students wrote their friends and simply gave the name of the book they were reading and, in turn, asked their buddy for the name of the book they were reading.

As the previous entries indicate, "Making judgments or evaluations" on what they had read was the major type of response in the study. The researcher expected many of the entries to fall in this category since in their letters to each other students would often tell what they were reading, what they thought about it, and sometimes a little of what their book was about. The drop in "Recalling or remembering what happened", however, by 13% in the second part of the analysis was significant. It was indicative of the fact that the student's thinking had become more reflective and varied as the study progressed, especially as reflected in the metacognition category. This was the third most frequent type

of response in the second half of the study. Their reflections were sometimes on the book they were reading:

> 4/19
> Dear Ms. crocker.
> I really am injoying Rosa Parks My Story.
> I (It) really is incredible what blacks had to do between the 1900 - 1960, that's where I am so far. If I could change the book I would have all the mean white people be treated as the blacks were. What would you do?

The researcher speculated that growth in the metacognitive category was probably partly due to another aspect of the study referred to earlier where the journals were used as well - the assessment/goals aspect. This segment of the study was introduced after the students had been into the program for one month. The main purpose was to help the students become more independent and responsible for their own learning. Approximately every two weeks, each student was asked to assess what they had accomplished in the program so far and then write some goals they would like to achieve. This entry was dated and entered in the back of the dialogue journal so access and follow-up would be easier as they wrote and reviewed what they had written earlier. The researcher then gave some feedback which often included new goals set in conjunction with what students had written. However, as the study progressed, growth was evident in students' proficiency in evaluating their own strengths and weaknesses and in understanding what was expected of them. Consequently, there

was less feedback given since it was often only necessary to encourage and compliment them on their efforts.

The researcher also noticed that this self-evaluation and goal-setting encouraged the use of metacognitive skills as students reflected and took control of their learning. It seemed to make them more cognizant of, not only what they had achieved but, what they still wanted to accomplish. To illustrate this point, the first entry below was written by a student who tried to do his best. The allusion to "reading faster" stemmed from a discussion in a mini-lesson on what "good readers don't do." Both the student entry and researcher reply were typical as students wrote about the reading and writing they were doing. Usually the reply was meant to encourage them to read and write as much as they could keeping in mind the many genres available and the questions in their exercises.

> 3/1
> Dear me,
> I have been Reading very good books through this workshop. One Book is called Cayons. I really liked that book. I read to the finish. I fell (feel) that my speed of reading is good but I could write more about my books in my Journal. I have kept up with my Journal, its Just that I have never said enough for my book. I well try. Some goals or objectives I would like to set for myself for the remainder of this week. My goal for this week is to improve on my writing in my Journal. I well try to write two journals a week. I well also try to finish my book and pick up a new one.

3/1
Dear _____,
You did a good job of evaluating your progress so far. I had similar goals in mind for you.

Judging from the last entry I just read in your journal, I think you are already starting to work on your goal above - writing more in your letters. Keep it up. Remember, I do not want you to simply tell me what the book is about. I am more interested in your reactions to what you read. Use the questions that are stapled in your exercise if you are not sure what to write about.

I noticed in your "Read to Succeed" you do not read alot at home. See if you can increase your reading time to 1/2 hour. Also try and read a different genre from what you are currently reading.

Good luck! Enjoy Reading Workshop.
Mrs. C.
P.S. Remember, you only have to write to me once a week. Do you have a class buddy yet?

The next entry was written by one of the students who ranked low in the class in terms of reading and academic ability. Again, the reply was typical as they often needed help in selecting books and praise for what they had achieved.

3/1
How I feel about what I have done so far is I think really good. I have read two books and droped (dropped) one Well I also have wrote alot of buddy journals, I have wrote Mrs. Crocker and she has wrote me back. The first book I have read was the best book ever that was about slavery.

Some goals I would like to set for myself for the rest of the week are: Try to get some of my own books each week. at home. write two journals each week one too my friend and to Mrs. Crocker, I

will get some people, sometimes to help pick out a mystrey or science fiction.

3/2
Dear _____,
I can see you are making a real good effort and I am really pleased with your progress so far. Your self-evaluation is really good. I agree with you and had similar goals for you as well.

Remember, when you are writing journals to me, do not simply tell me what the book is about. I would rather read why you liked or disliked a particular book, for example. Don't forget the questions stapled in your exercise if you need help with a topic.

What kind of books are you interested in reading? Can I help you? Please come and see me or the school librarian if you need help. It is good to see you are getting other students to help you select as well.

See if you can read for a 1/2 hour each night. Remember, the more you read and write, the better you'll read and write.

Good luck! Enjoy Reading Workshop.
Mrs. C.

As these and the previous entries indicate, growth did not just happen cognitively; it happened affectively, as well. Through the dialogue journals, students were able to respond in new ways that were not often "encouraged or accommodated in school." Their growth expanded to include the "reader's involvement" in both the cognitive and affective aspect of learning as they not only reflected on their progress and took control of their own learning but responded in ways that showed their feelings, emotions, and critical thinking. The research findings of Livaudais (1986), as cited by Lesesne

(1991), were pertinent in determining the reading activities students from Grade 7 to Grade 12 find interesting and motivational. Undoubtedly, the read-alouds and freedom of choice in reading materials were factors. Having the opportunity to respond to what they were reading was important as well.

Concept of Self as Reader

Marsh's Self-Description Questionnaire - 1 was used to determine if the experience of a Reading Workshop improved students' concept of 'self as readers'. The 76-item questionnaire that assesses four areas of nonacademic self-concept, three areas of academic self-concept, and a General-Self scale, was administered according to the guidelines in Chapter 3. A child's self-ratings in different areas of self-concept are given in the eight scales.

The scale requires the student to respond to simple declarative sentences such as "I get good marks in reading," and "My parents are easy to talk to." Students check one of five responses: False scores 1 point, Mostly False scores 2 points, Sometimes False/Sometimes True scores 3 points, Mostly True scores 4 points, and True scores 5 points. For each scale, the lowest possible raw score is 8 points, and the highest possible raw score is 40 points. Each of the eight scales contains eight positively worded items with an

additional 12 negative items that are not included in the self-concept scores. The purpose of these is to break the positive response biases.

For the purposes of this study, five of the eight scales were used. Appendix L contains a summary of the raw scores for each scale on the pre and posttest. These scales measured students' perceptions or concepts of their Peer and Parent relations, as well as General School, General Self, and Reading Self-Concepts. The Reading Self-Concept Scale, however, was the most important in relation to one of the research questions posed by the study. Questions on the Reading Scale included such statements as: "#11. I like READING," "#18. I'm good at READING," "#25. I am interested in READING," and "#57. I look forward to READING." Of the five scales used, as well as the other instruments used in the study, an analysis of variance showed that the change in reader self-concept was statistically significant at .001 level. A comparison of the pre and posttest scores showed that 85.7% of the students had stayed the same or showed an improvement in their concept of 'self as reader'. Two of the three students who stayed the same had scores of 40 before and after the study. The mean gain was 11.9. Only three students did not show improvement in this area with two of these students showing a decrease of only one point and one student showing a decrease of two points. The students' concepts of

'self as reader' improved significantly during the period of the Reading Workshop Program.

An examination of the results of the students' perceptions of Peer Relations showed an improvement from the pre to the posttest with a mean gain of 2.6. An analysis of variance confirmed that these gains were also statistically significant at the .025 level. Some statements on this scale included: "#7. I have lots of friends," "#14. I make friends easily," "#28. I get along with kids easily," and "#60. I am popular with kids of my own age."

The above results were not surprising considering the rapport that had developed among many of the students in their dialogue journals. Some new and unexpected friendships developed during the study, especially between some male and female students who initially had little in common. Through these letters students had found a means to 'open up' and share their thoughts and feelings.

The students' perceptions of Parent Relations, however, did not show any significant improvement during the program. Paired differences showed a mean gain of 0.2. An analysis of variance for this scale showed it was not statistically significant. This was not surprising since the study required little parental involvement except for one meeting that had been scheduled before the program started in order to explain what the study was about. At this meeting, many parents

shared their own experiences of becoming readers, that is, when they read because they wanted to, not because they had to. They emphasized the importance of choice in reading materials to readers and indicated they would have enjoyed such a program themselves. In addition, they affirmed the importance of children having time to read, especially in school. It seemed that whenever the researcher met one of these parents, they were eager to ask how the program was going. The General School Self-Concept Scale showed a mean gain of 1.3. Again, these findings were not statistically significant.

Finally, the General Self-Concept Scale showed a mean gain of 1.5. An example of the statements on this scale included: "#29. I do lots of important things," "#45. In general, I like being the way I am," "#67. I can do things as well as most other people," and "#72. A lot of things about me are good." An analysis of variance confirmed that this scale was statistically significant (.036). This result was not surprising in light of the positive results on the "Reading" and "Peer Relations" scale. Students felt better about themselves at the end of the study. Students who were involved in the program had more positive self-concepts.

Effects of Program in Relation to Gender

This investigation sought to explore the effect of a

Reading Workshop on students' reading achievement, attitudes, and concept of 'self as reader' in a Grade 7 classroom. It also explored the effect on students' perceptions of peer and parent relations, general school and general self-concepts, as well as the researcher's perceptions overall. Analyses of variances of pre and posttest scores confirmed that gains were statistically significant in comprehension (.006), attitude (.003), peer relations (.025), general self (.036), and concept of self as reader (.001). Gains were not significant in vocabulary (.076), parent relations (.781), or general school (.352). Although the study showed an increase in vocabulary gain, lack of significance was not surprising since the whole program emphasized understanding or meaning of large discourse at the story or comprehension level. The study was not focused on words as such.

A closer examination of the analysis of variance for the differences between scores of males and females separately appears to indicate that the study had more significance for females than males. The mean gains and statistical significance for females was greater in comprehension (.014), attitude (.024), and concept of self as reader (.009). This was not surprising in light of the following findings.

A total of 395 books were read by the students during the study ranging from 7 to 51 books each. The average number of books read during the study was 20 books, an indication of the

large amount of reading students had accomplished in three months. However, a closer examination of the total number of books read by each gender revealed that the females read 61% or 241 of the total books read while the males read 39% or 154 of the total books. In addition, a total of 374 letters was written back and forth amongst the students in their dialogue journals. Again, closer examination revealed that the females wrote 55% or 205 of the total letters while the males wrote 45% or 169 of the total letters. Females read and wrote more during the study.

Although the males did achieve statistical significance in attitude (.045) and concept of self as reader (.028), they had greater gains and statistical significance over the females in the area of peer relations (.017). Even though the females read and wrote more, this finding was interesting in light of the fact that it seemed the relationships amongst the boys improved more as they talked about reading in their dialogue journals. Despite the fact the males were slower getting involved in both the reading and writing activities, the result was more positive in terms of the relationship that developed amongst their peers.

A rapport had gradually developed amongst many of the students. The dialogue journals enhanced the 'community of readers' as their letters were often used to encourage and recommend to their buddies and the researcher that they read

a particular book. A 'comraderie' developed as a result of the program and was promoted by the personal form of communication of the letter as the students took on the confidence and authority of "real" readers. The following entries by several of the male students in the class is indicative of this. Often, the better readers and writers provided a role model for some of the more reluctant students.

> 3/3
> Dear _____,
> I read a book called The Dark Thirty it was a good book about ghosts and a bit about slavery. It was a good book and I think you would like it. What book are you reading now? Is it good?
>
> 4/28
> Dear Mrs. Crocker,
> today I had just finished Death Watch. I would probley speak for both of us when I say that it is a really good book. The only problem is that some parts were hard to understand. I think the author should of drawn a couple of pictures to describe it, or at leased (least) a couple of sketches.
>
> 4/15
> Dear _____,
> I found that This Can't be happening at McDonald Hall was cool. After you read that book, please read Losing Joe's Place. It is a Gordon Korman book. It is wickett.

The dialogue below developed between one of the male and female students in the class who, before the program had started, had very little in common. The male student who wrote the following entry, however, put a great deal of

thought and effort into trying to persuade his female buddy to read a particular book:

> 3/8
> Dear _____,
> How are you? I'm fine. Well, I may have a soare writing hand after writing back to you. It should only take about 200 years. Well, I guess I should start, I believe that before you say you wouldn't like science fiction books, you should try my book. I believe that you might get to like science fiction books. I'm really not sure which character I would really like to be friends with. I guess I really have two. The chief _____ Mr. Scott (better know as Scottie) and Captain Kirk. The reasons that I would like to be friends with these two men is that they are strong, brave, and not afraid to speak their minds. I don't believe I would change anything in this book because it's already a great book. It also seems like you got your hands on a great book. It seems that your really into it, and just plain enjoying it. You really like this book and just real life fiction books in general. You make this book sound so good, I might even give it a try (and I really don't like real life fiction). Real life fiction is your favourite genre, isn't it? Well, I have two favourite genres: Science fiction and mystery. Well, I gotta go now. But, I'll be writing you again another time.

The other variables were not statistically significant for either gender. A summary and comparison of the mean gains for each variable is in Table 5 below.

TABLE - 5

Gender Comparison of Mean Gains

	Boys	Girls
Vocabulary	2.09	1.0
Comprehension	1.7	4.8
Attitude Scale	7.2	5.2
Concept of Self as Reader	3.8	2.9
Peer Relations	4.3	0.8
Parent Relations	0.55	1.0
General School	0.64	2.1
General Self	1.3	1.7

Researchers' Perceptions of the Program

Introduction

The main purpose of this study was to quantitatively evaluate the effect of a Reading Workshop on seventh graders' reading vocabulary, comprehension, attitudes, and concepts of 'self as reader'. Valuable insights were gained as students participated in the various components of the Reading Workshop. Based on the results of this study, the researcher is of the opinion that her observations and interpretations of events are valuable. They are discussed overall under three main headings: mini-lessons, independent reading, and dialogue journals.

Mini-Lessons

Based on Atwell's (1987) work, the Reading Workshop usually began with a 10- to 15-minute mini-lesson. As discussed in Chapter 3, the mini-lessons during the first several weeks were procedural, i.e., consisted of explaining the rules and requirements of the program. Rules, based on Atwell's work, were posted and a letter explaining the Reading Workshop was distributed. It was only a matter of time before students began to realize that the program was being evaluated in three parts: through the letters written each week to the researcher, the assessment/ goals written approximately every two weeks, and following the Reading Workshop rules and completing their Home/School Reading Program, Read to Succeed, on the required nights. These were not "slack" periods or "time off" from the regular curriculum. This was the curriculum.

For the researcher, the need to 'repeat' or 'drill' different concepts often was not necessary. It seemed students were better able to retain what had been discussed or taught in these mini-lessons due to their brevity and conciseness. That students did, in fact, retain ideas was evident in their letters where the ideas and concepts introduced often surfaced weeks later in their writing.

The following examples from the goals/assessment part of one student's journal illustrate this point as the individual

tried to break the habit of lip-reading and vocalizing while reading. Based on a similar mini-lesson conducted by Atwell (1987), the researcher had discussed some of the skills competent readers use, such as not lip-reading and vocalizing since they "...are bad habits because they slow down the reading rate and force the reader to see single words instead of chunks of meaning" (p. 217).

> March 1/94
> I feel that I've read alot of books during the last month. I never read as much as I do now that I started this program. I also have a bad habit. it is that while I'm reading I move my lips. I don't do it all the time but when I do I try to stop it. This program has really helped me read more. And I'm trying to stop reading with my lips. read the right way....
>
> Some goals or objectives that I would like to set for myself for the rest of the week are that I'm going to try and read one book each week. If I start to read with my lips I will put my finger on my lips....
>
> March 7/94
> I think that I'm not reading with my mouth anymore.... My goals for this week are to try and skip a boring part of the book. I never achieved that one last week because if I skip a part I might not understand the book when I'm finished.
>
> 3/21
> I have been filing in my read to succeed every night and reading lots of books. I don't think that I'm going to skip anything in my book because I might miss something, and I still don't read with my mouth....I LOVE the reading workshop. It was a great idea

The second presentation of mini-lessons was based on introducing to students the many outstanding young adult authors and their books. The main purpose was to encourage students to read some of the literature introduced as well as for them to see the range of books available; and as Monson (1987) noted: to choose "...material that engages the hearts as well as the minds of your students" (p. 110).

As research and authors have already confirmed, reading aloud proved invaluable here in enticing students to read (Hillman, 1975; Vail, 1977; Butler, 1980; Gatherall, 1981; Briechle, 1984; Frick, 1986; Trelease, 1989; and Swift, 1993). During the Book Talks, the researcher introduced the author, gave a brief summary of the book, and then read aloud carefully chosen excerpts. It usually concluded with a personal response about why the book was enjoyed. Although not all students read what had been shared in class and preferred taking advantage of the freedom to choose and select their own material, many of them did choose these books and often wrote or asked for other books with similar themes. Very quickly many students began to identify with certain authors and their books as the following quotes show:

> 3/21
> I am going along well with my goals. I have concored (conquered) two goals that were hard to overcome. My goals from now on will be minor.
>
> My goal for this week is to Read arcund one chapter a night on the nights I do not (have) to read. In my Journals I need to have a question ansewered. I will try that.
>
> I think that Reading Workshop is a great chance to get to know a author. I really like Gordon Kormen for his great style at writing his books. I probally, after my reading experince I will write him.

> 4/29
> Dear Mrs. Crocker,
> Hi! I'm reading <u>One Last Wish</u> by Lurlene McDaniel. It is real good so far. But when I first started it I hated it. But with her books you have to keep reading it....

In another mini-lesson, where different authors and their writing techniques were discussed, one student began to compare authors and their writing styles and eventually came to prefer one over another:

> 5/4
> Dear Ms. Crocker
> I am now reading <u>The Burning Questions of Bingo Brown</u> by Betsy Byars. I like the way she writes but I prefer the way Paula Fox's book are. What do you think of the way the too writers write? Have you ever read <u>The Burning Question of Bingo Brown</u>? The author Betsy Byars don't put a lot of words in a book that most people don't understand and the chapters are short. It seems as if your reading the Book faster. What do your think? Well I must go.

Books were read aloud and shared in other areas of the

curriculum, such as Mathematics and Social Studies, whenever the opportunity presented itself as well, especially the reading of poetry. Rainy days and special occasions were prime times for poetry. Several anthologies of poetry were placed in the class library and were shared and enjoyed by the students. One student in particular delighted in reading it.

> 4/19
> Dear Mrs. Crocker,
> I'm getting to love all kind of poems. When I read one that sounds sort of stupid I read it again but if its still Just a stupid I put a tune of a song to it and I like it! I'm aswering No. 7 qustiion. I thing this book is perfect for anyone who like poetry like Me! The poems are funny and exciting Some of them are so funny I start to laugh. I read poetry book with no pictures and all of a sudden the person that's in the poem is me! (In my mind of corse.) Well I got to go and read again. bye!

Several excellent resources mentioned in Chapter 3 were used for background information on many authors and a bulletin board display on authors was set up. The researcher had her own collection of information on authors that was placed in the class library as well. One student, who started reading the book Romeo and Juliet Alive (and together at last) by the author, Avi, thought that the writer was female and of adolescent age. In a journal entry to a buddy she stated:

4/14
Dear _____,
Hi, right now I'm reading the book Romeo and Juliet Alive! (and together at last). The author is someone named AVI. I like the way she writes. It sounds like someone our age is writing the book. I dropped it for the Easter Holidays and started to read another book but now I picked it up again. So far I like it alot. It's pretty funny. You should get it.

When she wrote a similar entry to the researcher, she was encouraged to read the author profile. She was surprised to learn that the author was male, older, and that Avi was not the real name. This then, provided an opportunity to discuss "pen names" as well as to continue to look at the real people behind the books.

The Book Talks often provided the context the researcher needed to discuss various topics thus providing a natural extension to what had been shared. This was the case when the book Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell was presented. Not only did this Book Talk provide an opportunity to discuss the author and his many books, but a mini-lesson on the "Newbery Medal" was a spinoff from this presentation since it had won that medal in 1961. Other medals, such as the Caldecott award, were discussed as well.

The value of having other people outside the classroom share books and their experiences with reading was also an important strategy used. Often this provided the motivation

a student needed to read a book for him/herself. As Graves (1991) noted, "We know that we need never be alone as long as there are books and people who can share with us their own delight in exploring the world through reading" (p. 86). The teacher/librarian had been invited for a mini-lesson on a selection of books from the school library. She shared a selection of fiction and nonfiction books covering a range of topics and reading levels. Several students selected from the books presented and one student who experienced reading as difficult and had trouble finding a book he liked and could read, finally found a book he liked and read it nearly two months into the program. The transition and progression from not reading to finally becoming a reader is shown in the different entries he recorded in his journal:

> 3/1
> Dear Journal
> I have not read very many book so far. I think the journal I have read are pretty good. I wrote a journal to _____ and he did not answer it. I am trying to pass reading but the books are to hard. I think I am going to bring in some of my own books.
>
> Some of the goals or objectives I would like to set for myself for the rest of the week are to try to reading a bit faster and to try to read with(out) useing my finger.

3/14
Dear: Mis Crocker
The librarain came to our class and she had some of her favourite books to show us. She said that we could rent the book out now. I picked out a book. The name of it is Tackle Without a Team. It is about a football team that did not get together well. Scott was good and this other boy did not like him. One day when he was finish a football game and when he went to his bag he found drugs.

3/21
I finally found a book that I like. The name of it is Tackle Without A Team.
I wish to finish the book I am doing now because every book I read was not very interesting and I put them back. for my journal I wish to write my journal a little bit longer.
I think so far in this reading prosses (program) it is going very good.

3/30
Mis C:
If I could be friends with one of the characters in my book I would be Scott Knarer. He is a tackle on the Gray Hooks. I would like to be him because I like football very much.

4/21
Dear: Miss Crocker
Thank you for picking out two books for me to read. The book am reading know is This can't Be Happening at Macdonald Hall. It is about to boys on a hockey team that is always getting in troble.

Although he still needed assistance in selecting a book to read and had to be encouraged to sit away from the group because he was often easily distracted, his appetite for reading had been 'whetted'. For his final entry he wrote:

> 6/6
> The book I think is the best is Tackle Without a Team. Overall I think this Reading Program was a Total success because know I am reading more books at school and at home.

In addition, the substitute teacher, discussed earlier, visited the class and during one mini-lesson enthusiastically shared several of Gordon Korman's books that she had read during her Junior High years. Still cherishing her books, as well as the author's signature that she managed to obtain on one copy, her love and interest in reading was evident to all. After her visit, several more students now wanted to read Korman's books; a waiting list developed for the books that had been found in the class and school library. One male student in the class was already developing a keen interest in this author and his books as the following quotation shows:

> 3/28
> Dear Mrs. Crocker,
> I really am hooked on Gordon Korman. The way he writes is like a bank full of gold. I cannot put it down. I really can relate to the things my caracter does. Drives cars, works, plays, and he chases girls.

The researcher believes that parents and/or significant others can also play a vital role in not only serving as a model for reading and reading aloud to their children (Silvern, 1985; Reed, 1988; and Trelease, 1989) but, as well, in sharing with students their own experiences and love of

reading. Judging from the positive influence other invited guests had when they came into the class, the researcher felt that visitations by parents and/or significant others would not only provide a reading model for the students but would motivate the students to read as well.

The researcher observed that some of the best "Book Talks" were given by students and a frequent question by students was, "When are we going to have a Book Talk?" When the Reading Workshop was first announced, many of the students groaned when they asked if they would have to do book reports. For many, it was simply more homework. However, the enthusiasm with which they talked about their books and read aloud various excerpts was outstanding. One of the most enjoyable and funny sessions in class occurred when one of the students started to read aloud excerpts from the book, Mouse Trap, by Walter Dean Myers. Requests to let him continue resulted in almost a whole period being devoted to his reading to the class. Students often waited in anticipation to share what they had read or for books that had been shared:

> 3/23
> Dear Mrs. Crocker
> I hope you enjoy the book called "Dinky Hocker Shoots Smack". I certainly did. Can I have a lone of the book "Francis Rain" I here it is a very good book. I hope I get to do my "Book Talk" pretty soon. The book I am talking about is called "Underground to Canada". It is a good book. I liked the book _____ talked about. Did you? Well I have to

go now. Bye.

3/31
Dear miss
I am half finshed (finished) Call it Courage by Armstrong Sperry it is a good book. The next book I would like to read is the book _____ is reading I am going to try (to) get it when he in (is) finshed.

During several lessons on genre, a list had been generated on the different categories of books, such as "Books About Horses," "Books About Romance," "Science Fiction," and "Fantasy", so that students might use the genre when trying to categorize books. It was noticed that the majority of students usually read just one genre and were not always aware of the other categories of books. In addition, genre was not a concept that was completely understood, especially by the reluctant readers. Encouraging students to try the different genres was a frequent goal the researcher wrote for the students in their journals. In addition, they were asked to rate and classify the type of book they had read when they recorded it in their record keeper and on the "Book Menu" chart, a chart that contained books rated as "Excellent" that was posted in the Reading Corner. Students frequently talked about different genres and referred often to the completed class chart for a book on a particular topic. Many of them commented on liking a particular genre - a genre that they might not have tried otherwise if it had not been discussed in

the mini-lessons. The following journal entries reflect some of the student experiences:

> 4/29
> Dear Mrs. Crocker,
> How are you? I have read and finished a few books this week when I was off. First of all, I finished off Anne Frank (great book) and after almost two and a half weeks without a good hardy boy or science fiction book, so I just had to get my hands on one, and I did. Three of them. The first one was called the border line case, the second one was danger on vampire trail, and last but certainly not least is called False Alarm I haven't read that one yet but I going to soon. Very soon, and I'm also in school reading a very good Star Trek book called Metamorphosis by Sean Lorrah. Mrs. Crocker, for almost the past three weeks, I've been reading books from two genre that I normaly don't read anything from: realistic fiction and non-fiction. And the books I read were pretty good, But, I don't think that I will ever find a genre of books that I like more than Science fiction and Mystery.
>
> 3/21
> Dear journal,
> I have fulfilled my goals. Almost every four books I have something from another genre. And I found out I like biography, romance, and espically science fiction. I don't lip read any more. I am pleased with the number of books im reading a week, at least two. Sometimes 2 1/2. I like the way I answer and write letters. I at least answer one of the questions on the sheet. I like reading work shop. I think it helps me to become a better reader. I like almost all the books ive read esicpall (especially) "Blueberries and Whipped Cream.

In the above entry, the student talked about not

lipreading and reading better as a result. Based on Atwell's (1987) suggestion, the third presentation of mini-lessons was based on skills. During several other mini-lessons, the researcher had discussed different strategies good readers use when reading (Atwell, 1987, pp. 216-20). Based on Smith's work (1984), these included skipping over words they did not know and guessing at what the word meant rather than "sounding out". In addition, they were advised to read the largest units of information possible rather than concentrating on individual words or letters. As Smith (1984) noted, "...comprehension must precede the identification of individual words for the simple reason...that words taken in isolation, or one at a time, are essentially meaningless" (p. 110). Other strategies included speeding up reading as much as possible to increase comprehension and concentration, as well as not using a card or pencil to underline as they read or lipread and vocalize as these were habits that could "...slow down the reading rate and force the reader to see single words instead of chunks of meaning" (Atwell, p. 217). As well, students were advised to avoid rereading and to abandon books they did not like. Finally, with these tips, the "Rule of Thumb Technique" for measuring the difficulty of a book was presented and posted. Here they were advised to place down one of four fingers and lastly a thumb for each difficult word on a page. If on a page of about a 100 words,

all fingers and the thumb were down, the book was probably too difficult (Hancock and Hill, 1987).

The journal below was written by one of the reluctant readers in the class. In several of his letters previous to the strategy mini-lessons, he talked about books he was not enjoying or finishing. Of all the mini-lessons introduced, these strategy mini-lessons were the most valuable for many students as they learned to read faster and more often. The following are his comments:

> 3/1
> Dear me,
> Where sance we start reading in school I read a lot more then I use to. This is a exelent way to get people started reading books. All most every night I read a chapter 10 to 12 pages.
> Some Goals I would like to set for myself for the rest of the week are if I am reading a stupit book I am going to drop it and start a new one.

Part of the researcher's response to this student is written below.

> P.S.
> I'm glad you're not going to stick with a book you don't enjoy. We have hundred of books in the class library for you to choose from. Have you read <u>Half-a-Moon Inn?</u> by Paul Fleischman?

The researcher felt that part of the purpose in responding to students was to encourage them to trust their own instincts on what they liked or disliked as well as to suggest other books they might enjoy reading. Like Atwell

(1987), it was felt the teacher's role was not one of getting too personally involved, "Our dialogue journals focus on the academic subjects under consideration in my course: books, authors, reading, and writing. I'm not a counsellor, and the purpose of the letters is not to invite students' personal problems or offer counsel" (p. 178).

Following soon after the strategy mini-lessons, students were writing about strategies discussed in mini-lessons and it was obvious they not only wanted to do what "real" readers did but they wanted to become "real" readers too. The strategies discussed in the mini-lessons became important as they gave guidance, direction, and provided a "model" of real readers.

Independent Reading

> I think reading workshop is a very good program for kids our age. I think the next class that comes would love this program. I think going back to the regular curiculam is bad because it is not fun but reading is especially when you get to lay down to read. (Grade 7 student in the study).

Reading Workshop became synonymous with reading and that is what the students did. Despite an announcement on the P.A. system or a knock at the door, students went on reading unaffected by interruptions. Many times the researcher had to call students back to their desks for a mini-lesson as they raced to get their 'favourite spot' for reading. Frequently

during recess and lunchtimes, students from the other classes came to visit and read in the Reading Corner.

Initially, it seemed, there were always several students who could not read during the assigned period. From having to use the bathroom to disturbing other classmates, they could not seem to settle down. The researcher also observed that, for the most part, these students were at the lowest end of reading achievement in the class and did not seem to like to read. As the program progressed and various strategies such as Book Talks were used, however, they improved dramatically in their behaviour.

As has been discussed earlier, it is not enough just to have books available in the classroom library. It has to be designed so that students want to visit it and read (Harste et al., 1988 and Fractor et al., 1993). The researcher observed that having an open-faced book display where the front covers were displayed seemed to entice students to read, since the majority of books that were selected were often from this display unit. Martinez and Teale (1989), as cited by Fractor et al. (1993), observed in a week-long study in a Kindergarten classroom library that "Over 90% of the books chosen by children were from open-faced shelves" (p. 483). This strategy worked for older students as well probably because students were better able to see what was available. In addition, it helped to have most of the books coded by genre

since many of the students started to like particular genres and did not always know what kind of book they were selecting. For many of the more reluctant readers, however, help was always needed in selecting something to read since genre was not always a concept they fully understood.

Harste et al. (1988) also noted that an active classroom library only increases the use of the school library since students "...become more interested in books and more aware of what kinds of books are available and so go in search of them in the school library." (p. 129). The researcher observed that as the study progressed, this was true of the students in the study as well. As they became familiar with authors and their books, they often frequented the library in search of different titles.

The use of carpet ends as an identifiable place to read was enticing and it allowed them the freedom to choose to sit where ever they wanted. With their own pillows and stuffed toys, many chose places under tables and in far corners of the classroom. Comfort was key and like the title of the Reading Corner, "Home Sweet Home", it helped in making them relax, feel contented, and want to read.

Students need to be aware of the quality and range of books available and given 'permission' to read whatever they want to read. The perception amongst older students is often that picture books and chapter books are 'baby books' and many

do not select them for fear of being ridiculed by other students. Somehow it seems these books do not count. This was an attitude that was often hard to change as the following entry shows:

> 3/24
> Dear Miss,
> I am really started reading a book this week. I was just reading small books like 2 nim (minute) mysterres and the Orphan Boy. What happen was in the book 2 min mysterys I found them read really Prombles (Problem) solving.

In response to this student, the researcher tried to point out that there was nothing wrong with reading these books since they were "real" too. It all depended on the individual and their tastes. Again, there were several mini-lessons on this topic as a variety and range of books continued to be discussed and introduced. The student above wrote a letter a week later and it was filled with excitement and enthusiasm for a "small" book he was saving to be read. Gradually confidence and trust in their own choices and decisions took hold:

> 3/30
> Dear Miss,
> The book I got at the library is going to be a good book becauses the back says the book is the best book ever for kids It is about a boy made of sticks comes to life. The books name is Pinocchio. Ever time he tells a lie his nose gets bigg. I have not start the book yet because I want to save it when I going to Deer Lake. It is going to be a long ride so I dont (want) to be boury (bored). This

> book has the best drawing in it so the book is going to be easy to understand. Miss you had this book 3 years ago. Did you like it, I bet you did because it is full of action. I can't wait to read it. By the way I am going to deer lake on a hockey tornment.

The researcher also noticed that some of the picture books and shorter chapter books were read by many more able readers as well. Often they were read as a 'break' from the longer novels they were reading and sometimes, too, for their universal themes and quality. Part of a dialogue between two of the more avid readers is a case in point:

> 3/22
> Dear _____,
> I just read the book "The Stranger". it was a faluls (fabulous) mystery about a man who appeared one day, And had made something strange happen. I think you will enjoy this book. And it's only 12 pages long. This is the first mystery I every (ever) enjoyed! Because im (I'm) usually so stuck on realistic fiction. Well I wont tell you to (the) strange thing. You just read it for yourself.
> P.S. It can be found on the window shelf.

Although the majority of books in the class library were fiction, nonfiction was continuously added and read aloud to the students since this was not only a genre that many of them enjoyed but "...nonfiction often becomes the catalyst that turns teenagers into lifetime readers" (Abrahamson and Carter, 1991, p. 54). Some of the most popular books in class came from this genre as students seemed fascinated by such topics as "Sunken Ships" and "UFO's". As one student indicated in

his final comment to the researcher:

> 5/6
> The best thing in reading workshop was (a least to me) the reading. I didn't not like any thing about it but next year is to bring in more book on UFO sighting etc.

To offset the imbalance between fiction and nonfiction books, the students were taken to the school library where a display of nonfiction books was set up shortly before Easter. Several students got involved with Easter crafts and as a result, the researcher received decorated eggs from two students as Easter gifts. Information from one of the nonfiction books in the classroom library also gave two students a project idea for the school science fair. For one of the more reluctant readers, a first-time purchase of a book was made through the Scholastic Book Clubs. This was as a result of an interest he developed in shipwrecks while reading a book about them.

Despite all this sharing and dialoguing, however, the researcher learned that keeping in tune with the interests and tastes of the class is critically important. One of the more discerning readers in class was a student of average reading ability who was always looking for a book to read even though he selected books and read them during the program. Often on a visit to the school library, for example, he would spend the whole period looking for a book and still not find one. He was also one of the few students who visited the public

library. Despite this, the researcher assumed everything was okay and he was enjoying the program. However, on the Self-Description Questionnaire - 1 by Marsh (analyzed earlier) administered after the study, his responses to #25 statement "I am interested in Reading" was false, to #41 statement "I enjoy doing work in Reading" was false, to #49 statement "Work in reading is easy for me" was false, and to number #57 statement "I look forward to Reading" was mostly false. When asked why he felt this way, he replied he enjoyed the program but he could not always find a book he liked. He did not write a great deal in his letters but his final comment was insightful:

> 5/7
> Dear Mrs. Crocker,
> ...I think that the Reading Workshop was great I think that it should continue next year. I like the Read workshop when I was reading interesting books.

Not just any books will do when trying to develop readers. Having a suitable book available at the right time for a student is often critical. In addition, we need to be readers ourselves not only to provide a model for our students to emulate but also to become a resource available to our students in suggesting and helping them find the 'right' book.

The home/school reading incentive program, Read to Succeed, also positively influenced the amount of reading students had accomplished. A certificate was passed out each

month to students who successfully participated in the program. During February, 14 of the 21 students received a certificate, during March, 17 students received a certificate, and during April, 19 students received one. As the study progressed, more students started to read at home and complete their record keepers. The researcher felt that here also was an opportunity for parents to get involved in their child's reading in seeing to it that the required reading was done each night and the record keepers were completed.

Finally, instead of students meeting the ten-minute requirement for each night's reading in their Read to Succeed program, they often read for a half hour or longer. As indicated earlier, when responding to their assessment/goals, the researcher often encouraged them to read more at home, especially if the student were a reluctant reader. Gradually, many books started in school were finished at home as students could not wait to see what was going to happen next or how the story ended. Before long weekends and Easter holidays, the class visited the school library and were given the opportunity to select books if they wished. In addition, they were encouraged to order books through the Scholastic Book Clubs which was sent every month, as well as to purchase books through any school Book Fairs. As some of the following and previous entries have shown, some students chose to read as part of their leisure activities.

4/11/94
Dear Mrs. Crocker,
I read alot of books over Easter Holidays, did you? Here are some of the titles of the different books I read: Stacey's Choice, Poor Mallory, Jessi Wish, Summer Fun, Sun, Fun, & Games, Boo, did I scare you? Camp Spooky and alot more besides. Hope you like the book I drawed.
P.S. It was better than that on the real cover.

4/13
Dear Mrs Crocker,
This is my first time wrighting to you since Easter holidays were over. I read three or four books over easter. The book I am reading now is....

3/30
Dear _____,
I am still reading face-off and it is a good book to read. I like this book because all the characters are all my age. The characters in my book are named Brad, T.J., Chris, Tony, Trey, and Mr. and Mrs. McKinnen. I will be able to finish this book tonight when I get in bed.

Children who read in school read at home. As Graves (1991, p. 25) pointed out:

> Nancie Atwell (1987) showed us that when her students read n school they read at home. Her reasoning was simple but correct. If children are in the middle of a good plot, they'll read at home without assignment. If a child already has begun reading about her project on squirrels in school, she'll have the momentum to continue to work at home....Children who read in school read at home and in abundance. (p. 25).

Gradually, it seemed, students were becoming lifelong

readers as they no longer just read during school time. They now read because they wanted to, not because they had to.

Dialogue Journals

> March 21, 1994
> Dear journals,
> ...I have enjoyed the reading program because I like to read alot. I also taught that when we started this program that we would not get a chance to write, I also enjoy writing, But, the journal took care of that. So I would say that overall, I have really enjoyed this program. (Grade 7 student in the study).

As discussed in Chapter 2, not only is reading to children and giving them time to read important, but providing an opportunity for them to talk about what they are reading is necessary as well. In the literature on early readers, for example, it was found that having one significant other who had the time and patience "to answer children's questions about words and reading" was important in their literacy development (Durkin, 1961, p. 164). Other studies also supported these findings (Durkin, 1966; Clark, 1976; and Butler, 1979).

The students in this study seemed to enjoy the dialogue journal as a form of response for 'talking' and sharing about the books they were reading. Often they would not have the journal placed in the trolley when they would be asking if a letter had been written to them yet. At the beginning of the

program, some students expressed difficulty in trying to write as the following student wrote:

> 2/19
> Dear me,
> ever sence we started Reading Work shop it is fun reading But I don't like writing in Journal because it is hard to think on something to say.

Again, when encouraged to use the questions (discussed earlier), the responses changed dramatically as the student now had a focus:

> 3/21/94
> Dear me,
> I did do the goals and I like reading every night and I am starting to like writing in my journal. I like the reading workshop it is fun reading. The goal I am setting for this week is to finish the book TOP SECRET.

There were many advantages to using the dialogue journal in the study as well. For some of the more reserved or less verbally communicative students, it was an opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings without being the centre of the class' attention. In addition, because the students read and wrote at their own ability and pace, they received responses specific to their needs. Such an individualized program had success built into it as long as students were genuinely reading and writing. Veatch (1958) noted how the free choice of material by students provided "...a way of keying learning more closely to the specific levels of each pupil" (p. 6). Being able to dialogue on the choice of

material, having a reply one-on-one from the researcher, as well as having their friends reply to what they wrote, guaranteed an audience for them only.

A series of mini-lessons on "What Reading Does" was based on the work of Graves (1992) for often, as the author pointed out, "We are often unaware of what reading does" (p. 67). We live in a world surrounded by print and yet we are not always aware of its presence or effect on our lives. As Graves noted, "We may look to books to make decisions in crisis or to help us deal with grief. We may seek books to gather more information about a problem that confounds us or search out people in new places who are reading books" (p. 86).

The researcher related and explained the following points made by Graves in relation to her own life.

- Reading parallels our own experience.
- Reading extends our own experience.
- Reading helps us to understand people.
- Reading provides storehouses of information.
- Reading provides relief and escape.
- Reading provides a taste for language.
- Reading moves us to act (pp. 67-70).

As the following entry demonstrates, the journals provided an opportunity for response as students were able to discover the "the power of print for themselves" (p. 67).

> 3/2
> Dear Mrs. Crocker
> Hi, I felt better when I read this book. I felt better becose (because) it gave me a few ideas on how to get my mom to go some where. My mom is reading my book now. She really enjoys reading books like that. She takes her book every night before she goes to bed and she reads for about a an half hour. It takes my mom a little longer to read books becose where she was sick and she lost abit of her memory so she has to go back and read over certain parts. Well I gotta go now. Seya

Wollman-Bonilla (1989) summarized important benefits of the reading journal as a result of her own experience in a Grade 4 classroom:

> One of the most valuable qualities of the reading journal is that it is tailored to each child's interest, concerns, and needs...Children's reading strategies and comprehension of specific stories were naturally developed through the journals...Journal writing also helped to develop students' knowledge of literature...Journal writing also helped the children grow in communicating and refining their ideas...The most striking development facilitated by the journals was students' growth in confidence and motivation to read. (pp. 118-9)

The researcher's perceptions of the students in the study were that the more they read, the better they read; the more they wrote, the better they wrote and their "confidence" and "motivation" grew with them. This growth was evident in the analysis of the dialogue journals during the second half of the study where mere recall responses dropped by 13%.

The summary type of response did not change even to the end of the program for several of the reluctant readers. The typical entry to the very end for one of these students was:

> 3/24
> Dear Mrs. Crocker:
> The name of the book I am reading is called Exit Barney McGee it The Book That you gave us for Christmas The authors name is Barney McGee it about This kid who runs away it is a very good book that's all for now. Bye.

Excerpts from the book, Underground to Canada, had been read to students early in the study and other books on slavery had been shared with them as well. One of less skilled readers, however, could not grasp the concept that many books could be written on a similar theme such as slavery. She wrote on four separate occasions in her journal asking if there was another book called Underground to Canada, even though other titles and authors had been shared with her on this.

It seemed more time was needed for some children to simply be read to and have books shared with them. Becoming a reader was a longer process and would take more time than a study.

Finally, although the dialogue journal was the main form used for response, students were involved in the interpretive activity of creating a jacket cover for a book they had read in the realistic and historical genre. Although they had been encouraged to use drawings and illustrations in their

journals, many of them did not. However, they were pleasantly surprised at the attractive cover they had created and were proud to see their work displayed on the bulletin board in the Reading Corner (Appendix M).

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Traditional approaches to teaching children how to read has emphasized the acquisition of a number of skills assuming that, once those skills are acquired, children will want to read as they move through the grades and, of course, for a lifetime. We know from research and various authors, however, this is not always the case. As Reed (1988) indicated, while 12 is the age when reading skills peak, it also is the age when many children lose interest in reading. Research cited by Johnson (1965) and Neal and Proshek (1967), as well as studies such as those by Tunnell et al. (1991), showed that childrens' negative attitudes toward reading increased as they got older and moved through the grades. A study in Ireland by Greaney (1980) also noted that little time was spent in leisure reading among Grade 5 students and he cited Maxwell (1977) and Whitehead et al. (1975) who noted that as children get older, the same is true as well.

Goodman (1974) believed literacy "...can become an extension of the existing language competence..." (p. 823). The research on early readers confirms that children who were not formally taught to read did learn to read (Durkin, 1961; Clark, 1976; and Butler, 1979). They learned to read as a

natural extension of learning to talk. In all cases, there was present a significant other who was interested in and cared for the child and read to them, talked to them, and answered their questions.

A different approach to teaching children how to read is needed if we not only want children to acquire the skills necessary for reading but to use them and see themselves as members of the "literacy club". The "skill" and "drill" approach of the basal readers, with its controlled vocabulary, does not expose children of any age to the rich language of literature that children experience in trade books. Neither does the basal readers provide the freedom of self-selection nor response which we know, through research, are necessary factors in improving students' reading achievement, positive attitudes toward reading, and concepts' of themselves as readers.

Smith (1984) contended "children learn to read only by reading" (p. 23). With this view, different strategies are needed in not only teaching children how to read but in creating the desire to read. The present study examined a reading program that provided self-selection of literature, time to read independently, as well as a means for student response. It also examined its effect on reading achievement in vocabulary and comprehension, attitude, concept of self as reader, students' perceptions of peer and parent relations, as

well as general school and general self-concepts. It also provided for an overall description of the researcher's perceptions of the program process.

This chapter begins with a summary of the five major research questions relevant to the study. This is followed by a discussion of the conclusions drawn from the study as well as a number of recommendations for implementing a Reading Workshop in a regular classroom.

Summary

The researcher designed a Reading Workshop based on the work of Atwell (1987) and a review of the literature pertaining to reading as presented in Chapter 2. Three main components of the program consisted of mini-lessons, independent reading time which involved self-selection of reading material, and the dialogue journal which was used for response. It was implemented in a Grade 7 class in Marystown, Newfoundland, and lasted for three months. Twenty-one students spent 11 one-hour periods in a 14 day cycle in Reading Workshop. The case study design was used to evaluate this program. Gains in reading achievement, attitudes towards reading, students' concepts of themselves as readers, as well as general implementation of the program overall, were the major considerations. In addition, an examination was made of students' perceptions of peer and parent relations and general

school and general self-concepts.

Students were administered pretests and posttests in reading achievement, attitudes toward reading, and concepts of 'self as readers' in an effort to describe changes in these variables during the study. In addition, data was also collected to see if there was any effect on students' perceptions of peer relations and parent relations, as well as general school and general self-concepts. Descriptive data were collected throughout the study in the form of the researcher's observations and the students involvement through their comments and reactions in the dialogue journals and throughout the program. Parents' comments on the questionnaire administered at the end of the study were also examined.

Five questions fundamental to the study were:

1. Will the experience of a Reading Workshop increase students' reading achievement in vocabulary and comprehension?

2. Will the experience of a Reading Workshop improve students' attitudes toward reading?

3. Will the experience of a Reading Workshop influence the students' concepts of 'self as readers'?

4. Will the experience of a Reading Workshop affect male and female students differently?

5. What are the researcher's overall perceptions of the Reading Workshop with specific reference to students' progress as a result of interactions around the mini-lessons, independent reading, and dialogue journals?

Data was collected from the pretest and posttest scores on the following instruments:

1. Gates-MacGinitie Standardized Reading Test, Level E, forms 3 and 4.
2. Estes Attitude Scale - a Likert type scale for measuring students' attitudes toward reading.
3. Self-Description Questionnaire - 1 by Marsh to infer the students' concepts of 'self as readers'.

Answers to these questions, based on the instruments above and the descriptive data collected, were discussed in chapter 1V and are now briefly reviewed here beginning with question number one.

1. Will the experience of a Reading Workshop increase students' reading achievement in vocabulary and comprehension?

Results at the end of the study indicated positive answers to this question. The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Level E, forms 4 and 3, were administered as pre and posttests respectively. Students' results on the standardized reading tests were compared with the national norms and showed a mean gain of 0.4 years in vocabulary and 0.9 years in comprehension. Fifteen of the 21 students made gains in vocabulary with one maintaining "Post High School" on both the pre and posttest while 12 of the 20 students made gains in comprehension with one maintaining "Post High School" on the pre and posttest. While the mean score in vocabulary was

still below grade level at the end of April, it was above grade level in comprehension. An analysis of variance showed gains in comprehension were statistically significant at the .006 level. Again, as discussed earlier, even though the study showed an increase in vocabulary, the results were not surprising since the whole program emphasized understanding or meaning of large discourse at the paragraph or story level. The study was not focused on words as such.

As discussed in Chapter 11, many primary studies have shown the success of using a literature-based approach in the classroom. Similar success using the Reading Workshop approach has been demonstrated by others as well (Atwell, 1987; Dionisio, 1989; McWhirter, 1990; Kletzien and Hushion, 1992; and Swift, 1993). This study confirms that involvement of students in a Reading Workshop enhances their vocabulary and comprehension since there were gains in both areas with the latter being statistically significant.

2. Will the experience of a Reading workshop improve students' attitudes toward reading?

The Estes Attitude Reading Scale was administered both before and after the study. Results from the study confirmed that the students' attitudes had improved. Seventeen of the 21 students or 81% stayed the same or showed improvement in their attitude toward reading with a mean gain of 6.2. An analysis of variance confirmed that these gains in attitude

toward reading were statistically significant (.003).

Comments and reactions made by students throughout the study and in their journals indicated strong support for the program as well. Students' final recommendations were either to continue with the program this year or carry on with it next year.

The questionnaire administered to parents at the end of the study also showed positive support for the program. Seventeen of the questionnaires were returned and all indicated yes to #1. "My son/daughter appears to enjoy the Reading Workshop" and #4. "I would like to see the program continued next year." All of their comments positively supported the program.

Another aspect of learning, often neglected, yet positively influenced by the study was shown as well. The "affective" domain where students were able to identify personally with what they were reading and respond emotionally and intellectually was emphasized and showed students' growth in this area throughout the study. Although an analysis of the letters in the dialogue journals revealed the major response was "Making judgments or evaluations", it also showed a decrease in "Recalling or remembering what happened" by 13% in the second part of the study. The change was towards more reflective, metacognitive, and critical thinking as students assessed and evaluated their own learning and 'dialogued' with

their 'buddies' and the researcher in the form of letters.

These findings confirmed the conclusions of Tunnell et al. (1991) in their review of the literature earlier: "We have long been convinced that an affective approach to reading, emphasizing art, reading, and children's trade books is more effective both in teaching reading and improving attitudes than most current skills approaches" (p. 242).

3. Will the experience of a Reading Workshop influence students' concepts of 'self as reader'?

The Marsh Self-Description Questionnaire - 1 was administered both before and after the study. For the purposes of the program, five of the eight scales in the assessment were used. The most important scale of these five in relation to the question above and the most statistically significant for the whole study was the Reading Scale (.001) that measured students' concept of 'self as reader'. A comparison of the pre and posttest scores showed that 85.7% of the students stayed at the same level or showed improvement in their concept of 'self as readers'. The mean gain was 11.9. Only 3 of the 21 students did not show improvement being only 1 or 2 points away from staying the same as in the pretest.

As a result of the program, students were not only becoming readers, but they also saw themselves as readers. Although the process took more time for some of the more reluctant readers, this was significant in that for many of

them the perception or view of themselves as readers had changed in a positive way.

The Peer Relations scale which measured students' perceptions of their relationships with peers also showed an improvement from the pre to the posttest with a mean gain of 2.6. An analysis of variance confirmed that these gains were also statistically significant (.025). Undoubtedly the conversation and letters in the dialogue journal between students over books in a format that was personal and affective had a positive influence on students' rapport and friendships.

The General Self-Concept Scale also showed a mean gain of 1.5. Again, this was statistically significant. The researcher felt that students' improving in peer relationships and in views of themselves as readers contributed to their overall concept of self where views of themselves had improved. This finding was consistent with Battleheim and Zelan's (1982) view as discussed earlier in Chapter 11 as well. They noted that children's experiences in learning to read "may decide how he [sic] will feel about learning in general, even about himself [sic] as a person" (p.4). According to Smith (1988), whether or not children view themselves as readers may very much depend upon the invitation to "join the literacy club". It appears the program was effective in improving students' concept of 'self as reader'

and, as well, an improved view of general self and improved perceptions of relationships amongst peers.

The final two scales were not statistically significant. The General School scale showed a mean gain of 1.3. This finding was not surprising since the reading program was more likely to affect students' specific concepts of themselves as 'readers' rather than a general academic self-concept which included other subject areas such as Mathematics. The Parent Relations scale showed a mean gain of 0.2. Again, this was not surprising since there was no communication with the parents during the study apart from one meeting that was scheduled at its commencement.

4. Will the experience of a Reading Workshop affect male and female students differently?

An analysis of variance for the differences between scores of males and females separately appears to indicate that the Reading Workshop had more significance for females than males. The mean gains and statistical significance for females was greater in comprehension (.014), attitude (.024), and concept of self as reader (.009). The females read more (61% of the total books read) and written more letters in their dialogue journals (55% of the total letters written) during the program.

However, while the males did achieve statistical significance in attitude (.045) and concept of self as reader (.028), they had greater gains and statistical significance over the females in the area of peer relations (.017). Here the personal communication in the form of letters in their dialogue journals enhanced the positive communication and sense of "community of readers" for this group in the classroom. Although the males did not read and write as much as the females in the study, the relationships amongst the males improved significantly as they 'talked' in their journals. Role-modelling by some of the better readers and writers in the class also helped.

5. What are the researcher's overall perceptions of the Reading Workshop with specific reference to students' progress based on interactions around the mini-lessons, independent reading, and dialogue journals?

Valuable insights were gained as students participated in the various components of the Reading Workshop. As a result of the mini-lessons, concepts and ideas that were introduced and discussed were better retained by the students due to their brevity and conciseness as they often surfaced weeks later in the students' writings.

The Book Talks, as well, introduced to students the many outstanding young adult authors and books on various genres and reading levels. Being a model by reading with them during

independent reading time and reading aloud to them proved invaluable in enticing them to read. Many of the students began to identify with certain authors and their books, as well as to compare authors and writing styles. Reading aloud in other areas of the curriculum was important as well, especially the reading of poetry.

Having people outside the classroom share books and their reading experiences, as well as the Book Talks by the students themselves, often provided the motivation some students needed in order to read. In addition, they sometimes provided the context the researcher needed for other strategy lessons, such as the mini-lessons on the Caldecott award and other medals.

The dialogue journals provided an opportunity for response as students wrote about the books they were reading at their own ability and pace. Students who were more reserved or less verbally communicative student could 'talk' without being the centre of attention.

The physical design of the classroom library itself, especially in providing access to a wide range of reading material, was also an important consideration (Koeller, 1981; Anderson et al. 1985; Harste et al. 1988; and Fractor et al. 1993). Open-faced book displays and comfortable seating arrangements helped create an atmosphere where students were invited to read. Visits to the school and public library were also important in exposing them to more books and encouraging

them to seek other sources for reading materials.

Finally, the home/school reading incentive program, Read to Succeed, proved beneficial both during and after the program. Not only did it help students keep a record of the reading each night during the program but it served as a portfolio of the books read at the end as well.

Conclusions

> I hope our dining room table will serve to develop the habit of reading and, with it, literacy, conjuring up a new and sensible image of a good reader that students can and want to emulate. I hope it places student responses in its rightful place - at the head of the table and the heart of the curriculum. And I hope this environment supports reading and readers by providing what readers need....time, ownership, and response. (Atwell, 1987, p. 156.)

While some conclusions are informed by the empirical data presented in the study, other observations are more descriptive and interpretive. Since no control group was used, one cannot assume similar results would occur with another group. In any case, it is hoped the study will prove beneficial for anyone replicating such a program.

Three elements central to this study were "time", "ownership", and "response". As shown in the literature review, these factors are necessary not only in improving reading achievement, but in building positive attitudes

towards reading and improving the students' concept of 'self as reader'.

We know from studies that as children move through the grades, less and less time is given for them actually to read. This is a concern both for children who need to learn to read and for developing literacy as part of the process of becoming a lifelong reader. The Reading Workshop provided periods of independent reading time, supported by opportunities to relax in a rich literate environment, almost every day. Rossman (1987), as well as others, have noted the concept of reading automaticity - the ability to read with..."greater speed, more accurate performance, with attention freed from basic skills and focused on higher-order aspects of the task" (p. 31). He also pointed out the relationship between automaticity and the amount of time children actually spend reading. Practice is necessary with any skill and reading is no different. The Reading Workshop provided this opportunity almost every day.

The Reading Workshop also provided students the opportunity to self-select their own reading materials as well as the opportunity to talk about what they were reading in a dialogue journal. In addition, the mini-lessons exposed them to various reading strategies, authors, books, as well as different ways of responding. As a result, students were able to take control of their own learning and respond to what they read more personally, thoughtfully, reflectively, and

critically. They read what they wanted to read as opposed to what someone else was telling them to read. As their journals indicated, their reading now had a purpose in their lives as their nights and holidays were often prime times to finish reading their books. They showed too that they enjoyed learning from books for sometimes, in their critical analysis of books, their comments indicated that the book was too short and the author could have had more facts.

Students read and wrote during the Reading Workshop and, as the study progressed, the amount of reading and writing they did improved and increased. For some students, however, becoming a reader was a longer process and would take a longer time than a study. In any case, it seemed they were becoming lifelong readers as they no longer read just during school time.

As we move toward the professionalising of teaching, the obvious and real-life examples of learning often seem too simplistic for classrooms and we feel more elaborate, technical, and complicated methods are needed in order for learning to occur. The students in the study, like the students in Atwell's class and similar studies, have shown that learning does not have to be complicated and occurs naturally when everyday life conditions are created in the classroom.

To help create readers, we have to empower children. We

have to invite them to participate. In order for this to occur, it is essential that we trust and respect students and their choices. With that comes the dignity necessary to grow and learn. The researcher found that in using a Reading Workshop approach, the students read, wrote, and learned beyond what would have been expected in a regular curriculum. With freedom comes the responsibility to take control of our own learning. If the ultimate goal of education is to create individuals who are independent, can think critically and reason, as well as read for themselves, this study suggests that more opportunities for time, ownership, and response in reading are required.

Recommendations

In an effort to lend more reliability to this study, as well as explore unanswered questions, the following are some recommendations. They are divided into two groups: research recommendations and practical teaching recommendations.

Research Recommendations

1. It is recommended that this study be replicated using a control group.
2. It is recommended that a similar study be conducted for a longer period of time, possibly a full year.
3. It is recommended that a follow-up study and research be

conducted with these students to determine if significant gains made during the study in reading are retained.

Practical Teaching Recommendations

1. It is recommended that more time be given for students' sharing of books.
2. It is recommended that more time than this study allowed be given for follow-up and evaluation of student Book Talks.
3. It is recommended that more time be given for reading aloud, especially to students who have difficulty with reading and do not like to read.
4. It is recommended that a parent component be built into the program in order to have them more actively involved in their children's learning. This could involve activities such as visiting the public library, monitoring the home/reading program, and sharing reading experiences.
5. It is recommended that an evaluative component, such as the graphic thinking symbols (Kletzien and Hushion, 1992), be used for the dialogue journals to assess growth in depth of and quality of writing.
6. It is recommended that, where possible, class libraries be functional and active since accessibility of books is important for children to read. This includes creating

libraries containing books that will accommodate a wide range of fiction and nonfiction as well as reading levels, regardless of grade.

7. It is recommended that any reading students do during assigned reading periods be seen as part of their program including its evaluation so these periods are not seen as 'slack periods' or 'time off'.

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APPENDIX A

Canadian Tests of Basic Skills - Achievement for Major Subtests, Grade 8, Fall, 1977 to 1992

Figure 13.1 Vocabulary

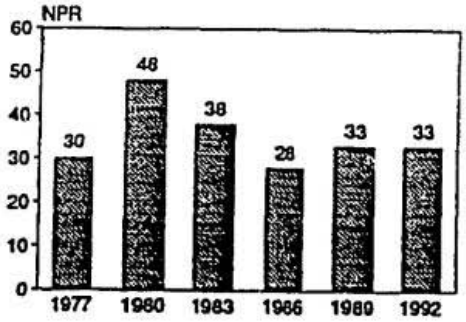


Figure 13.2 Reading

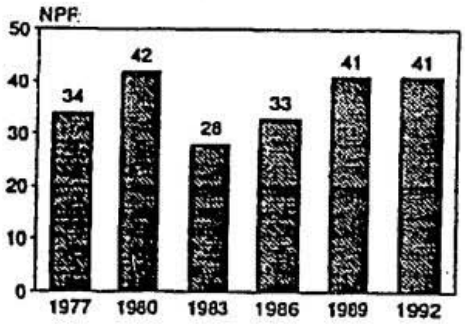
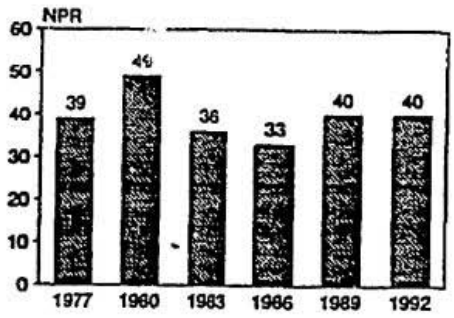


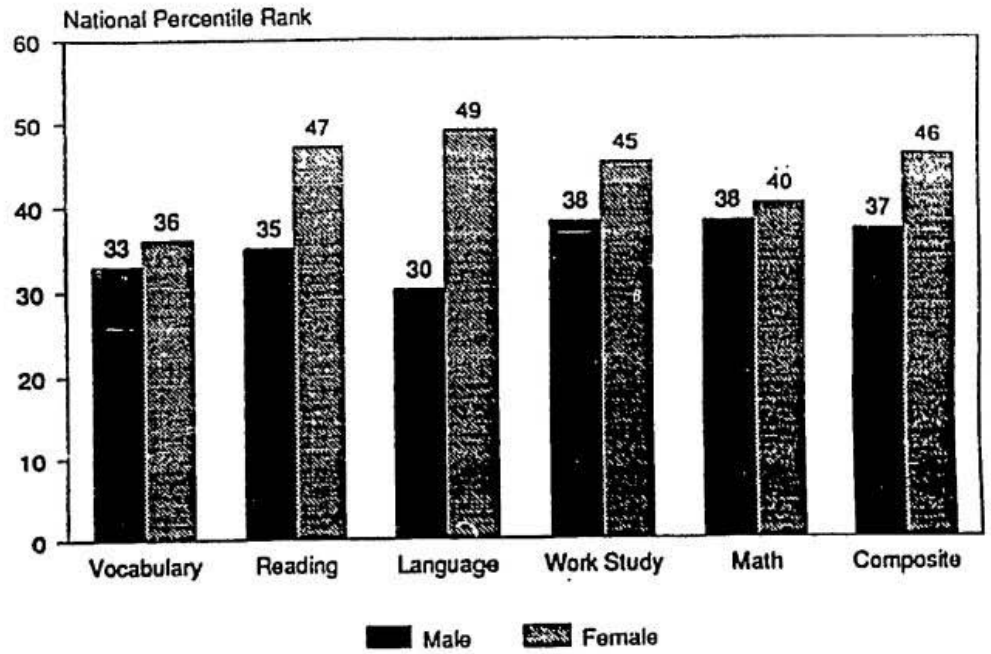
Figure 13.3 Language



SOURCE: Education Statistics - Elementary-Secondary, 1992-93
Department of Education, St. John's, Newfoundland

APPENDIX B

Canadian Tests of Basic Skills - Sex Differences in Achievement for Major Subtests, Grade 8, Fall, 1992



Composite: Male N =4011 : Female N =3875
(N may differ for individual subtests)

SOURCE: Education Statistics – Elementary-Secondary, 1992-93
Department of Education, St. John's, Newfoundland

APPENDIX C

Canadian Tests of Basic Skills - Achievement (1) by Subtests by Sex, Grade 8, Fall, 1989 to 1992

Table 27. Canadian Tests of Basic Skills - Achievement[1] by Subtest by Sex, Grade 8, Fall, 1989 and 1992

	Grade Equivalent						National Percentile Rank					
	1989			1992			1989			1992		
Subtest	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Vocabulary	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.7	7.6	33	33	33	33	36	33
Reading	7.7	8.1	7.9	7.7	8.1	7.9	35	47	41	35	47	41
Total Language	7.3	8.0	7.7	7.3	8.1	7.7	30	47	40	30	49	40
Spelling	6.9	7.7	7.3	6.9	7.8	7.3	26	40	33	26	42	33
Capitalization	7.4	8.0	7.7	7.5	8.1	7.8	32	45	38	34	47	41
Punctuation	7.6	8.3	8.0	7.6	8.3	8.0	36	53	45	36	53	45
Usage	7.3	8.0	7.7	7.4	8.1	7.7	32	46	40	34	48	40
Total Work Study	7.6	8.0	7.8	7.7	8.0	7.9	35	45	40	38	45	42
Visual Materials	7.8	7.9	7.8	7.9	7.9	7.8	38	41	38	41	41	41
References	7.5	8.2	7.8	7.5	8.1	8.0	32	50	39	32	47	39
Total Math	7.7	7.9	7.8	7.7	7.8	7.8	38	43	40	38	40	40
Math Concepts	7.9	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	43	45	45	45	45	45
Math Problems	7.7	7.8	7.7	7.8	7.8	7.8	37	39	37	39	39	39
Math Computation	7.5	7.8	7.6	7.4	7.6	7.5	31	39	34	28	34	31
Composite[2]	7.6	8.0	7.8	7.7	8.0	7.8	35	46	40	37	46	40

[1] Includes public, private, and native schools.
[2] Average of all subtests.

SOURCE: Education Statistics - Elementary-Secondary, 1992-93
Department of Education, St. John's, Newfoundland

APPENDIX D

Parent Questionnaire

To: Grade 7-2 Parents
From: Maureen Crocker
Re: Reading Workshop Study
Date: May 3, 1994

Dear Parents:

Your son/daughter has been involved in a Reading Workshop since February of this year. I would like to have some feedback or reaction at this time in an effort to evaluate the program. Please take a few minutes to complete and return the questionnaire below.

Thank you for your continued support and co-operation.

Yours truly,

Maureen Crocker
Grade 7 Classroom Teacher

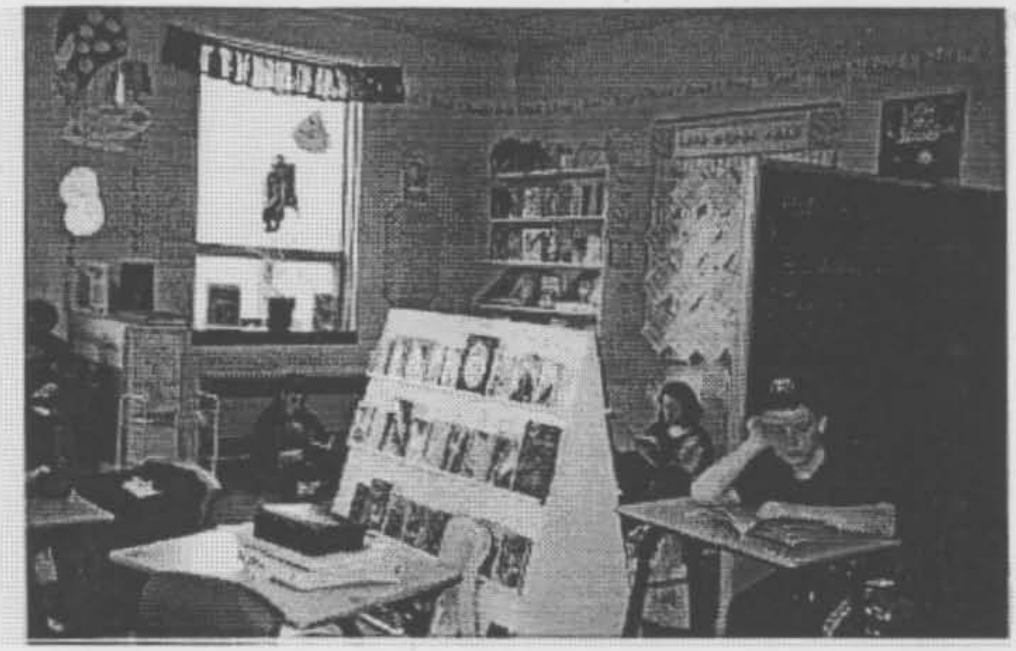
Circle yes or no.

1. My son/daughter appears to enjoy the Reading Workshop.	Yes	No	Uncertain
2. My son/daughter reads more as a result of the Reading Workshop.	Yes	No	Uncertain
3. My son/daughter's interest in reading has increased.	Yes	No	Uncertain
4. I would like to see the program continued next year.	Yes	No	Uncertain

Comments: _____

APPENDIX E

Photographs of the Reading Corner

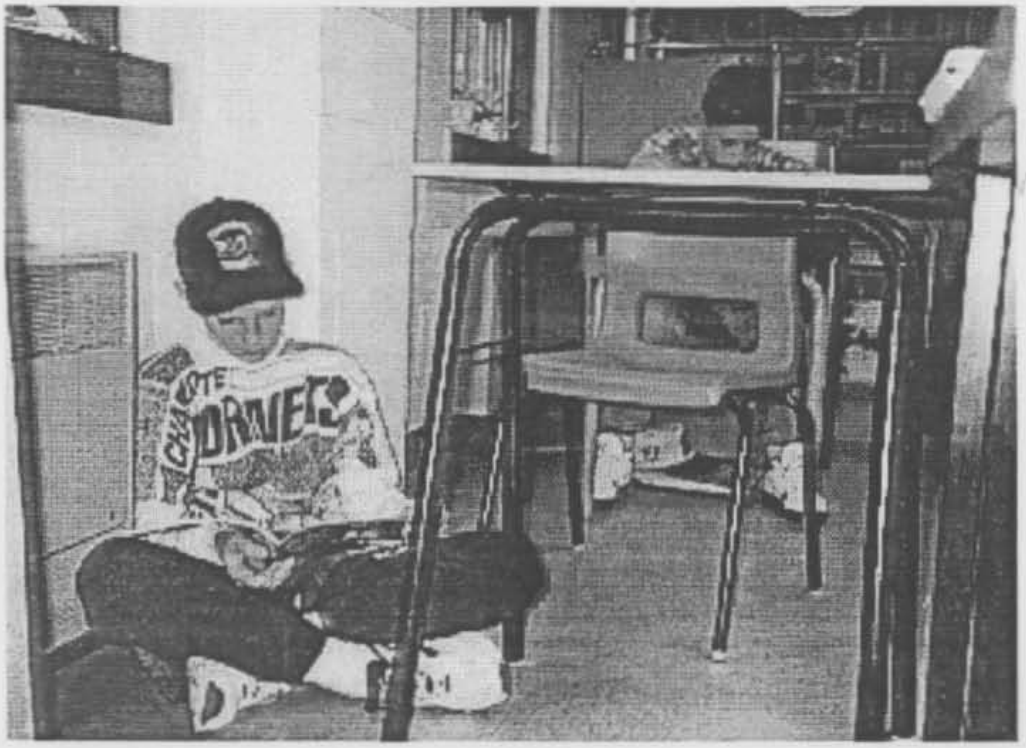


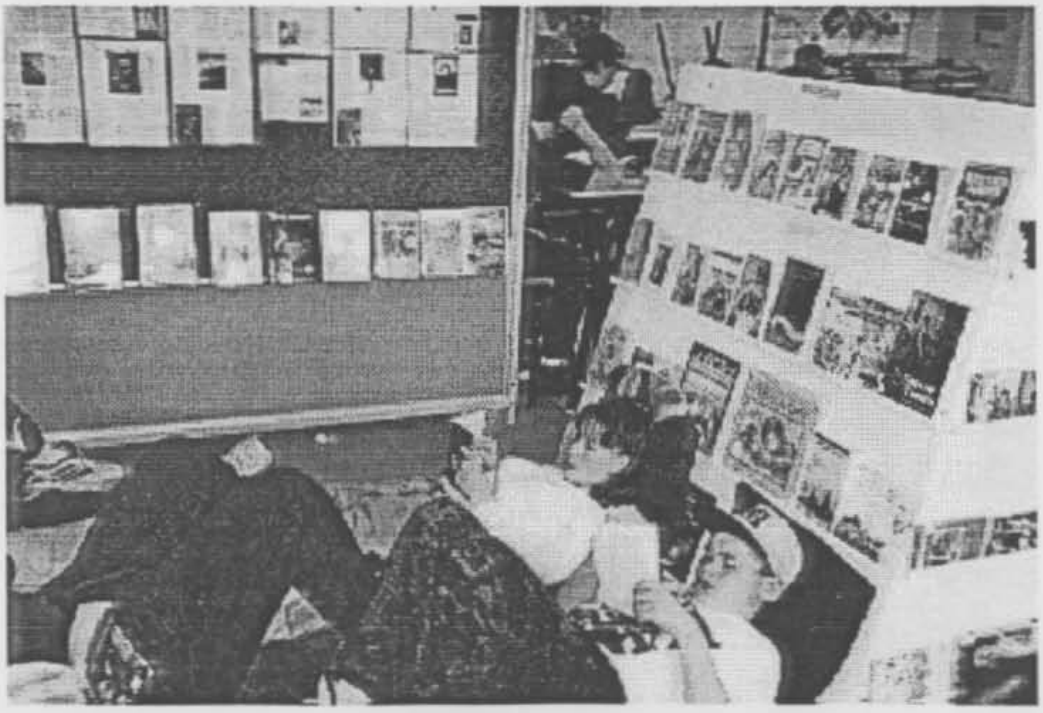


Photographs taken during independent reading time






DRIVE



Photographs of children sharing books





While some students selected and signed out books, others wrote in their dialogue journals





Visit to the school library to select nonfiction books



Students often shared books during recess and lunch



APPENDIX F

Sample pages from the "READ TO SUCCEED" program that students had to fill in each night as they read

March, 199___

The following chart is completed each evening after a ten minute reading session.

During the first week of each month, tape an assigned reading session. The tape is returned to the teacher to be evaluated. Before taping, give the following information:

1. **Date**
2. **Story Title**
3. **Page Number (You must read about half a page)**
4. ***Most important of all,* Tell in your own words what you have read.**

This procedure will continue until the month of April. Do not tape over what has been read.

"Practice makes Perfect!"

	DATE	TITLE	PAGES	SIGNATURE
MONDAY				
TUESDAY				
WEDNESDAY				
THURSDAY				

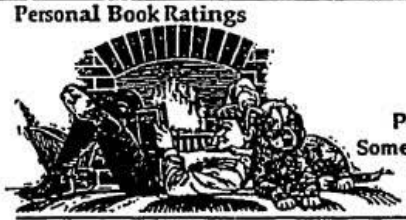
	DATE	TITLE	PAGES	SIGNATURE
MONDAY				
TUESDAY				
WEDNESDAY				
THURSDAY				

Note: From READ TO SUCCEED by Annette F. Coultas, 1991, St. John's: Coulmar Curriculum Consultants Inc. Copyright 1991 by Annette Coultas. Reprinted by permission.

Summary Page from the "READ TO SUCCEED" Program

(Note: Students also recorded the genre and used this rating scale when rating books: 1 - Excellent, 2 - Very Good, 3 - Good, 4 - Fair, and 5 - Poor.)

Personal Book Ratings



Personal ratings of books by me.
Some were more special, as you can see.

BOOK TITLE	AUTHOR	PAGES	DATE STARTED	DATE COMPLETED	RATING

APPENDIX G

Top Number One Books Students Recommended

Students had rated many books as number one but were asked to select only one they would list as their favourite. Some students could not decide on just one and these entries are listed as well. The number two in brackets indicate the total number of students who listed this as their choice.

Anonymous. Go Ask Alice

Babbit, Natalie. Tuck Everlasting

Barr, Linda. The Wrong Way Out (2)

Beattie, Owen and Geiger, John. Buried in Ice

Christopher, Matt. Tackle Without a Team

Cooney, Caroline B. The Face on the Milk Carton

Dejong, Meinders. The House of Sixty Fathers

Dixon, Franklin W. Dead of Night

Duane, Diane and Moorwood, Peter. Sea Quest

Fleischman, Paul. Half-a-Moon Inn

Frank, Anne. Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl

Greene, Bette. The Summer of My German Soldier

Kerr, M.E. Dinky Hocker Shoots Smack

Kolman, Gordon. Losing Joe's Place (2)

This Can't Be Happening At MacDonald Hall

Myers, Walter Dean. Mouse Trap

McDaniel, Lurlene. Baby Alicia is Dying (2)

Beans on the Roof

McNicoll, Sylvia. Blueberries and Whipped Cream

Pike, Christopher. Chain Letter 2

Smith, Dick-King. Harry's Mad

Smucker, Barbara. Underground to Canada

Stine, R.L. Hallowe'en Night

White, Rob. Deathwatch (2)

Wilder, Laura Inglis. Little house in the big woods

Young, Malida D. On My Honor

APPENDIX H

Authors Introduced During the Study

Alexander, Lloyd

Armstrong, William H.

Byars, Betsy

Cleary, Beverly

Dahl, Roald

Danziger, Paula

Estes, Eleanor

Fleischman, Sid

Fritz, Jean

Hamilton, Virginia

Hughes, Monica

Konigsburg, E.L.

L'Engle, Madeleine

Little, Jean

Lowry, Lois

MacLachlan, Patricia

O'Dell, Scott

Paterson, Katherine

Paulsen, Gary

Reid Banks, Lynne

Silverstein, Shel

White, E.B.

APPENDIX I

Books of Poetry Presented

Ahlberg, A. (1983). Please Mrs. Butler. New York: Puffin.

Allix, H. (1991). The maladjusted jungle. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Amery, H. (1990). The Usborne Book of funny poems. London: Usborne Publishing Limited.

Booth, D. (1989). Til all the stars have fallen. Toronto: Kids Can Press Ltd.

Davidge, B. and Wallace, I. (1993). The mummer's song. Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre.

de Regniers, B.S., Moore, E., White, M.M. and Carr, J. (1988). Sing a song of popcorn. New York: Scholastic Inc.

Dunning, S; Lueders, E., and Smith, H. (1966). Reflections n a Gift of watermelon pickle...and other modern verse. New York: Scholastic Book Services.

Harrison, M., and Stuart-Clark, C. (1988). The Oxford treasury of children's poems. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Heidbreder, R. (1985). Don't eat spiders. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Larrick, N. (1991). Let's do a poem! Introducing poetry to children. New York: Delacorte Press.

Little, J. (1986). Hey world, here I am. Toronto: Kids Can Press ltd.

Lobel, A. (1985). Whiskers and rhymes. New York: Scholastic Inc.

Ohuigin, S. (1988). Scary poems for rotten kids. Windsor: Black Moss Press.

O'Neill, M. (1961). Hailstones and halibut bones. New York: Doubleday.

Pittman, A. (1976). Down by Jim Long's stage. St. John's: Breakwater Books Ltd.

Prelutsky, J. (1981). It's christmas. New York: Scholastic Inc.

Silverstein, S. (1974). A light in the attic. New York: Harper and Row.

Silverstein, S. (1974). Where the sidewalk ends. New York: Harper and Row.

Stevenson, R.L. (1989). A child's garden of verses. London: Princess House.

APPENDIX J

Estes Attitude Reading Scale Scores and Difference

Student	Pretest	Posttest	Difference
1.	89	89	0
2.	76	84	8
3.	84	95	11
4.	85	92	7
5.	90	85	5
6.	86	96	10
7.	85	86	1
8.	80	82	2
9.	85	90	5
10.	74	100	26
11.	75	94	19
12.	70	84	14
13.	86	84	-2
14.	97	95	-2
15.	91	98	7
16.	65	63	-2
17.	76	78	2
18.	95	90	-5
19.	79	99	20
20.	84	88	4
21.	67	78	11

APPENDIX K

Parents Comments from Questionnaire

"The reading workshop has improved our son's attitude towards school...he enjoys it and looks forward to every day. I believe the reading workshop is part of the change necessary to develop highly motivated young people who are ready for the challenge of todays changing world."

"I see quite a difference in _____. Since he became involved in the reading program. He has more confidence in himself, his marks are excellent. We are very proud of the work he is doing."

"_____ has enjoyed the Reading Workshop and the opportunity to choose her own reading material. I think that all children would benefit from such a program."

"_____ has showed more interest in reading books, since this program started and I would like to see it in again next year."

"I find that he is enjoying reading a lot more. I would like to see this program continued next year."

"_____ really seemed to enjoy this program. She has a big interest in reading all different types of books. it would be great to continue this program so hopefully _____ will continue to read."

"_____ seems to spend more time Reading. He enjoys the workshop and I think it should continue next year."

"_____ seems to be more interested in reading."

"My daughter enjoys reading more books."

"_____ enjoyed reading program."

"_____ enjoys to read alot."

APPENDIX L

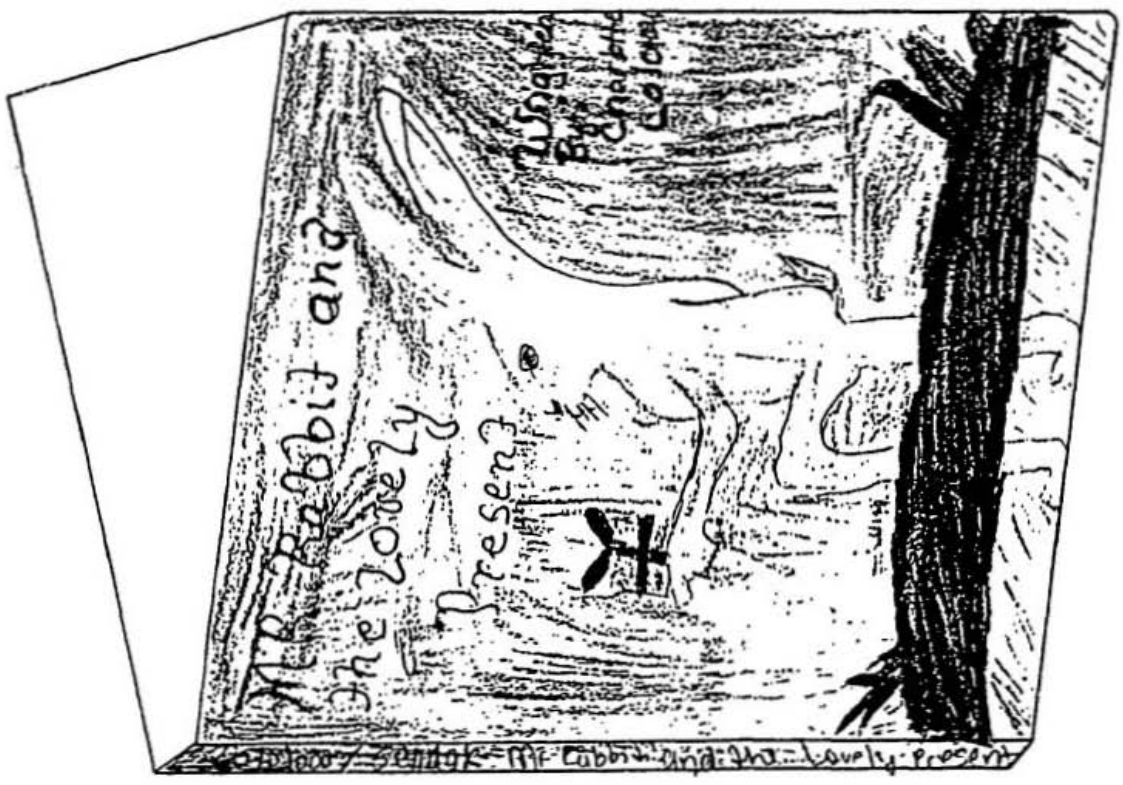
Self Description Questionnaire - 1: Raw Scores

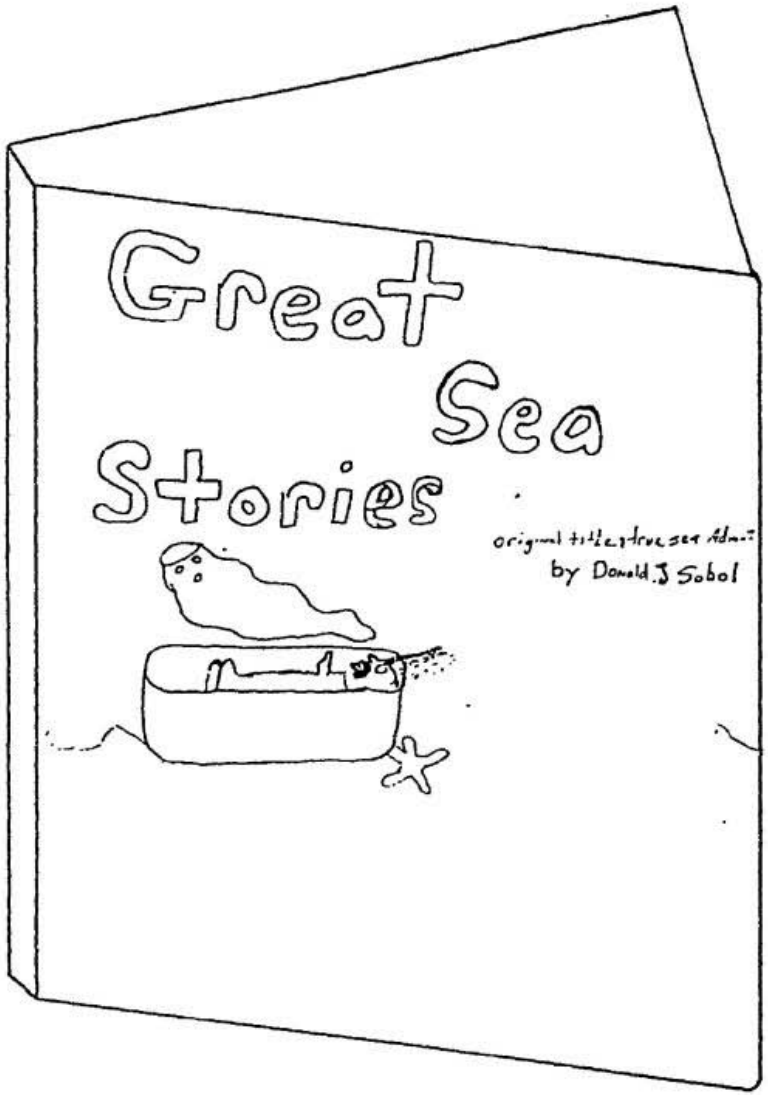
#	Peer Relations		Parent Relations		General School		General Self		Reading	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1.	36	36	38	37	33	28	36	30	37	38
2.	30	38	39	38	26	28	38	40	32	30
3.	28	27	36	33	32	28	33	39	37	39
4.	32	33	38	37	32	31	37	40	34	37
5.	32	30	37	29	36	32	32	36	38	37
6.	29	32	30	37	15	20	33	34	35	40
7.	24	28	29	26	11	20	28	29	28	34
8.	30	35	38	38	26	24	35	37	33	33
9.	34	38	40	40	16	32	34	40	38	40
10.	32	40	40	40	30	40	39	40	37	40
11.	19	21	40	40	24	26	27	29	24	33
12.	34	27	36	39	24	23	33	33	29	34
13.	24	30	27	28	19	19	22	26	28	30
14.	23	25	39	36	35	37	40	38	40	40
15.	35	32	33	34	34	33	28	29	37	36
16.	27	32	36	40	21	15	34	38	31	29
17.	35	37	37	39	26	30	38	37	25	39
18.	32	31	34	34	33	32	31	34	40	40
19.	19	36	36	39	14	19	37	33	15	23
20.	32	31	36	39	20	30	36	36	28	33
21.	36	39	40	40	21	9	34	38	29	31

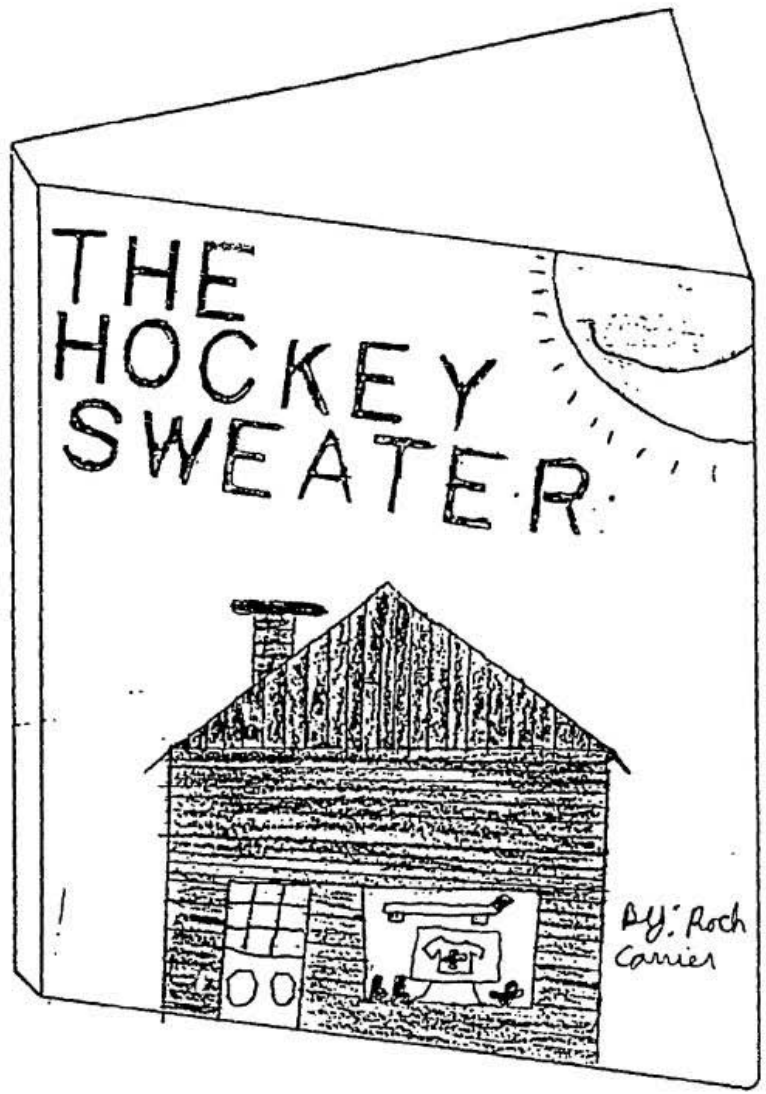
APPENDIX M

Jacket Covers

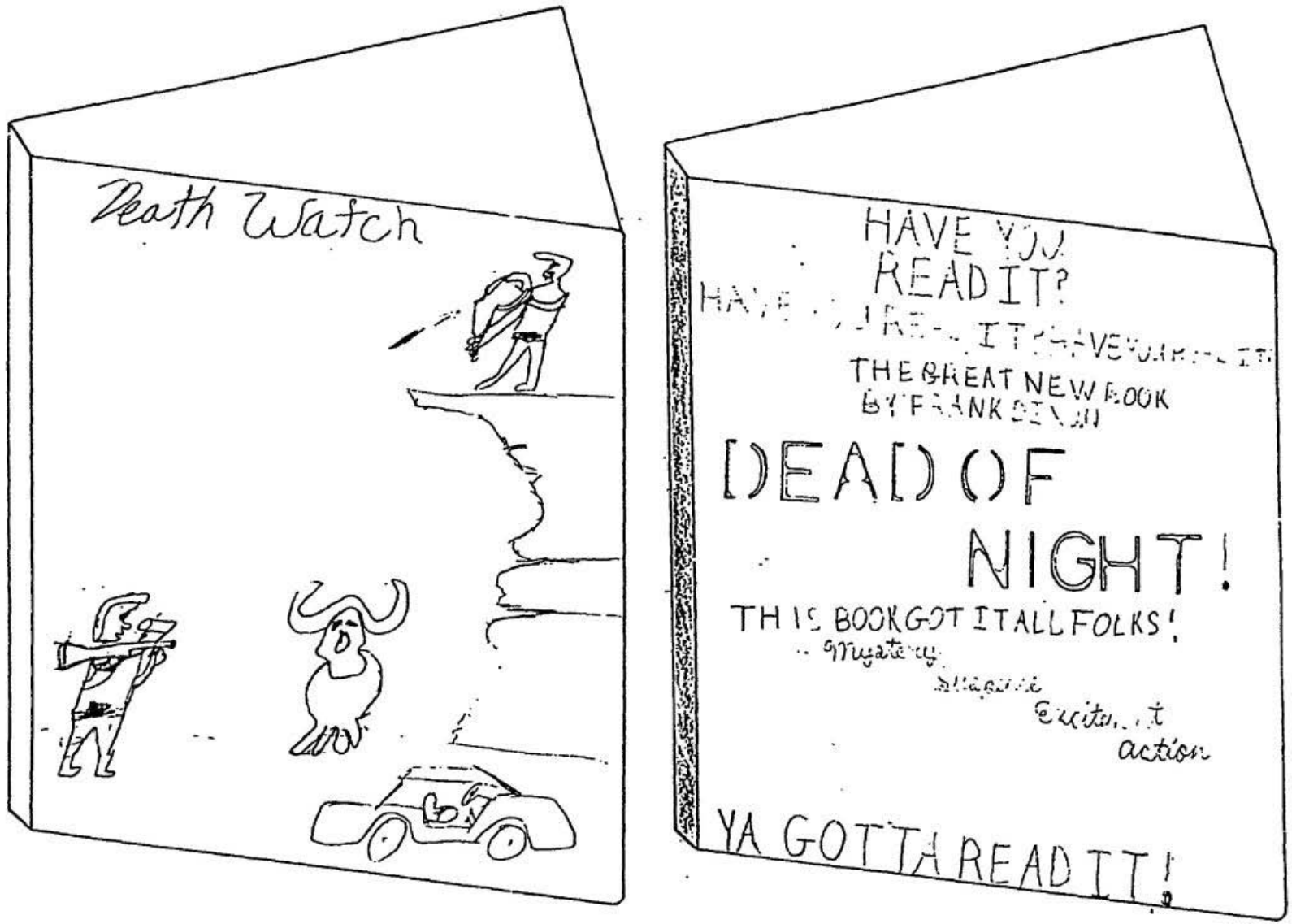

Whisper
of
Death
Christopher Pike


Mr. Rabbit and
the Lovely
Present


Great Sea Stories
original title: true sea Adv.
by Donald J Sobol


THE HOCKEY SWEATER
by Roch Carrier

THE
TITANIC
By Robert Ballard
TITANIC
Sea
D.S.
By Diane


Death Watch
HAVE YOU
READ IT?
THE GREAT NEW BOOK
DEAD OF
NIGHT!
THIS BOOK GOT IT ALL FOLKS!
mystery
action
YA GOTTA READ IT!

APPENDIX N

Letter to Ethics Review Committee

P. O. Box 131
Creston South, NF
AOE IKO

November 20, 1993

Dr. Walter Okshevsky
Chairperson
Ethics Review Committee
Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, NF

Dear Dr. Okshevsky:

Please find attached five copies of my research proposal.

The study involves Grade 7 students and I hope to carry it out during the Winter of 1994. I have set aside an evening to explain the new program to parents and a letter requesting their attendance is attached (Program detailed in proposal). Written consent will be needed from them for their son/daughter to participate in the tests\surveys that will be used. I have attached a copy of the parental consent form, testing material, as well as other correspondence required for the investigation.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Maureen Crocker

APPENDIX O

Certificate of Approval from Ethics Review Committee

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Memorial University of Newfoundland

Faculty Committee for Ethical Review of Research Involving Human Subjects

Certificate of Approval

Investigator: Ms. Maureen Crocker

Investigator's Workplace: Faculty of Education, MUN

Supervisor: Dr. Joan Oldford-Matchim

Title of Research: "The effect of a reading workshop on seventh graders' reading vocabulary, comprehension, attitudes, and 'concepts of self as reader'."

Approval Date: December 17, 1993

The Ethics Review Committee has reviewed the protocol and procedures as described in this research proposal and we conclude that they conform to the University's guidelines for research involving human subjects.

Dr. Walter Okshevsky
Chairperson
Ethics Review Committee

Members: Dr. Walter Okshevsky
Dr. Tim Seifert
Dr. Dennis Sharpe
Dr. Amarjit Singh
Dr. Patricia Canning

APPENDIX P

Letter to School Requesting Permission to Conduct the Study

P. O. Box 131
Creston South, NF
AOE IK0

January 4, 1994

Mr. Patrick Baker
Principal
Marystown Central High School
P.O. Box 549
Marystown, NF

Dear Mr. Baker:

As part of the requirements for the Master's degree programme in Curriculum and Instruction at Memorial University of Newfoundland, I am planning to conduct a study with my Grade 7 students this Winter. The study is designed to implement and evaluate the effect of a Reading Workshop on student's reading achievement, attitudes, and concept of self as reader.

The study will be conducted for one hour periods each day and will begin with a mini-lesson that will either address the current needs of the class or be a read-aloud. This will then be followed by a period of sustained silent reading where students will have an opportunity to choose their own reading materials. Finally, they will be required to share their thoughts and feelings about the books they are reading in a dialogue journal. The importance of time, ownership, and response in reading is emphasized in this Reading Workshop.

I have set aside time for an evening to explain the new program to parents,. Attached is a copy of the Gates-MacGinitie Standardized Reading Test, the Estes Reading Attitude Scale, and the Self-Description Questionnaire - 1 that I will be using in my evaluation of the Reading Workshop.

I am, therefore, asking your permission to allow me to conduct this study. I thank you in advance in anticipation of your consent.

Sincerely,

Maureen Crocker

APPENDIX Q

Letter from School Granting Permission to Conduct Study

Marystown Central High School
P. O. Box 549
Marystown, NF
A0E 2M0

Telephone: (709) 279-2313
FAX: (709) 279-3031

7 January 1994

Mrs. Maureen Crocker
P. O. Box 131
Creston South, NF
AOE IKO

Dear Mrs. Crocker:

I have received your request to conduct a study involving some of our grade seven students in evaluating the effect of a Reading Workshop on student reading achievement and attitudes.

I have no hesitation in granting permission for your study and I would be interested in discussing your findings when the study is completed.

Best wishes for success in your graduate program.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick J. Baker
Principal

PJB/mr

APPENDIX R

Letter to Roman Catholic School Board
Requesting Permission to Conduct the Study

P. O. Box 131
Creston South, NF
AOE IKO

January 4, 1994

Mr. Michael Siscoe
Superintendent
Roman Catholic School Board for the Burin Peninsula
Marystown NF
AOE 2MO

Dear Mr. Siscoe:

As part of the requirements for the Master's Degree programme in Curriculum and Instruction at Memorial University of Newfoundland, I am planning to conduct a study this Winter with my Grade 7 students. The purpose of the study is to implement and evaluate the effect of a Reading Workshop on student's reading achievement, attitudes, and concept of self as reader.

The importance of time, ownership, and response in reading is emphasized in this workshop. For one hour periods each day of the week, I would conduct the Reading Workshop which basically begins with a 10- to 15-minute mini-lesson that would either address the current needs of the class or be a read-aloud. This would then be followed by a sustained silent reading period where students would have an opportunity to read books of their own choosing. Finally, they would be required to share their thoughts and feelings about the books they are reading in a dialogue journal.

I have set aside an evening to explain the new program to parents and have attached for your perusal the parental consent form to be used in asking permission to administer the Gates-MacGinitie Standardized Reading Test, the Estes Reading Attitude Scale, and the Self-Description Questionnaire - 1.

I am, therefore, asking your permission to allow me to conduct this study. I thank you in advance in anticipation of your consent.

Sincerely,

Maureen Crocker

APPENDIX S

Letter from Board Granting Permission to Conduct Study

P.O. Box 69
102 Ville Marie Dr.
Marystown, NF
A0E 2M0

Roman Catholic School Board
for the
Burin Peninsula

Telephone (709) 279-2870
279-2871
279-2873
279-2874
Fax (709) 279-2177

W. Hodder
Chairperson

M. Siscoe
District
Superintendent

E. Murphy
Business
Manager

MEMO TO: MAUREEN CROCKER

FROM: MIKE SISCOE

RE: YOUR SURVEY

DATE: JANUARY 6, 1994

Go for it Lady!

Good Luck!

APPENDIX T

Initial Letter Requesting Parents to First Meeting

January 10, 1994

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am pleased to have _____ in my class this year. I hope it will be a happy and productive one. I believe that together we can help your child do his or her best.

I am inviting you to meet with me on Monday, December _____, at 7:30 P.M.

At this time I will be discussing a new program that your child will be involved in next term. It is very important that I see you, so if you are unable to come to school on Monday at 7:30, please let me know and we can arrange another time to meet.

Yours Sincerely,

Maureen Crocker

APPENDIX U

Letter to Parents Requesting Permission for their Son/Daughter to Participate in the Study

January 17, 1994

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am requesting your permission to have your son/daughter participate in an investigation I am conducting. I am presently working on a Master's degree in reading at Memorial University with Dr. Joan Oldford-Matchim and as part of my study toward this degree, I must do some work with Grade 7 students. I am hoping to gain some information on the effect of a Reading Workshop on their achievement, attitudes, and concept of self as readers.

Three pencil and paper type tests/surveys will be used but only for the purpose of the thesis. They will be completed in class and will not determine your child's placement or instruction. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw your child at any time. The study has received the approval of the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee (as well as the approval of the Roman Catholic School Board and Principal). The results of my research will be made available to you upon request.

Your child's identity will be kept in confidence. All reports of this study will safeguard the identities of the individual student.

As I need as large a group as possible for this study, I hope all students can participate. If you give permission for your son/daughter to participate, please complete the attached form below and return one copy to school as soon as possible. The other is for you. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me at 279-3335 after 6:00 P.M. If you wish to inquire about the research, please contact Ms. Theresa Jarvis, Roman Catholic School Board Office, at 279-2870.

I wish to thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Maureen Crocker

Grade 7 Reading Workshop Response Form

I _____ (parent/guardian) hereby give permission for my child _____ to take part in the evaluation of the grade seven reading workshop. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that my child and/or I can withdraw permission at any time. I understand that these tests/surveys will only be used for the purpose of the thesis described above and will not determine my child's placement or instruction. All information is strictly confidential and no individual will be identified.

_____ Date

_____ Signature Parent's/Guardian's

APPENDIX V

Letter to and Permission from Herbert W. Marsh to use Self- Description Questionnaire - 1

P. O. Box 549

Telephone 279-2313

Marystown Central High School
Marystown, Placentia Bay
Newfoundland

Dr. Herbert W. Marsh
P. O. Box 555
Campbelltown, New South Wales
Australia 2560

January 4, 1994

Dear Dr. Marsh:

I am currently a Graduate student at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada, and I would like to request your permission to use the Self Description Questionnaire-1 as part of a study I am planning to conduct this winter with twenty-two students in my Grade 7 class. I have received permission from all appropriate sources and I am hoping to start my study as early as possible in January. I have contacted The Psychological Corporation here in Canada and the United States and they inform me they no longer carry your testing instrument. I already have your manual and 15 copies of the SDQ-1 but I need additional copies of the SDQ-1 instrument as well as the Scoring Profiles. I plan on administering this as a pre- and post-test.

I would greatly appreciate you giving me permission to use your instrument as well as further information on where I can order your materials. Thank you in advance for your help and cooperation.

Yours truly,

Maureen Crocker

Dear Ms Crocker:
Please feel free to make as many copies of the SDQ as you need for purposes of your research