PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AS PART OF THE PREPARATION OF A READING CONSULTANT

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Slides Included

PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AS PART OF THE PREPARATION OF A READING CONSULTANT

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by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project was to enable the writer to become involved in the development and implementation of a language development program as part of her preparation for the role of reading consultant.

From September to June, the writer, under the supervision of two university professors, worked with teachers and pupils in four kindergarten classes, using children's experiences, library books, and audio-visual materials for language development.

At the beginning of the project, the writer taped samples of the children's language to assess their level of development. These samples and her observation of children's interaction with one another and with the teacher enabled her to decide the types of experiences required to improve each child's facility in the effective use of language.

The writer held a weekly conference with each teacher during which she introduced new ideas and made suggestions which could be applied in particular situations to improve the program. She kept a diary in which she recorded reports of those conferences and also descriptions of classroom activities which she had initiated.

Periodic reviews of her diary, conferences with teachers, and weekly conferences with her supervisors provided the writer with continuous evaluation of her progress. Summative evaluation from four sources - conferences with principals, conferences with teachers,

evaluation of pupil performance and growth in language, and the writer's experience the following year as a reading consultant - indicated that the project was successful in that the purpose was achieved.

Recommendations arising from the project were: (1) that the University continue to provide field experiences, under the direction of a university professor or a qualified reading consultant, for graduate students preparing to become reading consultants; (2) that graduate students preparing to become reading consultants be provided with opportunities to conduct in-service sessions; (3) that graduate students preparing for the position of reading consultant be provided with opportunities to work with different members of a school staff to acquire experience in working with a variety of people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to express sincere appreciation to the many people who assisted in the completion of this project. Gratitude is expressed to her advisor, Dr. Ethel M. Janes, for the advice, assistance, and guidance which she unstintingly gave throughout the course of the project. Appreciation is also expressed to Professor Gordon Woodland and Dr. W. John Harker for their constructive criticism.

The writer wishes to record her gratitude to the principals, teachers, and pupils under the Avalon Consolidated School Board who participated in the project; the staff at the Centre for Audio-Visual Education at Memorial University who provided materials; and the staff of the Education Library at the University for their help.

Finally, to her family, especially her father, without whose inspiration and encouragement this report would not have been possible, the writer expresses heartfelt gratitude.

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to enable the writer to become involved in the development and implementation of a language development program in kindergarten as part of her preparation for the role of reading consultant. In the project she worked, under the supervision of two university professors, with pupils and teachers in four kindergarten classes, devising procedures, techniques, and materials for improving language development as a framework for the teaching of reading.

Need for the Project

In recent years educators in Newfoundland have become seriously concerned over the high drop-out and grade repetition rates in Newfoundland schools. In 1964, Sister Mary Perpetua Kennedy investigated the drop-out problem in Newfoundland at the seventh, eighth, and ninth grade levels for the ten-year period 1954-64. She found that one of the chief reasons for early withdrawal from school was "grade-failure and repetition". The Report of the Royal Commission on Education and

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Sister M. Perpetua Kennedy, "A Critical Analysis of the Drop-out Problem in the Province of Newfoundland over the Ten-Year Period 1954-64" (unpublished Master's Thesis, Catholic University of America, 1965), pp. 87-8.

Youth noted that, according to Student Progress Through the Schools by Age and Grade, in the year 1963-64, of all the provinces of Canada, Newfoundland had the highest percentage of repeaters in grade two and the second highest in grades three, four, and five.[2] Since achievement in reading is such an important factor in determining whether pupils in the primary and elementary grades are promoted, it would appear that many children in those grades were experiencing problems in reading.[3] Furthermore, a study initiated by the Commission showed that among a sample of grade eight students the most significant weaknesses were in reading comprehension and arithmetic problem solving.[4]

As a result of the growing awareness of the importance of reading, the demand for trained personnel in reading at all levels has increased tremendously. The Provincial Department of Education, recognizing this need, made provision in the Schools Act, 1969, for Board Supervisors and other personnel in reading[5], and the following year the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Memorial University of Newfoundland offered its first graduate program in reading for

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[2]Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Report of the Royal Commission on Education and Youth, 1, (St. John's, Newfoundland: The Queen's Printer, 1967), p.37.

[3]Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Student Progress through the School by Grades (1965), pp. 8, 28, 40; "Overage Pupils through the Grades", Department of Education Newsletter, XIX (September, 1967); Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Statistical Supplement to the Annual Report of the Department of Education (1968), p. 8; "The Promotion Pattern", Department of Education Newsletter, XIX (November, 1967).

[4]Ibid.

[5]Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, The Schools Act, (St. John's, Newfoundland: The Queen's Printer, 1969), p. 25.

the preparation of reading consultants.

Authorities in reading emphasize the importance of supplementing theoretical preparation with practical experience. Indeed, the International Reading Association specifies field experiences under a qualified reading consultant or supervisor in a school setting as a necessary part of the preparation of a reading consultant.[6] There are, however, few opportunities in Newfoundland for prospective consultants to work with consultants in the schools during their university preparation. Plans were made, therefore, by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction for graduate students' involvement in a language development program which would provide a framework for the teaching of reading. This project, which was part of that program, provided the writer with practical experiences in working with teachers and pupils.

The problem of reading deficiencies is not a new one. While there seems to be widespread agreement that the kinds of reading instruction used today are not adequate for many of our children, there are differences of opinion as to what can be done to remedy the situation. Because of this interest in reading instruction in recent years, instructional materials, methodology, and structural reorganization have received much attention. Educators are now aware, however, that teaching reading is a complex task and that neither materials, methods, nor reorganization alone will produce any dramatic improvement in reading achievement.

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[6] "Roles, Responsibilities, and Qualifications of Reading Consultants", The Journal of Reading, XII (October, 1968), 60-63.

For too long, reading was taught in isolation from the other language arts. In the past, readiness programs emphasized drill and pencil and paper exercises. Teachers were trained to use basal readers with carefully controlled, but artificial, language patterns and to introduce sight words which were meaningless to many children. Such programs failed to consider the importance of the linguistic and conceptual background of the child.

Recent studies in child development and in the interrelatedness of all the language arts--listening, speaking, reading, and writing--have added to our understanding of reading readiness. Today, many educators realize that if reading instruction is to be considered on a broader basis, it makes sense to start with the experiences of the learner and to build the reading program on this foundation so that children will perceive reading as a meaningful activity. Since written language patterns differ from oral language patterns of children, the introduction of written language must be preceded by a firm background of oral language experience which will enable the child to deal successfully with the language patterns presented in the instructional program. It is, therefore, essential that children's language be developed in the kindergarten year so that they will be able to make the transition from oral language to the written language which they will later encounter in the formal reading programs.

Objectives

The objectives of this project were to enable the graduate student

To acquire experience in helping teachers improve their program through the introduction of new techniques and procedures.

To become involved in curriculum development through the development and implementation of a language development program.

To produce visual and print materials for use in in-service training.

Definition of Terms

Reading Consultant. A full-time employee of the School Board who works directly with children, teachers and administrators within a school system or district to develop, implement, and coordinate the reading programs.

Language Development Program. A program to develop each child's ability to use language effectively. The program uses children's experiences, trade books, and teacher-made and commercial audio-visual materials to expand vocabulary, to promote fluency of expression, and to foster concept development.

Method

This project involved the writer (a graduate student in reading) in the development and implementation of an oral language program in four kindergarten classrooms in the St. John's area. During the period of her involvement in the project, the writer was supervised by the two university professors who were directing the language development program of which this project was a part.

The writer visited two schools weekly during the first semester, but for the remainder of the year she visited all four schools, each school receiving a visit every second week. Emphasis was placed during classroom visits on recognizing and helping teachers expand the abilities they displayed in their teaching.

In the first semester, the writer worked mainly with the pupils, helping them use their own experiences as a basis for their language development. Objects of interest which the children brought from outside the school, as well as firsthand and vicarious experiences which they wished to share, formed the framework of their language development. In order to determine their growth in the effective use of language, the writer made a ten-month study of several children.

During the second semester, the writer worked mainly with teachers, holding individual conferences during which she introduced new ideas and made suggestions regarding procedures and techniques which might be applied in particular situations to improve the program. Different methods of grouping, the most effective use of instructional materials, and utilization of all existing space were some of the other areas receiving particular attention.

The conferences with teachers also provided the writer with information which allowed her to ascertain the degree to which she was successful and indicated how she might render more assistance. The writer kept a diary in which she recorded reports of conferences with teachers and descriptions of classroom activities which she initiated. Periodic reviews of this diary and weekly conferences with her supervisors helped her evaluate her progress in the practical application

of her academic preparation.

Each classroom was liberally supplied with books as well as audio, visual, and audio-visual equipment such as tape recorders, cameras, phonographs, projectors, and primary typewriters. Help was given in introducing the equipment and materials as the need or readiness for each became evident. Gradually these were incorporated into the teachers' regular procedures. As a result of their use, the writer collected samples of visual and print materials for her use in in-service training as a reading consultant.

This chapter has included the purpose of the project, the need for the project, definition of terms, and method. In Chapter Two the literature related to the training of reading consultants, the relationship between the drop-out problem and low reading ability, and the relationship between proficiency in oral language and reading ability will be reviewed. Chapter Three will deal extensively with the procedures of the project. Chapter Four will present a summary with some conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature will focus on four main areas: (1) the development of the position of reading consultant, (2) the preparation of a reading consultant, (3) reading retardation as a major factor in the drop-out problem, and (4) the interrelatedness of language development and reading achievement.

Development of the Position of Reading Consultant

The first reading specialists responsible for the teaching of reading emerged in 1930, according to J. Alan Robinson who has traced the development of the position from its inception through the succeeding thirty-five years.[1] During the thirties, reading specialists were employed in only a few large cities of the United States and, even twenty years later, special supervisors of reading were few in number.

During the 1950's, Robinson reports, many more people were hired as reading consultants but they had no specialized training and were used primarily as remedial reading teachers.[2] Since these "specialists", by doing remedial reading, were responsible for correcting reading disabilities rather than preventing them, most of the reading

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[1] J. Alan Robinson, "The Reading Consultant of the Past, Present, and Future", The Reading Teacher, XX (March, 1967), 475.

[2] Ibid.

programs did not provide specialized help until children were in the third grade or beyond and were already failing in reading. People responsible for the total reading program remained few in number. They were usually employed in large cities and were most often called supervisors of reading.

Robinson found that it was not until the 1960's that the picture began to change and the roles of the various specialists in the field of reading became defined. Today, reading specialists are being sought to serve, not only as remedial reading teachers, but also as reading consultants who work with teachers, administrators, and parents to prevent reading failures. Working with the staff of a school to develop, coordinate, and evaluate the reading program is the major role of the reading consultant.

The Preparation of a Reading Consultant

Authorities in education recommend that standards and qualifications of reading consultants should be higher than an undergraduate degree, and many consider a period of practical experience necessary. During the Conference of Cognitive Studies and Curriculum Development, Jean Piaget, commenting on the problem of teacher-training, stated that adults as well as children learn better by doing things than by being told about them.[3] He was referring to teachers-in-training when he remarked: "If they read about it, it will be deformed as is all

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[3] Eleanor Duckworth, "Piaget Rediscovered", Journal of Research in Science Teaching, II, 3 (1964), 172-75.

learning that is not the result of the subjects' own activity".[4]

In Durrell's view, "a preoccupation with verbalism, apparently in the belief that the highly complex skills of teaching can be imparted through lectures and discussion", is the fatal weakness of education today.[5] Durrell, while admitting that what is being taught is sound, contended that it is not being used and will not be used until the student has the opportunity to practise his art under the direction of his professor.[6]

In 1966, the Committee on the Graduate Study of Education, recognizing the need for a broad concept of education--"one which links theory and scholarship with technology and practice"--recommended the inclusion of an internship in the Master's degree program.[7] This was considered by Broudy to be the most significant recommendation of the report[8], and the Committee was commended by Brubacher for standing firm on the mutual importance of theory and practice.[9]

In 1960, the National Society for the Study of Education, noting the increasing interest in teacher education, devoted a section

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[4]Ibid., p. 174.

[5]Donald D. Durrell, "Challenge and Experiment in the Teaching of Reading", Challenge and Experiment in Reading, ed. J. Allen Figurel, International Reading Association Conference Proceedings, VII (New York: Scholastic Magazines, 1962), pp. 13-23.

[6]Ibid., p. 15.

[7]"Graduate Study of Education", Harvard Educational Review, XXXVI 2 (1966), 155-183.

[8]Ibid., pp. 156-161; [9]Ibid., pp. 181-183.

to the topic. William S. Gray, relating his views in this publication, considered the duties of the reading consultant to be of such a varied and complex nature as to require broad preparation.[10] He recommended that a period of internship to provide for participation in supervisory activities in a school system should be required of all students preparing for this position.[11]

The following year, Ruth Strang conducted a survey of American colleges and universities to determine the number and types of reading programs offered for reading teachers and specialists. In a report of her survey, she commented on the need for improvement in the quality of both courses and programs. She suggested that a semester of internship in a school system or reading clinic should be a part of the program.[12]

Picharz, discussing teacher-training programs, commented that having students work on a practical level can accomplish more than a "theoretically structured impractical course offered on a college campus".[13] Similarly, Robinson considered a supervised internship in a school setting particularly valuable for developing practical insights

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[10]William S. Gray, "The Role of Teacher Education", Development in and through Reading, Sixty-first Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 144-161.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ruth Strang, "Preparation for Teachers of Reading", Journal of Developmental Reading, IV (Autumn, 1960), 56.

[13]Josephine A. Picharz, "Teacher Training for Improving Reading Instruction", Education, LXXXI (1961), 231-34.

into a variety of problem areas.[14]

Robinson identified expertness in human relations, adequate training, and superior organizational ability as the three essential qualifications of a reading consultant.[15] He felt that, since the reading consultant would have to work with many types of people, communicate well, and elicit support, expertness in human relations was probably the most important of the three. Detriech suggested further that, while personal qualifications could not be taught in a college course and were, therefore, difficult to assess in terms of the number of courses taken, they were qualifications which training institutions and employing agencies needed to be aware of.[16] She emphasized the need for supervised field experiences for graduate students in reading. Indeed, she insisted that training institutions should recommend for reading positions only those students who had demonstrated to some degree during their training the personal qualifications they would need.

Other professions such as law, theology and medicine have for years made use of supervised work experiences which are designed to increase the competency of the learner as he pursues his career objectives. In Brameld's view, to achieve standards of practice in education comparable to the medical field, radical improvement would be

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[14]H. Alan Robinson, "The Role of the Reading Consultant", Highlights of the Pre-Convention Institute No. 11 (Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1965), pp. 1-18.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Dorothy M. Detriech, "Standards and Qualifications for Reading Specialists", The Reading Teacher, XX (March, 1967), 485.

necessary. He felt that internships--one year for classroom teachers and two years for specialists--should be required.[17]

An examination of the fiftieth yearbook of the National Society for the study of Education published in 1951 revealed that only two universities in the United States--Teachers College, Columbia University and the University of Minnesota--included practical experiences for graduate students in Education.[16] Since then there has been a steady increase in programs which offer field experiences as part of graduate training. A 1973 publication of the International Reading Association listed at least one hundred and twenty-four programs offering field experiences under the direction of a reading clinician, a reading supervisor, or a reading consultant in a school setting.[19] Of these, at least seventy-five offered the field experience in a school setting and forty-seven institutions offered all three types.

In 1972, Harker conducted a study of all Canadian universities and colleges to determine the extent to which these institutions provided courses for the professional preparation of reading teachers and specialists. The results of the study showed that forty-one universities and colleges offered undergraduate degrees in education leading to

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[17]Theodore Brameld, "The Coming Breakthrough in Teacher Education", The Education Forum, XXIV (May, 1960), 449-456.

[16]Graduate Study in Education, Fiftieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951).

[19]Stanley F. Wanat (ed.), Graduate Programs and Faculty in Reading (Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1973).

certification by the provincial departments of education in their respective provinces. Thirteen of these institutions offered Master's degrees in reading education, with eight including in their programs the reading courses recommended by the International Reading Association for the professional preparation of special teachers of reading and reading clinicians. Only two graduate programs included all of the courses which the International Reading Association recommends for the preparation of reading consultants and in only two institutions were graduate programs apparently designed to give prospective reading specialists actual field experiences.[20]

The findings of the study led Harker to conclude:

> In some respects, the most serious deficiencies in Canadian reading education exist in the graduate programs...the future growth of Canadian reading education demands development and change in both undergraduate and graduate programs.[21]

One example of a program to provide field experiences for graduate students who aspired to become reading consultants was developed by the University of Wisconsin at Madison with the cooperation of the Madison Public School System. The program began in the summer session at which time each graduate student, under the direct supervision of the university reading specialist, worked with one or two pupils who had severe reading problems. The remedial reading practicum during the regular year was an intensive, closely supervised experience

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[20] W. John Harker, "The Professional Preparation of Reading Teachers and Specialists in Canadian Universities and Colleges", Manitoba Journal of Education, VIII (June, 1973), 44-45.

[21] Ibid., p. 45.

with a university instructor directly responsible for supervising the graduate student and a school remedial teacher available as a resource person on a day-to-day basis. A reading consultant from the public school's central office made regular visits to observe and supervise the school's overall reading program, including the work of the graduate student. In addition, a course entitled "Field Work in the School Reading Program" was offered during the regular year, differing from the practicum mainly in that the focus was upon the school's overall program rather than on pupils with problems in reading.[22]

In most instances a field work experience was planned within the context of the Madison Public School reading program. The details of the student's assignments were determined by the public school's consultants, and one consultant took direct responsibility for working with the student in his school contacts. The university instructor supervising the graduate student was available as a resource person and made periodic assessments of the student's work.[23]

The Graduate School of Education of the University of Chicago offered a two-year program for the training of reading consultants. In this program, the graduate student worked as an intern with a qualified reading consultant in both clinical and school situations during the second year of his university preparation.[24]

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[22]Wayne Otto and Richard J. Smith, "School-University Cooperation in the Preparation of Reading Teachers", The Reading Teacher, XXIV (May, 1971), 718-722.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Lawrence Moburg, "A New Consultant Gets Started", The Reading Teacher, XX (March, 1967), 520.

In Durrell's opinion, the activities carried on in the reading clinic at Boston University in the early sixties were a good example of the laboratory approach to teacher-training. In the clinic, the graduate students in reading, worked with their professors four mornings a week during the school year analyzing and correcting reading difficulties. Since they were preparing to become reading supervisors, they spent the last two months of the year in the public school system in practice supervision. Durrell stated that there was no question of the competence of such graduates as they had been observed at work in the actual situation in which they would later serve.[25]

In 1968, United States Commissioner of Education, Harold Howe, while addressing a group of elementary school principals, expressed the view that schools should become teacher training institutions:

> The school itself has many of the necessary components for taking on the teacher training responsibility...it offers a more practical setting than the college...a population, a principal, direct contacts with the parents, and a community environment.[26]

Durrell expressed a similar view when he said that "the professor of education of the future must be the best practitioner of the art of teaching in the public school classroom".[27] He believed that

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[25]Donald D. Durrell, "Challenge and Experiment in the Teaching of Reading", Challenge and Experiment in Reading, ed. J. Allen Figurel, International Reading Association Conference Proceedings, VII (New York: Scholastic Magazines, 1962), pp. 13-23.

[26]Otto, Wayne and Lawrence Erickson, Inservice Education to Improve Reading Instruction, (Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1973), p. 1.

[27]Durrell, op. cit., p. 23.

the principles which should be functioning in planning and teaching would be transmitted inductively through professor-student cooperation. He concluded that eventually students would graduate on certification of competence as judged by the analysis of teaching abilities rather than by the number of courses taken.[28]

Reading Retardation as a Major Factor in the Drop-Out Problem

Many reports of empirical research and articles of opinion on school drop-outs have been published in recent years. Attempts to ascertain the extent and the causes of the problem have yielded data which justify the concern expressed by interested persons and agencies.

Among the earliest records of the retention power of Newfoundland schools are those found in the statistics compiled on the results of the Council of Higher Education examinations in the twenties. Of a total of more than forty-eight thousand students in 1923-24, only four thousand and sixty-nine, or less than 10 percent, were enrolled above grade six.[29] In that period there were between fifteen hundred and two thousand students writing grade six examinations, but the number who reached grade eleven five years later was less than five hundred. Census figures showing the years of schooling for different age groups confirmed that forty-five years ago the majority of students dropped out of school with their elementary education barely completed.[30]

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[28]Ibid.

[29]"Grade XI Results", Department of Education Newsletter, XVI (January, 1965).

[30]Ibid.

In 1960, the Bureau of Statistics undertook a study of student retention for each of the ten provinces of Canada for the period 1946-47 to 1956-57. Results of this study revealed a steady and heavy loss of student potential as students progressed from primary to elementary and high school grades. At that time the holding power of Newfoundland schools was estimated to be at 29 percent, the lowest of all the Canadian provinces with one exception.[31] For the ten-year period 1952-62 the rate of retention had increased considerably but, at 41½ percent, Newfoundland still ranked third highest in Canada in the rate of school drop-outs.[32] While the retention rate for the period 1960-70 had risen to 60 percent, still two-fifths of the students who entered grade two were failing to complete high school.[33]

Awareness of the intensity of the drop-out problem has led to many studies investigating the causes of early withdrawal from school in both the United States and Canada. A survey of the literature reveals no single cause; rather there appears to be a multiplicity of factors associated with the phenomenon. There is in the results of the studies, however, evidence of a direct relationship between early withdrawal from school and poor reading ability and grade repetition.

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[31] Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Student Progress through the Schools by Grades (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1960), p. 28.

[32] "Promotions", Department of Education Newsletter, XIX (April, 1968).

[33] Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Statistical Supplement to the Annual Report of the Department of Education (St. John's, Newfoundland: The Queen's Printer, 1970), p. 40.

A comprehensive study of thirteen hundred drop-outs in five Midwestern American communities was conducted by Dillon under the auspices of the National Child Labor Committee. Among Dillon's major findings concerning drop-outs were a fairly high consistent regression in scholarship throughout the grades and a high frequency of grade or subject failure.[34]

In 1951-52 Bowman and Matthews began an eight-year study of all students in grade six that year in the public schools of Quincy, Illinois. Data collected on the students and interviews with all students who had dropped out by the end of the tenth grade showed that the drop-outs were "poor readers" and "academically below average".[35]

A summary of the factors associated with school drop-outs, compiled by Hohol, yielded information which corroborated the findings of the above studies.[36] Two of the studies revealed nearly identical factors relating to the problem. Horowitz, a school principal in Philadelphia, attempted to determine whether it was possible to predict with any degree of accuracy which students would remain in school long enough to graduate. His study revealed that "poor reading ability, poor attendance, and subject and grade failure" were primary factors associated with dropping out of school.[37]

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[34]Bert I. Greene, Preventing School Drop Outs (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 19.

[35]Ibid., p. 18.

[36]Albert E. Hohol, "Factors Associated with School Drop-Outs", Alberta Journal of Educational Research, I, No. 1 (March, 1955), 1-12.

[37]Ibid., p. 12.

A study conducted by the Nova Scotia Guidance Committee identified eight leading symptoms of early school leaving, the first three of which were:

1. Repeated failure in one or more subjects or grades.
2. A consistently low record of achievement.
3. Significant retardation in basic courses.[38]

Robert Zeller's summary of more recent studies in the United States revealed an almost identical set of factors which identify drop-outs. He listed nine primary factors, the first five of which were:

1. Failure to achieve scholastically--80% of the drop-outs are retarded at least one grade level.
2. Low reading ability--retardation one or two years.
3. Grade placement--two or more years below age level.
4. Low marks--low marks in the elementary school for the drop-out, and his grades continue to go down each year during grades eight, nine, and ten.
5. Retention--at least once in the elementary school.[39]

Few studies investigating the causes of students dropping out of school have been done in Newfoundland. A study of 113 grade nine drop-outs, conducted by George E. Martin in 1961-62, showed that only 21 percent had not failed at least one grade in school as compared with 60 percent among the sample who had remained in school. Only 36 percent had not repeated a grade and, in fact, 24 percent had repeated two or more grades. Of the drop-outs, a full 75 percent were sixteen

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[38]Ibid.

[39]Robert Zeller, Lowering the Odds on Student Drop-Outs (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 20.

years of age or older by the time they reached grade nine.[40] Martin concluded that:

> ...there appeared to be a direct relationship, then, between the incidence of failure and the dropping out of school. It follows that if the failure rate can be reduced, the number of drop-outs will, in all probability, be reduced.[41]

In 1964, Sister Mary Perpetua Kennedy interviewed one hundred young people who had withdrawn from school at the seventh, eighth, and ninth grade levels during the ten-year period 1954-64. Sister Kennedy found that one of the chief causes for their early withdrawal was grade repetition and grade failure.[42]

An examination of the information on repeaters in Newfoundland schools shows that for the year 1965, of all the Canadian provinces, Newfoundland had the highest percentage in grades two, nine, and ten; the second highest in grades three, four, and five; the third highest in grades six, seven and eight; and the fourth highest in grade eleven.[43]

Table I, which presents the percentage of repeaters at each grade level from grade two to grade eleven for two different periods, shows that while the percentage of students who are retarded in each grade is decreasing, ours is still not an enviable position.

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[40] George E. Martin. "A Survey of Factors Releated to Drop-Outs in Grade IX in Newfoundland Central High Schools in 1961-62" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Alberta, 1963), pp. 65-66.

[41] Ibid., p. 66.

[42] Sister Mary Perpetua Kennedy, "A Critical Analysis of the Drop-Out Problem in the Province of Newfoundland over the Ten Year Period, 1954-64" (unpublished Master's thesis, Catholic University of America, 1966).

[43] Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Student Progress through the Schools by Grade (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1965), p. 48.

TABLE I

PERCENTAGE OF REPEATERS IN GRADES TWO TO ELEVEN FOR THE YEARS 1961-62[a] and 1969-70[b]

Grades	1961-62	1969-70
II	13	8
III	11	7.6
IV	11.5	8.6
V	11	8.5
VI	7.5	8.2
VII	9.5	11.9
VIII	9	9.7
IX	24.5	13.3
X	17.5	11.2
XI	10	11.9

[a] Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Student Progress through the Schools by Grade (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1965), p. 48.

[b] Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Statistical supplement to the Annual Report of the Department of Education (St. John's, Newfoundland: Department of Education, 1970), p. 39.

With few exceptions, the percentage of repeaters per grade decreased over the eight-year period. This is not so much an indication of a great reduction in the number of repeaters in the grades (in grade eleven the number of repeaters for 1967-68 was 643; for 1969-70 the figure was 1040) as a result of the tendency to remain in school longer. Comparison of age-grade tables for the same periods shows a steady increase in the number of students in each grade from grade eight to grade eleven.

TABLE II

ENROLLMENT IN GRADES EIGHT TO ELEVEN
FOR THE YEARS 1961-62[a] and 1969-70[b]

Grades	Enrollment for Years	
	1961-62	1969-70
VIII	10,416	12,996
IX	10,107	11,883
X	6,469	9,824
XI	4,266	8,698

[a]Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Statistical Supplement to the Annual Report of the Department of Education (St. John's, Newfoundland: Department of Education, 1968), p. 9.

[b]Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Statistical Supplement to the Annual Report of the Department of Education (St. John's, Newfoundland: Department of Education, 1970), p. 9.

An examination of statistics for the years 1957 to 1967 indicates that only approximately one-third of the students went through school without repeating a grade and a full 30 percent dropped out of school before reaching age sixteen.[44]

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[44]"Grade XI Results", Department of Education Newsletter, XVI (January, 1965); Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Student Progress through the School by Grade (1970), p. 28; "Overage Pupils through the Grades", Department of Education Newsletter, XIX (September, 1967); Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Statistical Supplement to the Annual Report of the Department of Education (1968), p. 8; "Student Progress through the School by Grade", Department of Education Newsletter, XVIII (March, 1967); "The Promotion Pattern", Department of Education Newsletter, XIX (November, 1967); and Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Statistical Supplement to the Annual Report of the Department of Education (1970), p. 40.

A study of grades three and four students undertaken by the Department of Education school supervisors in 1959-60 provided "very disappointing" results.[45] At that time the reading level of Newfoundland students in those two grades was more than a year below the test norms. Conclusions of the study were that "only a handful of Newfoundland schools approached a favourable showing.[46]

Four years later a second study of all grade four students was carried out by the same group of investigators and again the results showed that Newfoundland students were reading "well below the test norms". This study showed that only 22 percent scored at or above grade level in reading comprehension: four out of five were reading below the test norm.[47]

In May 1970, a sample of grade three classes in Newfoundland--a total of 1603 students--were given the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests of Vocabulary and Comprehension. According to the Test Manual, the norms for a Grade III child taking this test in May or June were 3.9 for vocabulary and 3.9 for comprehension.[48] For the Newfoundland sample, the score for vocabulary was 3.2 and for comprehension 3.1[49] Again, the province as a whole was below the test norms.

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[45]"Deficiencies in Reading", Department of Education Newsletter, XV (November, 1963).

[46]Ibid.

[47]"The Standard of Reading in Our Schools", Department of Education Newsletter, XVI (September, 1964).

[48]Edward A. Jones, "Reading Survey, Grade III, June 1970", Department of Education Newsletter, XX (October, 1970), 5-6.

[49]Ibid.

In an attempt to provide reliable data concerning the achievement of students in this province, the Royal Commission on Education and Youth initiated a study under the direction of Dr. Arthur Sullivan of Memorial University of Newfoundland.[50] Grades eight and nine students in a sample of schools throughout the province were given the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. Results for grade eight showed:

> For the sample as a whole the level of achievement is slightly below that which may be expected from the test norms. The most significant weaknesses are found in the tests of reading comprehension and arithmetic problem solving.[51]

In the school year 1963-64 a committee of representatives from the Department of Education, the Newfoundland Teachers' Association, and Memorial University of Newfoundland met to "talk over the possibilities of research in Education in Newfoundland".[52] Concern over the discouraging results of the Public Examinations in grade nine prompted the Committee to begin their research with an attempt to discover the cause of the low percentage of passes in that grade. Out of a sample of 381 students who had written the Grade IX Public Examinations in June 1963, 284 were tested; the others had either transferred to other schools or left school altogether. To test the assumption that low reading ability was one of the major causes of the high percentage of failures, the Metropolitan Achievement Test in Reading was administered.

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[50] Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Report of the Royal Commission on Education and Youth (St. John's, Newfoundland: The Queen's Printer), pp. 43-44.

[51] Ibid., p. 44.

[52] "Grade IX Survey", Department of Education Newsletter, XVI (September, 1964).

The results, which are presented in Table III, showed that almost 60 percent of the sample were reading below their expected level.[53]

TABLE III

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS READING AT VARIOUS GRADE LEVELS[a]

Grade Level	Percentage of Students
Below VI	13
VI	14
VII	13
VIII	17
IX	15
X	28

[a]"Grade IX Survey", Department of Education Newsletter, XVI (September, 1964).

Pursuing the question of whether low reading ability contributed to the high percentage of failures in grade nine the previous year, the Committee went on to establish a relationship between grade equivalent in reading and the overall grade nine results. By dividing the 284 students who wrote the examinations into groups according to the scores on the reading tests, the percentages of passes for those reading at the various levels were determined. The relationship between grade equivalent in reading and the overall grade nine results is presented in Table IV.

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[53]Ibid.

TABLE IV

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GRADE EQUIVALENTS IN READING AND OVERALL GRADE IX RESULTS[a]

Grade Equivalents in Reading	Percent Passing Grade IX Public Examinations
Grade VI and below	20
Grades VII and VIII	47
Grades IX and X	80

[a] "Grade IX Survey", Department of Education Newsletter, XVI (October, 1964).

Working on the assumption that success in the content subjects is adversely affected by low reading ability, the Committee investigated the relationship between low reading ability and examination results in Literature, History, and Geography.[54] Table V, which presents the results of this section of the study, shows direct relationship between reading ability and results in grade nine examinations in these subjects.

To account for differences in intelligence, calculations were made for three IQ groups. Comparison of the results of good and poor readers when IQ is held constant produces further evidence of the relationship between reading ability and grade nine results, as is demonstrated in Table VI.[55]

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[54] "Grade IX Survey", Department of Education Newsletter, XVI (October, 1964).

[55] Ibid.

TABLE V

PERCENTAGE OF PASSES IN SELECTED SUBJECTS FOR STUDENTS AT VARIOUS READING LEVELS[a]

Reading Levels	Percentage of Passes		
	Literature	History	Geography
Below Grade VI	53	33	34
Grade VI	65	51	69
Grade VII	82	50	84
Grade VIII	81	60	84
Grades IX and X	98	78	96

[a]"Grade IX Survey", Department of Education Newsletter, XVI (October, 1964).

TABLE VI

PERCENTAGE OF PASSES FOR STUDENTS READING AT VARIOUS LEVELS FOR THREE IQ GROUPS[a]

Grade Levels in Reading	Percentage of Passes		
	IQ 80-89	IQ 90-99	IQ 100 and higher
VI and below	58	66	-
VII and VIII	74	87	92
IX and X	86	93	100

[a]"Grade IX Results", Department of Education Newsletter, XVI (October, 1964).

General conclusions of the study were:

1. Four-sevenths of the pupils in Grade IX had reading ability below the expected level for their grade.

2. Eighty percent of the good readers were successful in the Grade IX Public Examination; less than thirty percent of the poor readers passed.

3. While a high percentage of the good readers came from the most intelligent group of students, an appreciable number came from the low average group, and some came from the below average group.

4. All calculations consistently showed that higher reading ability was reflected in higher marks and a high percentage of passes in the content subjects.[56]

Many studies have shown a high correlation between low scholastic achievement and poor reading ability. Schreiber believes that reading deficiencies must be prevented if students are to achieve success and satisfaction from any instructional program.[57] He explains why he believes this is so:

> It [reading] affects not only the child, but also the parents' attitude towards the school. All parents, regardless of their cultural or economic level, or how unschooled they are know that there is one thing the school is supposed to teach their children and that is how to read. Yet study after study has shown that the average drop-out is two or more years retarded in reading.[58]

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[56]Ibid.

[57]Daniel Schreiber, "The School Drop-Out--Fugitive from Failure". Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, XLVI (May, 1962), 233-241.

[58]Ibid., p. 237.

In Schreiber's opinion, the low self-image held by most drop-outs can be attributed to poor reading ability because.."pupils who do not read well enough to do the work of their grade satisfactorily are apt to be retained. Constant failure brings in its wake discouragement and discontent".[59] If reading retardation is one of the major factors associated with early school leaving--and the evidence appears to be conclusive that it is--the results of the 1970 grade three reading survey[60] are, indeed, a matter of grave concern.

Interrelatedness of Language Development and Reading Achievement

Research has yielded varied and conflicting answers to the question of why some children learn to read with ease while some learn only with great difficulty and others not at all. According to Goodman, reading is a process which involves the interaction of language and thought.[61] Learning to read is dependent upon many factors. The child must be physically, socially, and emotionally ready, but, equally important, he must have a background of experience that will enable him to deal successfully with the concepts presented. Stauffer states that it is the responsibility of the school to develop sound techniques of instruction based on balance in maturation, experience, and language,[62]

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[59]Ibid.

[60]Jones, op. cit. p. 6.

[61]Kenneth Goodman, "Reading: A Psycholinguistic Guessing Game", Journal of the Reading Specialist, VI (May, 1967), p. 127.

[62]Russell G. Stauffer, "The Quest for Maturity in Reading", Language, Reading, and the Communication Process, ed. Carl Braun (Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1971), pp. 9-19.

while Monroe considers poor oral language development a major cause of difficulty in learning to read.[63]

A comprehensive study of children's language was begun by Loban in 1952, his subjects being a group of 333 children who were in kindergarten that year.[64] This longitudinal study was concerned with the children's use and control of language, their effectiveness in communication, and the relationship among their competencies in oral expression, reading, and writing. At regular intervals during the seven-year period from kindergarten to grade six, samples of their language were collected and studied.

The relationship between proficiency in oral language and competence in reading was clearly demonstrated in this study. In all grades from two to six, those students who were proficient in oral language were also high in reading achievement. By grade six, all subjects high in oral language ability were above their age expectations reading. The inverse was also true; virtually all those in the low group in oral language were reading significantly below their age expectations in each of the years studied.[65]

The performance of the group low in oral language was almost identical, in terms of grade levels, in each successive year except

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[63]Marion Monroe, "The Child and His Language Come to School", Language, Reading, and the Communication Process, ed. Carl Braun (Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1971), pp. 121-142.

[64]Walter Loban, The Language of Elementary School Children (Chicago: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963), pp. 1-57.

[65]Ibid.

that the median and upper quartiles tended to decline slightly. Considering this decline and the fact that the high group were actually increasing in reading achievement each year, the picture as a whole was "apparently a widening gap from year to year between those rated high and low in language ability."[66]

Other studies substantiate Loban's conclusion that "proficiency in oral language appears to be a necessary base for competency in reading. Hughes found a positive relationship between reading achievement and language usage, the correlation--after being corrected for attenuation--being .67."[67]

A study of factors determining success or failure in beginning reading, conducted by Gates and Bond, showed a fairly high correlation between the general quality of oral language and the pupil's success in learning to read".[68]

Bett's comprehensive review of the factors in reading readiness led to his stating:

> . . . the development of reading ability is primarily a problem of language. Children must have acquired a considerable fund of information and reasonable facility in the use of language: clear enunciation, correct pronunciation, a wide

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[66]Ibid.

[67]Virgil A. Hughes, "A Study of the Inter-relationships among selected Language Arts Areas and Abilities" cited by Mildred A. Dawson, "Interrelationships between Speech and Other Language Arts Areas", Interrelationships Among the Language Arts (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1954), 24-35.

[68]Arthur Gates and Guy Bond, "Reading Readiness: A Study of Factors Determining Success and Failure in Beginning Reading", Teachers College Record, XXXVII (May, 1963), 679-685.

vocabulary, mastery of basic sentence structure and the like.[69] Betts found that "children who evidence delayed language development constitute a major instructional problem for teachers.[70]

In a discussion of the implications of language in beginning reading, Adams makes it clear that:

> Children must have developed considerable ability in oral expression before they can be expected to comprehend or to reproduce through reading ideas of other persons.[71]

In view of the findings of these studies it seems reasonable to assume that the child must transfer his existing knowledge of language to the task of reading. That he can do so effectively only if what he reads is language which he understands has been demonstrated by research. Ruddell found that reading comprehension is a function of the similarity of patters of language structure in the reading material to the patterns of oral language structure used by the child.[72] This study was supported by Fagan's research which showed that students at the grade four, five, and six levels do not comprehend fully the various written language structures.[73] Since Strickland's study revealed

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[69]Emmett A Betts, "Factors in Reading Readiness", Educational Administration and Supervision, XXIX (April, 1943), 199-231.

[70]Ibid.

[71]Olga Adams, "Implications of Language in Beginning Reading", Childhood Education, XII (January, 1936), 158-163.

[72]Robert B. Ruddell, "The Effects of Oral and Written Language Structures on Reading Comprehension", The Reading Teacher, XVIII (January, 1965), 270-271.

[73]William T. Fagan, "An Investigation into the Relationships between Reading Difficulty and the Number and Types of Sentence Transformations", (unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, University of Alberta, 1969).

that the language structures of reading text books differ from those used by children, it can be readily seen that children whose knowledge of language is limited will have difficulty in reading with comprehension.[74]

According to Monroe, the transition from oral language to written language is usually easy for children who hear academic English spoken at home, who have had books of their own, and who have been read to since infancy. As children examine a book, look at the pictures, and recall the story they heard read, they remember some of the exact words, phrases, and sentences that were used in the book. In her opinion, one of the best predictors of ability to read may be simply "the number of books in a child's home and the number of hours a week parents read to their children".[75]

Learning to read depends to a great extent on the individual characteristics of the learner. Just as reading is limited by a child's knowledge of language, so it is limited by his experiential background. It is Goodman's contention that "no language has meaning apart from the experiences of the learner".[76] Because language is

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[74]Ruth Strickland, "The Language of Elementary School Children: Its Relationship to the Language of Reading Textbooks and the Quality of Reading of Selected Children", Bulletin of the School of Education, XXXVIII, No. 4 (Bloomington, Indiana: University of Indiana, 1962).

[75]Monroe, op. cit., p. 127.

[76]Kenneth S. Goodman, "The Language Children Bring to School: Build on It", Grade Teacher, LXXXIX (March, 1969), 140.

symbolic, it can only evoke images, feelings, thoughts, and visions which have their base in the experience of the reader. If the events, places, and objects the reader encounters are unrelated to any experiences he has had, he will have great difficulty in reading about them, even though the language elements may be familiar.[77]

Not only must the child always hear and use language in conjunction with his experiences, he must acquire language to express his experiences to others and he must have language as a medium in which to think reflectively about his experiences, and to form concepts and generalizations. Goodman has contended that opportunities must be provided for learners to verbalize the concepts they are acquiring, and thus, not only establish the concepts, but also make it possible to move on to more complex or abstract concepts. In his view, the child must acquire the concept as he acquires the language to express and manipulate it. Children need a variety of experiences in which they become intellectually involved; activities must be conducted in settings that result in much verbal expression.[78]

Gans has argued that the kindergarten must provide children with the wide array of experiences they need to become reading-ready, concluding:

> Children do not just naturally become ready for reading. To sprout intellectually they need to have active, interesting experiences with other children and adults. The thousands of ideas they learn as they play, explore, construct, and listen boost their intellectual growth--actually lift their IQ's--and help them grow as successful readers.[79]

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[77]Ibid.

[78]Ibid

[79]Roma Gans, "They Must Talk Before They Read", Grade Teacher, LXXXVI (December, 1966), 101-102.

CHAPTER 3

THE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Early in September the directors of the three-year program, of which this project was a part, held individual conferences with the classroom teachers, principals, and graduate student involved in the project to plan the initial procedures in implementing the program. During the first semester the writer visited two of the schools on a weekly basis, but for the remainder of the year she visited all four schools, each school receiving a visit every second week. During classroom visits, the writer's main concern was for recognizing, and helping the teacher expand, the abilities she displayed in her teaching.

It was planned that in the first semester the writer would work with pupils, helping them use their own experiences as a basis for their language development. Objects of interest which children brought from outside the school and firsthand and vicarious experiences which they wished to share would form the framework for their language development. During the second semester the writer would work mainly with teachers, holding individual conferences during which she would introduce new ideas and make suggestions regarding techniques which could be applied in particular situations to improve the program.

The reasoning behind this plan was that in order for the writer to be accepted as a resource person by the teachers, she would first have to demonstrate her ability and she could best do this by

working with the children in the classroom. It was apparent very early in the first semester, however, that the teachers perceived her as having a consultative role, and while she placed more emphasis on consultation in the second semester, she found herself working with both teachers and children almost from the beginning of the project.

In order to determine the extent of their language development, several children were studied during the year. In all, seven children were selected, only five of whom could be followed for the full year. A seemingly precocious child was selected but she transferred to another school during the second semester, and a boy described by his teacher as "stubborn and uncooperative" was transferred to a different group within the school.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into four sections: rationale for the language development program, implementing the language development program, providing for reluctant speakers, and in-service work with teachers.

Rationale for the Language Development Program

The primary objective of the project was to develop a program in oral language as a basis for reading instruction. Since, with few exceptions, listening and speaking are the only language skills that children have when they enter school, oral language must be the primary means of carrying on the instructional program in kindergarten and the primary grades. Later, major emphasis is given to reading and writing, and the child's success in these skills is largely dependent upon his

proficiency in the use of spoken language and his willingness to use it.

Generally the kindergarten class comprises several types of children. First, there is the child who has been reading before entering school. He may know the letters of the alphabet and can recognize many words in his environment--words he sees on signs, on television commercials, in books, and in brand names on products. Another group which stands out from the majority consists of children who are very eager to talk. In any situation, one, two, or more children are fluent in oral language, using a large meaningful vocabulary. Because they have had a rich background of experiences and want to tell what they know, they often tend to dominate discussions. These children are probably ready to learn good discussion procedures--to realize the need for listening attentively and courteously to the other children in order to respond intelligently and effectively.

At the other end of the continuum are those children who withdraw from the activities. Often these are children whose preschool experiences have been meagre and whose communication has been of a different type from that of other children. The majority have not had the kinds of experiences from which they would have acquired the vocabulary and related concepts encountered in many classroom activities. Some of these children have had little general language exchange with adults, since they come from homes where language is directed at them in the form of commands or directions with few reasons or explanations. Although these children have not been provided with adequate language experiences and reading materials in the home, many of them would not

generally be regarded as disadvantaged. The effects of their poor linguistic backgrounds, however, are particularly significant with respect to their school progress.

One of the first considerations in working with children must be the sensitivity of the child to criticism of his language. Language being a very personal thing, the child considers criticism or rejection of his language to be criticism or rejection of himself. It is essential, therefore, to build the child's confidence through helping him accept his own language and that of other children. At the same time, activities must be planned to broaden the language base of the child to help him understand the language that he will meet in print.

Implementing the Language Development Program

During the last week of September, the writer made her first regular visits to the classrooms. The purpose of these visits was to get to know the teachers and pupils and to become familiar with classroom routine. The first class visited consisted of twenty-one five-year-olds and one six-year-old; the second class had an enrolment of nineteen five-year-olds. Since, in each school, there were different activities being carried out at the same time by different groups of children, the writer received many requests for help. On her first visit to each classroom she spent the entire morning helping, getting to know the pupils' names, and now and then having a brief discussion with the teacher on some point of particular interest.

Organization of the Program

Later that week the writer held a conference with each teacher to discuss the objectives of the language development program. In the course of the discussion, the teachers commented on the wide range of abilities among the pupils in their classes. They defined three major problems:

1. The existing program--the Ginn Kit A Language Program--included many units dealing with topics such as the zoo, the carnival, and so on, which were unfamiliar to many of the children. Since these children would have difficulty in reacting to topics with which they had no previous experience, they would be deprived of many opportunities for language development.

2. In each class, several children were reluctant to speak before the group; some children spoke only to the teacher and a few were reluctant to speak even to her.

3. Even the most talkative of the children occasionally had some difficulty in organizing their thinking when relating past experiences.

The wide range of interests and abilities within each class made grouping necessary. For example, in School A, two children stood out from the others--Jeanette, who has already been referred to as precocious, and Thomas, who appeared to be having difficulty in relating to his peers. When the writer mentioned those two children to the teacher, she agreed that Jeanette had already acquired many of the pre-reading skills. She was curious and eager to learn to recognize words, and often pursued her own interests. Thomas, on the other hand,

she described as "stubborn and uncooperative". It was obvious that he was easily upset, did not complete tasks, and had a very short attention span. While all the children in the class had different strengths and weaknesses and, therefore, different needs, these two would require special consideration.

A prerequisite to providing a differentiated program to meet individual needs is the assessment of the children's present level of development. In this particular situation the writer considered it necessary to analyze a sample of each child's oral language in order to determine the types of activities required for the further development of the language of individuals and of the class as a whole.

Early in October, the writer collected taped samples of the children's language. The sessions were held in a small room with only the child and the writer present so that there would be no interruptions. The writer showed each child a picture which she asked him to describe. When a child's voluntary descriptions were brief, providing insufficient information regarding his language and concept development, the writer asked questions designed to assess these abilities.

After all the samples had been collected, the teacher and the writer listened to all of the tapes. It was not surprising that the tapes revealed a wide range of differences in both quantity and quality of the children's oral language. Several children were able to give very detailed descriptions of the picture, using precise and vivid language, good sentence structure, and advanced concepts. Others responded only in sentence fragments, and a few volunteered no description and answered the writer's questions only with "yes" or "no". In several

instances there was lack of understanding of the literal meaning of such basic words as "behind", "around", and "under".

From the taped samples it was possible to isolate such components of language as:

1. Sentence length
2. Fragments of sentences
3. Sentences connected by "and" as a filler
4. Difficulties in pronunciation
5. Infantile speech
6. Stuttering
7. Weak vocabulary
8. Limited concept development

Since one of the concerns in the program was that of extending and refining the concepts which children had acquired up to the time they entered school, the activities had to be planned to meet the needs of the individuals within the class. Obviously, the child who lacked the basic understanding of the literal meaning of the word "down" needed different activities from those needed by the child who asked, "What does 'go down in history' mean?" Yet both children were in the same class. The program was, therefore, developed to meet individual needs. While the first child was being introduced to the multiple meanings of words on a literal level, the more fluent child was challenged and motivated to work with language on a more advanced level.

Careful observation of the interaction within the group and analysis of the taped samples of the children's language formed a basis for the different grouping arrangements. The teachers and the

writer agreed that all children would profit from such activities as "Story Time", "Show and Tell", and "Choral Speaking". Listening to stories and to oral descriptions of objects and events would contribute to the children's vocabulary and concept development. Choral speaking would provide the shy child or the child who had a particular speech problem with opportunities to participate without feeling self-conscious.

In addition to these activities, purposeful instruction to further the development of concepts and vocabulary of all children, regardless of their experiential background, would be required. It was agreed that the provision of many firsthand experiences would be the most effective means of dealing with wide variations in both background and present level of language development. The sections of this chapter concerning the use of materials and the class projects contain examples of activities developed to meet individual needs. An example of one grouping arrangement--to meet the needs of five reluctant speakers—is also included in this chapter.

Use of Materials

Some of the features of each of the four classrooms that set them apart from most of the classrooms in Newfoundland schools was the provision of a large number of children's books and much audio-visual material and equipment.

Books. The books, including a "talking book" (a package of books with a cassette recording to accompany each title), were a veritable storehouse of stimulating experiences. The literary quality of the content was excellent as were the illustrations, and there

was a wide range of topics to meet the wide range of interests among the pupils.

The activities which grew out of the children's listening to the teacher's reading, listening to tapes, and browsing through the books included the following:

1. The children viewed films and filmstrips.

2. Some children made plasticine models of story characters and asked the teacher to label them.

3. Several children retold familiar stories on tape.

4. Each child illustrated a segment of a story and dictated a one-sentence description for the teacher to record underneath the illustration.

5. The more advanced children dictated their own experiences for the teacher to write.

6. A few children mimed characters from their favourite stories.

7. Many of the children engaged in spontaneous puppet shows.

8. The children participated in class projects.

9. The classes went on field trips.

10. The teachers invited resource people to visit the classrooms.

In addition to providing a stimulus for the above activities, the telling and reading of stories by the teacher and the taped stories resulted in the children's developing:

1. Greater enjoyment of books and stories

2. Extensive concept development

3. Improved speech habits

4. Understanding of the language patterns used in print

5. Ability to associate the printed symbol with the spoken word.

At times the activities arising out of the children's literature were designed so that all children could profitably participate regardless of their individual needs. One-sentence stories and experience charts are good examples of such activities. While some of the more advanced children began to recognize words from the stories, others were being helped to make the association between the printed words and the words they were speaking. For some children it was necessary to develop the concept of a word in print--to point out, for example, the space between the words the and book. It soon became apparent that, for those children, while phrases such as "the book" conveyed meaning, the idea that two words were involved had to be taught. Progress was continuous and individual, and while some children were already deciding where a capital letter or a period was required, others still needed help expressing their ideas effectively.

Working on experience charts helped the children organize their thoughts and relate them in sequence. These charts also provided an excellent opportunity to help children use better sentence structure. While the writer did not change the language used by the less fluent children when constructing the experience chart, she often asked the more able students if they could think of different ways of expressing particular ideas. For example, when one of the more able students said, "We put the containers on the window ledge when we had finished",

she helped them restructure the statement to read, "When we had finished we placed the containers on the window ledge".

As the number of experience charts increased, some children began to relate accounts of their experiences spontaneously, asking the teacher or the writer to write their stories. The teacher compiled the stories into books. Many of these books consisted of language which was more sophisticated than that found in most of the beginning readers, and as the children "read" their own and each other's stories they began to recognize many of the service words such as and, the, it, is, are, were, and others which are often difficult for some children to learn if taught out of context. Before the end of the year, many children were reading library books to the class, and some were reading filmstrip captions to the less able children.

Because of the interest shown by the children in certain stories which the teacher read--for example, a story about firemen--she arranged field trips and invited resource people to visit the classroom. Besides supplying the children with much information, these experiences provided many opportunities for written composition. As the children helped the teacher plan those events, as they wrote letters requesting permission to visit a particular place, and as they wrote letters thanking the hosts and the classroom visitors, they practised and extended their language skills. The children took great care in writing their letters; they were eager to have the teacher correct errors as they were aware of the fact that, since the letter was for other people to read, it had to convey the message effectively.

The tape recorder. The tape recorder was used extensively as

it enabled the teachers to provide instruction for different groups of children at the same time. In the early stages of the program, they used it mainly with the headphones for groups of children to listen to stories independently. As the program developed, the teachers used it to develop oral expression through recording group discussions of particular topics so that the children could hear their own contributions and decide how they might have contributed more courteously and more effectively. Later, they recorded children's telephone conversations (using toy telephones), group impressions of field trips, and talks given by resource people who visited the schools.

Some children used the tape recorder independently to tape their stories or experiences so that the teacher could later type or write them.

Often the teachers used a child's taped story to teach him comprehension skills such as organizing a series of events in sequence.

Films and filmstrips. Because the writer had access to the audio-visual materials at the Centre for Audio-Visual Education at the University, she borrowed films and filmstrips regularly and used them in the program. She usually left these materials for the teachers to use following her visits. The use of these materials not only provided a stimulus for the children's oral expression and creative composition but also contributed to their vocabulary and concept development. For example, after the teacher showed a film, she discussed the story with the children. As they talked about the story, she was able to help them select the main event in the story, recall a series of events in sequence, and talk about the meanings of words used in the story.

Because the children were exposed to so much print material--in library books, on experience charts, on labels, in captions on filmstrips, and in their own books--many children began to recognize some of the most frequently used words. Before the end of the year, some of the more capable children could read entire captions on filmstrips of familiar stories.

One teacher used filmstrips extensively in a supplementary program for reluctant speakers. A description of this program is included in a later section of this chapter.

The primary typewriter. During the first weeks of the program, the teachers used the primary typewriter to type stencils of experience stories from which they reproduced copies for the children to illustrate. As the program developed, they typed children's one-sentence descriptions of their drawings, which the children later compiled into a book. Soon, some of the more capable children became interested in using the typewriter themselves and asked the teacher to print their stories for them to type. (See Appendix A, Print #54.) At first the other children only watched as these children typed their stories but gradually they too began to type. By the middle of the year, all children were using the typewriter, some to type their names only, some to type one-sentence stories, and a few to copy captions from filmstrips and stories from books.

The camera. Each classroom was equipped with a camera and film so that the teacher and the children could take pictures of their experiences which the teacher would use for the children's language development.

At first, the teacher or the writer took the pictures and used them to stimulate discussion and creative composition. Several children, however, soon learned to use the camera and asked to take the pictures themselves. The results of their first efforts were both amusing and disappointing to the children. They realized that they had been concerned more with getting their classmate's faces into the pictures than with the activity. As they examined the pictures, they could see also that they had taken too many pictures of some aspects of an activity and too few of some others. This had happened because they had not been able to distinguish the most significant aspects of an activity from those which were less important. With the teacher's help, they acquired more skill and their later pictures reflected this skill. Many of the prints and slides in the Appendices were taken by the children. The set of prints showing the puppet theatre in Appendix A, pages 98 - 102, is one example.

Class Projects

The following is an account of classroom activities used in the program. No attempt has been made to include all the activities carried out during the project. Rather, a representative sample has been selected to demonstrate the type of program provided for the children. It should be pointed out that while the same types of activities were designed for each class, they often developed differently because of the different interests and abilities of the children. An example of the way in which one activity developed in two classes is the activity on plant-growing, which is included in

this chapter.

Magnets. During her second visit to one school, the teacher asked the writer to read a story to the children. From the five or six titles which the writer suggested, the children almost unanimously chose "Mickey's Magnet". The popularity of this title was apparently due to the fact that some of the children had just recently observed two older boys using a magnet. After these children had described a magnet and told how it worked, the writer read the book. The children enjoyed the story and asked to have parts of it read again. Because they had shown such interest in the story, the writer prepared the following unit on magnets for the next week:

The children sat in a circle on the floor. The writer placed several magnets on the floor and told the children that these were magnets similar to the ones used by Mickey in the story. The writer asked such questions as "Do you remember what Mickey used the magnet for? Do you suppose that these magnets will pick up pins? Would you like to try?"

Several children used the magnets to pick up some pins. The writer then asked, "Do you think the magnet will pick up any other things?" One of the children wanted to try to pick up bobby pins, staples, paper clips, toothpicks, and a pencil eraser which were on the floor. After making several attempts to pick up the toothpick and the eraser, the children realized that only certain objects could be attracted to the magnet. The writer then discussed with the children the types of material each object consisted of. She suggested that they tap the objects against a metal key and listen to the sound made

by each. By means of questions the children were guided to the realization that the objects which had been attracted to the magnet were made of metal. The writer explained that the word used to describe these objects was magnetic, and that instead of saying, "The magnet picks up objects" they could say, "The magnet attracts objects". While the only purpose of introducing these words was to expose the children to a richer vocabulary and to make them aware of different ways of expressing an idea, some children retained the words and could use them in context.

The children were interested in further exploration of the topic. Using the same techniques as those described above, the writer, after placing a dime, a penny, and a lead sinker on the floor, allowed the children to discover for themselves that not all metal objects are attracted; only those made of iron or steel are. By means of an experience chart, she helped the children organize the concepts developed through this activity, encouraging them to use the terms "capital letter", "sentence", and "period" as she printed the sentences on the chalkboard.

Not all the children in this class volunteered to participate in this activity. One child, in fact, expressed disinterest in the discussion, remarking that he was interested only in pets.

Those children who wished to experiment further with magnets were shown how to magnetize objects. The expressions on the faces of the children (See Prints in Appendix A, pages 94 - 95) illustrate their interest and fascination as they observed one boy magnetize a key.

Concepts were expanded as the children discovered through

experimenting that:

1. Magnets will attract pins, bobby pins, staples, safety pins, and paper clips.

2. Magnets will not attract a toothpick or a pencil eraser.

3. Magnets will attract a dime but not a penny.

4. Magnets will attract a steel disc but not a lead disc.

5. Magnets are made of a special kind of metal and will attract only certain kinds of metal. They will not attract objects made of lead or copper.

6. By rubbing something made of iron or steel on a magnet, you can make a magnet.

7. Magnets are useful for picking up small objects made of iron, steel, and silver.

Plant-growing in School A. During a visit to School A, one of the children asked the writer to read a story. From several titles suggested by the writer the children selected Robert McCloskey's "Make Way for Ducklings". The teacher had already introduced them to rhyming words and they were delighted with the rhyming sounds in the ducklings' names. After the story was read and the children were commenting on the illustrations and relating their own experiences with baby birds, animals, trips to the park, and boat rides, one child wondered where the ducklings would go when they were fully grown. There was some speculation about this: some of the ducklings might remain in the park, some might fly away to another lake, some might be taken by the park attendants as pets for their children. One child remarked that the ducklings were already growing but that nobody could

see them grow: "In fact nobody ever sees anybody grow but they grow just the same". Then one child posed the question, "How do people grow without our seeing them grow?" Jeanette, immediately supplied the answer: "That's easy to figure out. People grow so slowly nobody can watch long enough to see them grow". One child inquired as to whether we could see plants growing if we watched them. When the writer asked them if they would like to grow some plants to find the answer to this question, the children were unanimous in their desire to do such a project. The writer suggested that they would begin the project the following week.

After the children were dismissed, the teacher and the writer agreed that, since the theme of growing things was apparently of interest to all the children, the activities would involve the whole class. Accordingly, they planned a project in which the writer would be the director and the teacher would carry out the follow-up activities.

The writer began the project by reminding the pupils that during her last visit they were eager to try to find out how things grow. She then asked the question, "Do you remember what we planned to do today?" to which several children replied that they were going to plant seeds. When the writer asked if any of the children had seen anyone planting seeds and, if so, how it was done, children began relating what they knew of growing flowers and vegetables and of planting trees and shrubs. She then asked, "What things are needed to make plants grow?" As the children named the things needed, the writer listed them on the chalkboard, always repeating the word after the child named it and drawing attention to the letters, for example,

"seeds--s, e, another e, d, (the stroke is on the right side of the circle in the letter d), and another s". After the children had talked about the materials required, the writer suggested, "Let's plant some seeds today and see how they grow into plants".

The writer had already arranged on a desk the utensils and materials--containers, trowels, soil, water, and packets of seeds of both the fast and slow-growing varieties. She then asked for volunteers to help with the planting and discussed with them how the planting was to be done. As they worked, the children talked about what they were doing: "The soil is put into the containers, the seeds are sprinkled over the soil, the seeds are covered with soil, and the water is sprinkled over the soil".

When the children had prepared several containers of each type of seed, those who already knew how to care for the seeds explained that the containers would need to be kept in a warm, sunny place and would need daily watering. Since the children wished to share the responsibility for watering the seeds, we made a schedule of these responsibilities. The children decided, with the teacher and the writer, to make a weekly calendar with the name of the pupil opposite the day on which he would be responsible for the plants. After they had planted the seeds the children and the writer made an experience chart. A point worthy of mention is that Thomas, who usually teased and annoyed, entered whole-heartedly into the activities and helped to compose the experience chart.

During her next visit, the writer referred to the experience chart completed the previous week and read it. She referred, also, to

the responsibilities for the week, and the children reassured her that the plants had been cared for. After asking the children if they had noticed any change in the soil, the writer suggested that they might like to find out whether there was any change in the seeds planted a week earlier. One of the children dug up a seed of the fast-growing variety and they examined it to look for any change that might have occurred. The writer encouraged them to discuss the purpose for watering the seeds and to speculate as to what might happen during the next week. Again, the group composed an experience chart and the writer introduced the idea of making a class book. It was soon obvious, however, that each child wanted to make his own book. Since few of the children were able to copy the words from the charts, the teacher used a primary typewriter to make a stencil of each of the two experience charts already completed and reproduced copies for each child. She typed the story on the bottom half of the paper leaving the top half blank so that the children could make their own illustrations. The children made covers for their books from coloured construction paper and fastened them with ribbon which could be untied to allow them to add new stories. They were proud of their books, took them home to "read" to their parents, and brought them back to "read" to each other.

Because the children enjoyed seeing their names in print, the experience charts were all written in quotation form. Correct terminology was used while composing the charts, as, for example, "Thomas's name begins with a Capital T because we always write the first letter of everyone's name with a capital letter"; "After said we put a comma and then we write the exact words Thomas said"; "At the end of a

sentence we put a period"; "Those are quotation marks; we put them at the beginning and at the end of words that tell what someone said". By the end of the third week several of the children were reminding the writer, "Don't forget the comma after said", and "That's right; a period goes at the end of the sentence". Many of the children were recognizing the names of children in the class and some could print and even spell the names of some of their friends. In addition, they were beginning to recognize the names of the days of the week from the weekly chart and quite a few of the children were reading several frequently used words such as is, said, the, and, and we.

Every child in the class participated in these activities, and interest continued throughout a period of several weeks. During each visit, as soon as the writer entered the classroom, the pupils immediately went to the window ledge where the plants were placed, brought the containers to the middle of the room, and began to discuss what the day's activity was to be. It was interesting to observe that while Jeanette was usually the first to predict what would probably happen next, the other children freely expressed their predictions.

One interesting incident concerned the method of measuring the growth of the plants. After the first shoot appeared above the surface of the soil, the children decided to measure the plant each week to determine the rate of growth. They asked for no help but simply took a sheet of paper, measured the height of the shoot (about one inch), marked the paper, and put the paper in the teacher's desk to be used again the following week. The next week, the plant had grown to a height of about six inches. Again, the same method was used for measuring,

but when the question arose as to how much faster it had grown the second week than the first, the children realized that they had no way of finding out. For most of the children the fact that it had grown "a lot faster" was sufficient. A few, however, wanted to know "how much faster". Finally, Jeanette decided, "If we make spaces up the paper the same size as the first one, we will know how much faster it grew". Thus, the unit of measurement known as "the space" originated. The following week a second sheet of paper was needed to measure the plant which had grown rather quickly. The prints in Appendix A, pages 105 - 108, show a part of this activity.

When the slower-growing seeds began to appear, the same procedure was carried out. In fact, the project continued until the Christmas holidays, at which time failure of the school's heating system resulted in the plants' withering. The children were disappointed on returning to class to find that the plants had died, but they decided to plant more seeds in the spring. This they did, and the teacher took advantage of the second seedlings to interest the children in outdoor plants. Appendix A, page 139, contains prints showing the children observing the buds on the shrubs and collecting specimens to take back to the classroom.

Plant-growing in School B. After the children in each class learned that the writer visited another class, they always inquired about the other children's activities. When the children in school B heard about the plant-growing project in school A, they too wanted to grow plants. The same procedure was followed as in school A except that a different method of measuring the plants was used. One boy had

already acquired the ability to measure in inches, and, using a yardstick, he measured the plants and recorded the amount of growth on a chart. At the end of the semester many of the children had learned from him how to measure in inches. In this class, instead of making individual books, the children composed experience charts each week, recording what they had done and how much the plants had grown. These charts they compiled into a "Big Book".

One interesting aspect of the project in School B was that the children wanted to take the pictures of the activities themselves. As can be seen from the prints in Appendix A, pages 111-113, they were concerned more with getting their classmates, rather than the activities, into the pictures. Interesting also is the fact that, when they received the prints, the children themselves were quick to notice this point.

Puppet theatre. Early in November the children in one school became interested in puppets. As there was no puppet stage in the classroom, they improvised a stage, using a flannel board, which was satisfactory for the girls but too unstable for the boys' puppet hockey game. This led to the necessity of finding a more satisfactory puppet stage.

The teacher procured a large refrigerator carton which they used to make the theatre. When the children saw the carton they immediately asked, "What are we going to use it for?" When the teacher told them that they could use it to make a puppet theatre, they were excited and wanted to begin at once. The teacher first discussed with them how to make the theatre, and when they had all agreed what should

be done first, next, and last, they helped the teacher list on chart paper the different stages involved. As the activity proceeded, the teacher took a photograph of the children at work in each stage of the construction. When the teacher brought the prints to the classroom, the children arranged them in sequence and, with the teacher, made an experience chart using the photographs to stimulate recall. (See Appendix A, pages 98 - 102).

The use of photographs to record the different stages in this activity resulted in the children's asking the teacher to take photographs of their puppet shows. When the teacher commented that the time involved in having the photographs developed reduced their effectiveness for follow-up activities, the writer suggested that she have a child or group of children illustrate segments of their play and dictate the main ideas for her to type. This she did, and soon many of the more capable students were making illustrations and dictating the dialogue for their own plays.

Field trips. During a conference with the teachers, the writer discussed plans for class field trips. Before her next visits, the children in both schools had decided that they would like to visit the fire station. Arrangements for the visits were made by the teachers, with the writer helping them plan classroom activities around the visits. Subsequently, visits were made to a bakery, the airport, the experimental farm, and the beach. Occasionally the classes were taken outside the school to observe a change in the weather, the growth of vegetation, and the rate of growth of the different kinds of vegetation. The prints and slides on pages 139-140 and 155 illustrate

some aspects of these visits and some of the follow-up activities.

Children's writing. As a result of the activities growing out of the field trips, the more advanced pupils began to make illustrations of places they had visited with their parents. They dictated accounts of those visits to the teacher, who typed them and attached them to the illustrations. The children then took these "books" home to read to their parents, after which they brought them back and placed them in the Library Corner. Often children read their own books to other children in the class. One child's book, "My Trip to the Beach", is included in Appendix B, page 152. The writer asked the children if they would be interested in making a class book. She explained that if each child made an illustration and wrote his own story, all the stories could be put together to make the book. The suggestion met with the approval of the class who decided to write about their favourite pets. The Pet Book is shown in Appendix B, page 153. Books about dogs, people who help us, the fire station, and spring followed.

The boy who, during the project on magnets, had expressed an interest in pets borrowed the Pet Book to take home. The next day he brought his pet cat to school to show the other children. After telling the class about the cat, he suggested that they write a story about her. This was the beginning of a series of visits to the class by the children's pets. The children dictated stories about the pets which the teacher typed and kept in the classroom. The children were interested in those stories and read them often. Appendix B contains examples of these stories.

Resource people. Visitors to the school were not restricted to pets. After listening to the story Hide and Seek Fog, one child commented that her grandfather was a fisherman who used to fish for lobsters. A day or two later she brought to the classroom a model lobster trap which he had made for her. The teacher and pupils invited her grandfather to come to the school and talk to the children about fishing. Some parents--a policeman, a doctor, a nurse, and a carpenter--also visited the classroom and talked to the children about their work. The doctor, the nurse, and the policeman gave them charts and pictures on health and safety, and the carpenter gave them some pieces of wood, nails, and glue. The children thanked the visitors orally before they left the classroom, but later they helped the teacher write letters thanking them.. Some aspects of the visits and the follow-up activites are illustrated in Appendix A, pages 130-132.

Oral expression. Many of the more fluent children were quite at ease speaking with strangers. They could acknowledge a compliment, ask for information, and respond to questions. One child, who was a somewhat reluctant speaker at the beginning of the year, surprised both the teacher and the principal when, on Valentine's Day, she rose from her chair as the principal entered the classroom, presented him with a valentine, and remarked, "Mr. --- , here's a valentine I made especially for you. I worked on it all last night. I hope you like it". This was a spontaneous action and, compared with her almost reticent behaviour earlier in the year, showed much growth.

Another child was observed presenting a gift to a visitor and, although she had rehearsed the procedure, her remarks were not memorized.

She had been told only how to present the gift and the points to remember while she was speaking. The writer was impressed with the poise and self-confidence which she displayed and, as well, with the quality of her short speech.

Providing for Reluctant Speakers

The writer observed five children in School B—Mariette, Gwen, Dale, Derrick, and Blair—during the project on magnets, the "Show and Tell" period, and a period during which the Ginn Kit A was used. Despite the attempts of the teacher to involve these children in the discussions and other oral activities, there was almost no response. A question was answered with "Yes" or "No", and sometimes "I don't know". Blair, who had a speech problem, would signify "Yes" or "No" only by nodding or shaking his head, which caused the teacher concern especially since he had been in school the previous year and had not yet spoken there. For these five children to remain with the larger group would have meant that they would have had few opportunities to develop facility in oral expression. The writer suggested to the teacher, therefore, that she group them together for certain periods each day and develop a program to stimulate oral discussion.

Planning the Program

In planning this supplementary program, allocation of teacher time needed careful consideration. While it would have been easy to justify taking a large portion of the teacher's time for direct guidance of these children, such a move would have been detrimental to the

welfare of the remaining sixteen. Although the members of the latter group would have needed little encouragement to converse with each other while engaged in the various activities, a certain amount of direct teacher guidance was still necessary to ensure vocabulary building and concept development as well as other aspects of proper growth in oral expression. The teacher felt, however, that it would be possible for her to spend two fifteen-minute periods per day on language development with the five reluctant speakers. The teacher and the writer cooperated in planning a program utilizing audio-visual materials such as tapes (both teacher-made and commercial), filmstrips, and records. Examples of the types of the activities included in this program follow.

Use of Filmstrips

The writer showed the group the filmstrip "The Wonderful Porridge Pot". She used the small filmstrip projector so that the children could become familiar with the equipment and learn to operate it themselves. The writer read the captions on the filmstrip and discussed each frame with the children. Halfway through the showing she asked the children if one of them would like to push the button to advance the film. Mariette was the first to volunteer. There were few comments, but the children appeared to be enjoying the presentation. Often, after the writer had read the caption and the children had viewed the frame for a few moments, a child would suggest to Mariette that she "move ahead to the next one". After they had viewed the entire filmstrip and discussed the story, Derrick asked to see it again. The

others also wanted to see it again, and during the second viewing some of them discussed what was happening in each frame.[1]

Since the teacher was teaching two kindergarten classes, the writer left the filmstrip for her to use with the other class. When the writer arrived the following week, the group of five were seated on the floor in one corner of the classroom viewing the same filmstrip while the teacher was working with the larger group. The five were not aware that they were being observed so that it was possible to watch their reactions to the story. Humorous incidents in the story apparently amused them because they laughed and commented on certain details in the illustrations. As they advanced from one frame to the next, they identified the characters and selected the main point of the story illustrated in that particular frame. When the writer asked them why they had enjoyed the filmstrip, Derrick explained that when they were using the projector themselves, they could look at each picture as long as they wanted to and they could turn back to an earlier frame if they wished. It was obvious that these children would have to be allowed to move at their own rate rather than at a pace set by the other children in the class.

Listening Activities

The writer, the following week, introduced the children to

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[1]This type of activity was used throughout the year as it provided opportunities not only for oral language but also, as the children became more fluent, for developing comprehension skills such as selecting the main idea and recalling a series of events in sequence.

the listening station. After she had explained its use, she fitted the headphones on the children and let them listen to a taped story. Blair, always timid and somewhat nervous at the sight of anything unfamiliar, would not use the headphones. He decided that he preferred to look at a picture book. After a few minutes, however, he left his book and went to stand by the other children. He still refused to wear the headphones but before the story was finished he asked to try them on.

On her next visit the writer decided to have the children independently use the record player at the listening centre. Since the children in the larger group had already shown a preference for certain stories in the talking book set, she selected "Timothy Turtle", a favourite of many children in the other group. After a few minutes, however, it was obvious that these children showed little interest in the story. When asked if they wanted to continue, they replied in the negative suggesting that the writer read or tell them a different story. Because this and other stories in the set were rather long, the writer decided to record on tape a shorter story which these children had earlier requested her to read. Accordingly, she made a tape of "the Three Little Pigs" which she left with the teacher for this group to use independently. The teacher later reported to the writer that because the story was received well she would produce tapes of other stories which the children especially enjoyed.

As these children became more adept at operating the controls of the headset and tape recorder, the writer showed them how to hold the book open at the page being read, to turn the page at the sound of

the buzzer, and to stop the tape recorder if they wished to look at an illustration. For the remainder of the year these children, after finishing an assigned task, would quietly go to the audio-visual corner, select a book and tape, set up the tape recorder, and listen to the story. They usually took turns holding the book and operating the controls. Often individual children would select a book and tape and read along with the tape.

Children's Own Compositions

The children in this group showed an interest in filmstrips; they would view one several times and comment on the different details in the illustrations but would never select a title that had not already been shown by either the teacher or the writer. When the teacher showed "The Story of Dumbo", she asked the children to discuss the segment of the story illustrated in each frame before she read the caption. When the children's interpretation agreed with the script they were pleased but were disappointed when it differed. This provided the teacher with an opportunity to explain that there may be more than one version of a story, and that each illustration could have several interpretations. The writer suggested, during the next filmstrip showing, that the children could relate their interpretation of each illustration so that she could write their version of the story. All but Blair participated; he simply sat and watched as the writer recorded their story on chart paper. From telling a story using a filmstrip, the children progressed to dictating in one sentence and illustrating the main event in a picture, retelling a story which they had

heard, and, finally, dictating a story from their own personal experiences.

At first, the teacher or the writer recorded the children's stories on their papers using manuscript writing. Later, she typed the stories in primary type and pasted the typed copy over the manuscript. As the children acquired more self-confidence, they began to type the stories themselves, using the teacher's copy as a guide. Upper-case letters posed a problem at first as the typewriter keyboard was in lower-case. The teacher solved this problem by helping them use the alphabet chart on the wall, which comprised both upper and lower-case letters. As the children referred to the chart, located the upper-case letter which they could not match, and found the corresponding lower-case letter, they acquired yet another pre-reading skill. It should be pointed out that this was a slow process and extended over a period of several months.

Progress in Language and Social Development

While all five children showed progress, the amount and rate varied from one child to another. Early in the year, Mariette began to show considerable improvement in her oral expression and acquired a degree of self-confidence which resulted in her tending to dominate the discussions. This made possible and desirable her removal from the smaller group to the larger group where she began to speak freely and frequently. Blair, on the other hand, still spoke only occasionally and was very slow in mastering concepts with which other children had little or no difficulty. He did, however, participate in some activities;

he was beginning to respond to questions and appeared to be pleased when he received praise for his efforts. His illustrations were immature--human figures were poorly proportioned and lacked detail--and his one-sentence stories usually consisted of a word or two, for example, "Dumbo sad". The teacher and the writer praised him for every accomplishment, however small. They constructed sentences from his short phrases which they read to him as they printed the words underneath his illustrations. Thus, "Dumbo sad" was written as "Dumbo looks sad". These small accomplishments pleased him, and each time the writer worked with him on such an activity, he immediately took his paper to his teacher to read the story to her.

Although the children were progressing steadily under this arrangement, it was important that their social development not be impeded through segregation from other members of the class. For this reason they remained with the larger group for some activities while at other times they were members of different small groups. Thus, in the course of a week, each child worked with several groups of children, but for basic instruction in language they continued to be grouped together. Although they did not actively participate in "Show and Tell" activities, these children remained with the large group during the "Show and Tell" period, which was a profitable experience for vocabulary and concept development and for socialization. For other work and play periods, each of the four was teamed with other children. As an example, while the writer was teaching the children to share materials she arranged them in groups of four and asked each group to sit on the floor in a circle and to face the centre. She

then placed four pots of different coloured paint on the floor for each group to use, each pot containing a brush. The children exchanged brushes with each other as they needed to use the different colours. For the first painting session Gwen, Dale, Blair, and Derrick were placed in different groups. After working in one group two or three times, each child was transferred to a new group and was soon at ease in working with the other children. Again, Blair was the slowest in adapting to the new group situation. Gradually Dale "came out of her shell" and began to sit with the larger group for language lessons. She was moved out of the small group when she began to participate freely within the large group. Blair, Derrick, and Gwen were all integrated into several different groups for work and play periods, but they remained together for activities in language development.

Early in the winter the teacher remarked that Blair had begun speaking to her without being prompted. While he did not participate overtly in the "Show and Tell" period, he frequently remained with the teacher after the other children had become involved in another project and made reference to some object which had been displayed. On occasion he went to her and reported on some incident which had occurred at home or at play. At first he commented in short phrases, but gradually he began to use short sentences. As his confidence increased, he began to relate incidents to the writer and, when encouraged, supplied details. Certainly, the most satisfying experience of the whole project came during the first week of June, when the writer accompanied one of the directors of the project to the classroom. Since the writer's previous visit, Blair's father had bought him a swing and he was so

anxious to tell about it that, as he saw the two enter the room, he rushed up to them and began to talk about the swing. He was very excited as he began speaking, explaining where it was placed, who played with him, and other details. This was the first time that Blair had spoken spontaneously at such length in school and the first time that he had displayed emotion. Anyone seeing him at that moment would scarcely have recognized him as the reticent boy of the early fall period. Blair expressed great interest as the writer recorded his story on paper. This was probably the first story that had had any real meaning for him, and the incident provided an excellent opportunity for the writer to help him form the association between his own words and words in printed form. By this time, Blair was more at ease in conversing with his teacher, the writer, and Gwen and Derrick. At the end of the year, however, he still remained silent when working with the class as a whole.

Inservice Work with Teachers

At the beginning of the project the conferences with teachers dealt with various activities which they could do to provide an effective language development program. Early in the year, however, the teachers began asking the writer's advice on problems which related only indirectly to the language program. Two examples illustrate this aspect of the writer's involvement in in-service work.

Effecting Improvements in Classroom Procedures

In one classroom, space was limited and, with twenty-one pupils

in the class, the children could not pursue their different interests without disrupting others. The teacher asked the writer for ideas on a more efficient utilization of the existing space. The writer suggested that she use a portion of the large corridor which had an electrical wall outlet near the classroom door. The teacher, with the principal's permission, then moved a low table and several chairs from her classroom to the corridor to accommodate a tape recorder, a listening station, and a filmstrip projector. There it was possible for the children to be involved in small group activities using tapes and filmstrips. Since these types of activities required only a minimum of supervision, the corridor space was utilized for the entire year. See print on page 148, Appendix A.

In a second classroom the teacher found that involving her group of twenty five-year olds in activities requiring the use of paint, finger paint, or glue was very demanding of her time. Such activities required constant supervision as spills often occurred. Usually the teacher grouped the children and planned her program so that only part of the class would be using these materials. At times, however, the whole class participated in an activity which necessitated each child's using the materials. When the teacher inquired as to whether there was a more satisfactory way of using these materials, the writer suggested that she divide the class into groups of four with one set of materials per group. By lying or kneeling on the floor facing the centre, each child in the group could use the materials, but at the same time the number of pots of paint, paste, and glue was reduced to one-quarter of the number needed if used individually.

The above are but two examples of minor suggestions and decisions which, over a period of time, resulted in increased teacher effectiveness. The rapport which the writer established with the teachers, through assuming a supportive position, greatly facilitated her work in implementing the language development program.

Program Development

The writer's primary function was that of helping teachers develop their own programs using trade books, professional literature, and audio, visual and audio-visual materials. The writer used the facilities of the Education Library of the University to procure for the teachers professional literature on programs using a language experience approach and stressing facility in oral language. The teachers frequently requested clarification of certain points contained in the literature. These sessions provided the writer with valuable insights into the types of problems teachers experience in adapting to new techniques and approaches to teaching. The Centre for Audio-Visual Education at the University provided the writer with filmstrips, films, and tapes which she borrowed periodically and distributed to the teachers for use in continuing the activities begun during her visits. These materials were usually left for a period of a week and used by the teachers with both of their classes.

As teachers became more aware of the importance of a good background in oral language, they asked for ideas to improve their program. One request which all the teachers made was for a more effective way of using the tape recorder to facilitate oral expression. Until this

time, it had been used mainly for listening activities. A description of some of the ideas which the writer suggested for using a tape recorder in the oral language program is included in an earlier section of this chapter.

Every teacher in the group displayed strengths and special teaching techniques. The writer deliberately commented on each teacher's strengths, often asking if she might share the ideas with the others. All of them shared their ideas willingly. As a result, they asked for a group meeting. The directors of the project had already planned such a meeting, but the fact that the teachers themselves felt the need for the meeting probably contributed significantly to its success.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY, EVALUATION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The primary purpose of this project was to provide the graduate student with firsthand experiences valuable in her preparation for the role of reading consultant. To this end, she participated in the development and implementation of a language development program in kindergarten.

The review of literature focussed on three main areas: the need for practical training and field experiences in the preparation of a reading consultant, the correlation between low reading ability and early withdrawal from school, and the interrelatedness of reading achievement and proficiency in oral language.

Authorities in reading emphasize the importance of supplementing theory with practical experiences for graduate students in reading. According to the standards and qualifications listed by the International Reading Association, field experience under a qualified reading consultant or supervisor is a necessary part of the preparation of a reading consultant.

An examination of the literature reveals that, in the early fifties, few universities provided field experiences for graduate

students in reading. Since that time, there has been a steady increase in the number of American universities that provide field experiences in a university reading clinic or in a school setting for graduate students in reading. In Canada, however, a study conducted in 1972 revealed only two universities which offered programs designed to provide field experiences for prospective reading consultants.

Statistics on the retention power of Newfoundland schools for the period 1946-1947 to 1956-1957 show a heavy and steady decrease in school enrollment as students progressed from primary to elementary and high school grades. At that time, the holding power of Newfoundland schools was estimated to be at 29 percent, the lowest of all the Canadian provinces except one. While the rate of retention for the period 1960-1970 showed an increase, still two-fifth of the pupils who entered school dropped out before completing high school.

A study of the drop-out problem conducted in 1966 identified grade-failure and grade-repetition as the major causes of early withdrawal from school. Statistics from another study revealed that, of the drop-outs studied, only 21 percent had not failed at least one grade and 24 percent had repeated two or more grades. A survey of the reading ability of a sample of students who had written the 1963 Grade IX Public Examinations showed that more than half of them were reading below grade level. Comparisons of the students' reading levels with their results in the Public Examinations showed that less than 30 percent of the poor readers were successful as compared to 80 percent of the good readers.

The studies indicate that poor reading ability is one of the dominant factors which lead to grade-failure and grade-repetition and thus contribute to the drop-out problem in Newfoundland schools.

The literature stresses the direct relationship between proficiency in oral language and high reading achievement and between poor reading ability and difficulty with understanding the language patterns of printed matter.

A comprehensive study of the relationship among children's competence in oral expression, reading, and written composition clearly demonstrates the direct relationship between proficiency in oral language and competence in reading. In Loban's seven-year study,[1] those students who were proficient in oral language were high in reading achievement. By grade six, all subjects high in oral language were above their age expectations in reading. The inverse was also true; virtually all pupils who were low in oral language were reading significantly below their age group in reading.

Further research on the implications of language in beginning reading clearly indicates that children must have acquired reasonable facility in the use of language--clear enunciation, correct pronunciation, a wide vocabulary, and mastery of basic sentence structure--before they can be expected to comprehend, or to reproduce through

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[1]Walter Loban, The Language of Elementary School Children (Chicago: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963), pp. 1 - 57.

reading, the ideas of other persons.

The procedures used in the language development program were examined under five headings: rationale for the language development program, procedures in implementing the program, classroom activities, providing for reluctant speakers, and in-service work with teachers.

Evaluation

Four sources were used in assessing the value of the project in the writer's preparation for the role of reading consultant: reports from principals, discussions with teachers, evaluation of pupil performance, and the writer's experience in the following year while employed as a reading consultant.

Reports of Principals

Towards the end of the year, the writer held individual conferences with the principals of the schools involved in the project. During these conferences, she asked them for an evaluation of her work in their schools. All principals expressed satisfaction with the assistance given the teachers in implementing the language development program. One principal remarked that the writer's involvement in the kindergarten program had made him appreciate more fully the need for personnel to assist teachers in program development.

The most important aspects of the program as perceived by the

principals were:

1. The emphasis that was placed on helping each child develop a positive attitude towards his own linguistic ability.

2. The teachers' increased awareness of the importance of oral language as a framework for the teaching of reading.

3. The change that occurred in grouping methods with friendship, interests, and special needs replacing ability as the basis for grouping the children.

4. The self-conficence and self-reliance of the children which were evident as they engaged in independent activities.

Conference with Teacners

From discussions with teachers, the writer learned that they considered the program effective and would use it with future kindergarten classes. Furthermore, each teacher remarked that she would like the University to continue the program with the pupils through first and second grades. The teachers identified what they considered to be the most important features of the program as:

1. It allowed them the freedom to provide an improved learning environment. This was accomplished through removing several pupil desks and chairs to provide space for the children to congegrate in groups, both formal and informal, for the various activities that were carried on throughout the day.

2. The library books, on different levels of difficulty and on a wide range of topics, not only added to the children's enjoyment, but also enabled them to learn to be selective in the use of these

resources.

3. The study prints, films, and filmstrips stimulated the children's curiosity and interest in whatever area they wished to explore. This resulted in much verbal interaction among pupils and between pupil and teacher, which increased vocabulary development and, as well, improved children's concepts.

4. Equipment such as tape recorders, phonographs, listening stations, and filmstrip projectors, which the children learned to use independently, not only freed the teacher to work with different groups, but also developed in the children a sense of responsibility and self-direction.

5. The use of children's own experiences as a basis for their oral language and written composition promoted their self-confidence.

6. The children developed a sense of responsibility, self-direction, and self-confidence.

Evaluation of Pupil Performance

Evaluation of the program was based, also, on pupil performance which the teachers considered above normal for kindergarten. The teachers reported that the children who participated in the program appeared to be above normal in:

- responding to questions
- asking questions
- expressing ideas fluently
- vocabulary development

- concept development
- interest in reading activities

Since all the teachers had taught kindergarten for several years, it seems reasonable to assume that their perceptions of above normal performance were valid.

The Writer's Experience as a Reading Consultant

Since the completion of the projects, the writer has been employed as a reading consultant at the school district level. From this perspective, the most important aspects of the project in her preparation for this position can be summarized as follows:

1. The experience of working with different people in the project--directors, principals, teachers, and pupils--enabled the writer to develop ways of working with a variety of people and contributed to her confidence.

2. Since the writer was responsible for the reading program in a district with a pupil enrolment of approximately ten thousand, she found it impossible to provide an adequate in-service program by working with teachers on an individual basis. Much of the in-service education, therefore, had to be conducted with small groups of teachers at the different grade levels. During the meetings, the writer used the slides and prints which she collected from the project (see Appendices) to illustrate her oral description of techniques for program improvement. Because of the interest which teachers displayed in those presentations, the writer decided to collect, for in-service work, slides, prints, and tapes of activities which she was introducing in

different classrooms at each grade level.

3. Certainly, the most important aspect of the program for the writer concerned her experience in implementing new techniques and developing activities for language development. Since her first assignment as a consultant was in the primary grades, techniques which she had used successfully in the project became the framework of her in-service education during her first weeks in the position. For example, in one school where the pupils were grouped on the basis of ability only, she recommended the use of audio-visual equipment in all the primary classrooms to facilitate different types of grouping. The principal acceded to this request and solicited community support in raising funds which he used to purchase a tape-recorder, filmstrip projector, and listening station for each primary classroom. The writer then helped the teachers restructure their classes so that grouping was done on the basis of friendship, interests, and needs in specific skill development.

As soon as the teachers had adjusted their programs to the new grouping methods, the writer introduced the idea of using children's experiences as a basis for their written composition and helped them organize field trips for all the primary pupils. On the field trips, the children took pictures of everything which interested them. When they received these pictures, they used them to write stories which they compiled into individual and class books. The teachers reported that the pupil's interest in reading and writing increased as a result of these activities. After the classes went on these field trips, the

pupils often borrowed the classroom camera before going on a vacation to take pictures to use in their class activities. One set of slides which impressed the writer showed the sea under different weather conditions. Their collection of prints and slides provided the stimulus for much of their written composition.

It was obvious to the writer that teacher interest increased as the children became more actively involved in the language activities.

The foregoing account is one example of the experience which the project provided the writer and which proved to be invaluable to her especially during her first weeks in the position of reading consultant.

Conclusions

As a result of having worked on the project, the writer identified certain factors that would appear to have important implications for curriculum development in reading:

1. Use of the child's own experiences as a basis for language development results in improved oral expression.

2. Vicarious experiences from exposure to children's literature results in a larger vocabulary and more and better concepts.

3. Pupil authorship promotes more interest in and better understanding of other people's writing.

4. Special grouping to provide for individual needs results in greater fluency of expression.

5. The addition of an oral language program can make the existing kindergarten program more effective.

Recommendations

The writer makes the following recommendations:

1. That the University continue to provide field experiences, under the direction of a University professor or a qualified reading consultant, for graduate students preparing to become reading consultants.

2. That graduate students preparing to become reading consultants be provided with opportunities to prepare and conduct in-service sessions.

3. That graduate students preparing for the position of reading consultant be encouraged to work with different members of a school staff to acquire experience in working with a variety of people.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Prints

List of Prints

Magnets

Prints

1. A child magnetizes a key.

2, 3, 4. He uses the key to magnetize a pin, a paper clip, and a hairpin.

1

2

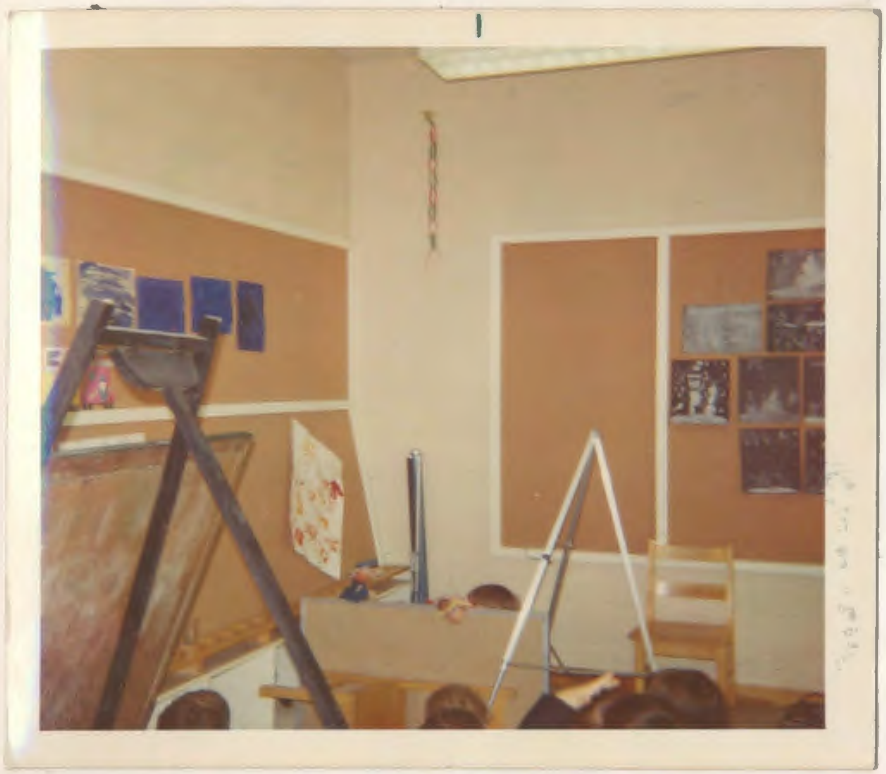
3

4

. The Puppet Theatre

Prints

5.	The first puppet show, using an improvised puppet theatre.
6, 7, 8.	The pupils make a puppet theatre from a refrigerator carton.
9.	The first puppet show in the new theatre.
10.	An experience chart, using the prints developed during the activity.
11.	The puppet theatre used as a reading centre.



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6

7

8

1

9

11

11

Plant Growing - School A

Prints

12. The children plant the seeds.

13. An experience chart composed after the planting.

14, 15. A seed is dug up one week after planting.

16. A seed is dug up two weeks after planting.

17. The fast-growing seeds have grown above the soil but no shoots appear on the slow-growing seeds.

18. The plants are growing quickly. The children decide to measure them.

19. The children measure the plants using a strip of paper with evenly spaced lines.

12


Byron said, "We put soil in the pan.
Jimmy said, "Next we put in the seeds"
Andy said, "We put in water"
Trevor said, "We put the seeds upon the window to grow"

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

Plant Growing - School B

Prints

20. The children plant the seeds.

21. The picture taken by a child focusses on the children's faces rather than the activity.

22. A seed is dug up one week after it was planted.

23. A seed is dug up after two weeks.

24. A boy uses a measuring stick to measure the plant.

25. An experience chart of the activity.

20

21

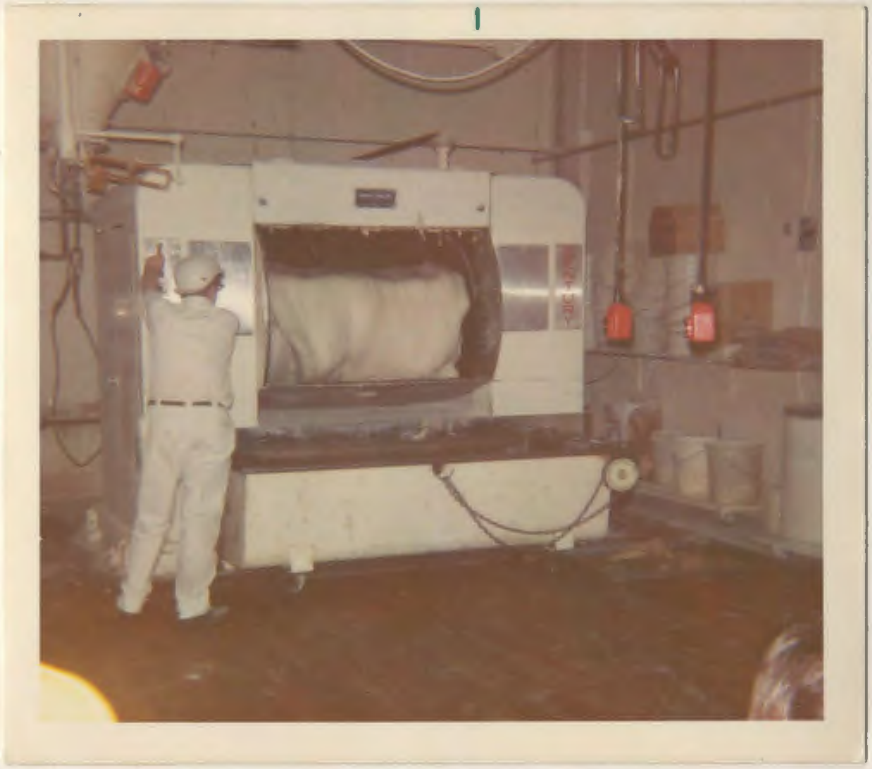
22

23

24

25

A Trip to the Bakery



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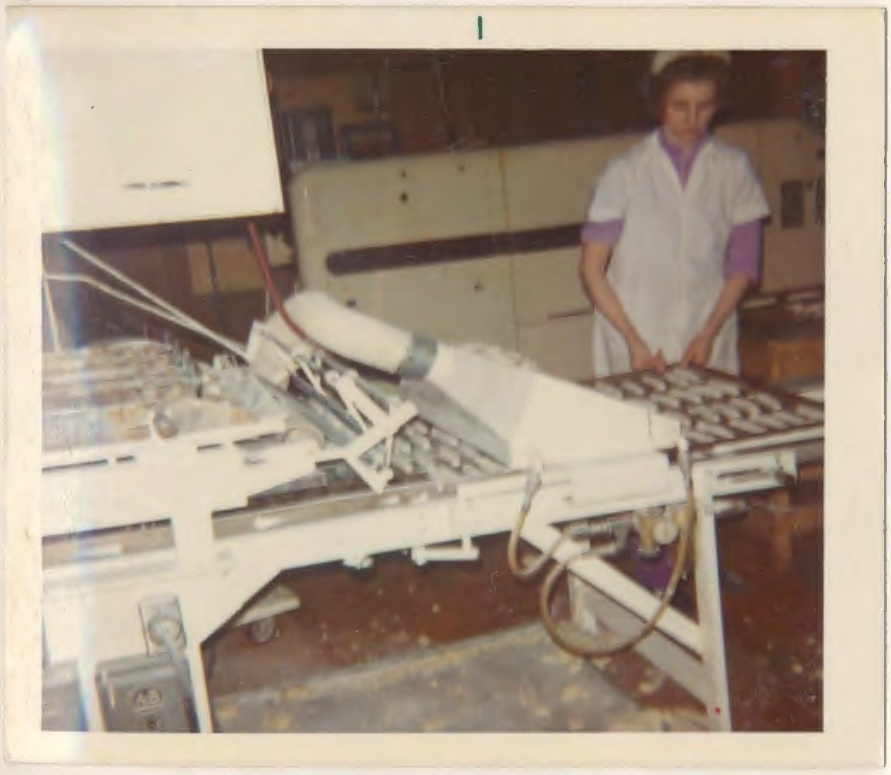

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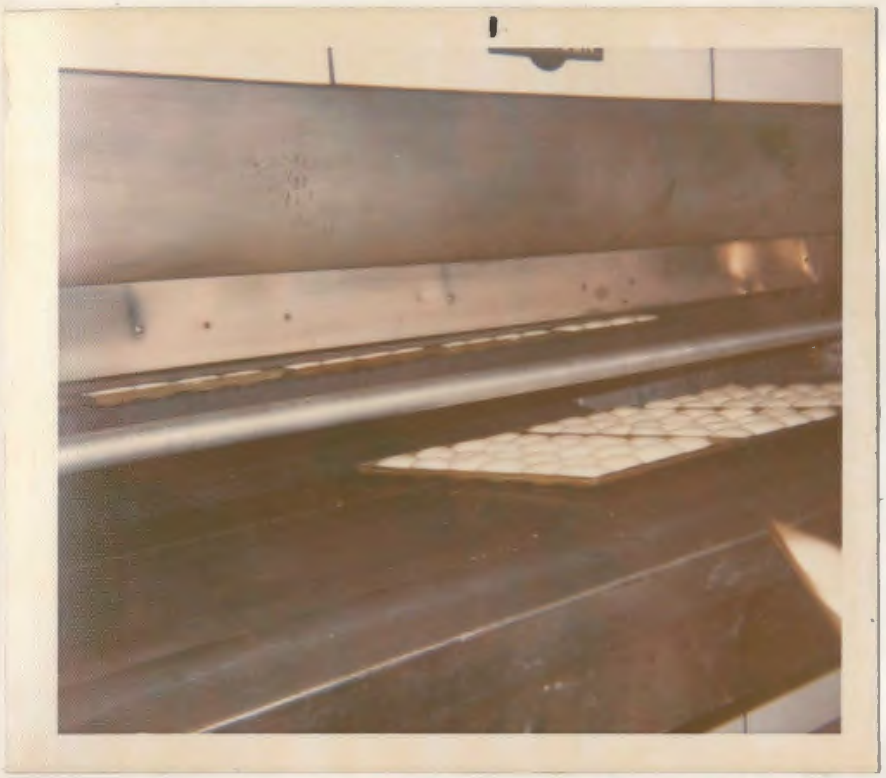

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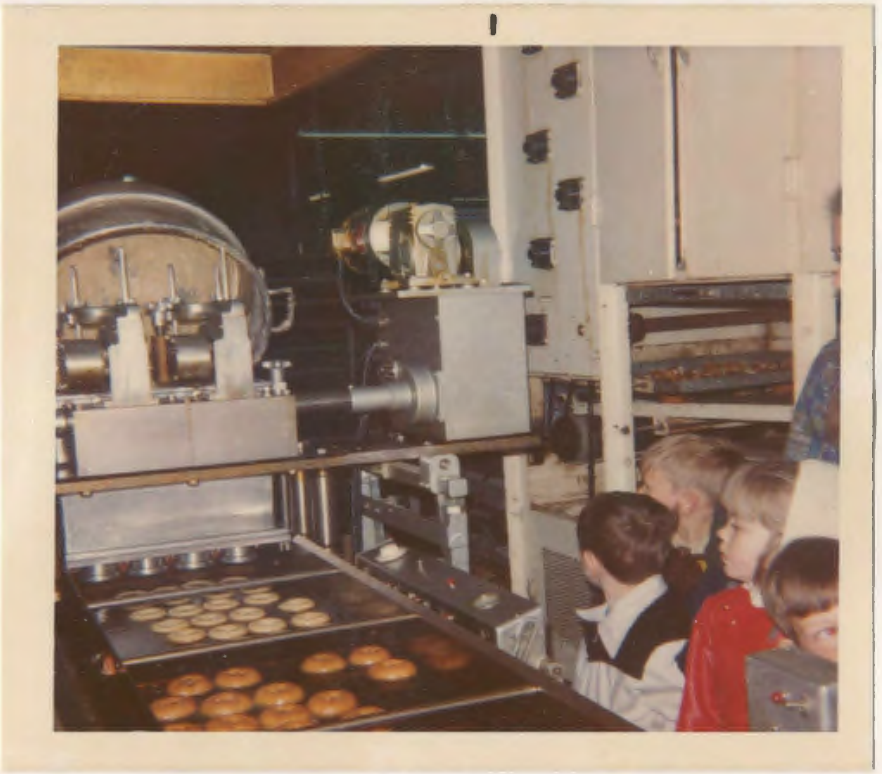

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A Trip to the Fire Station

31

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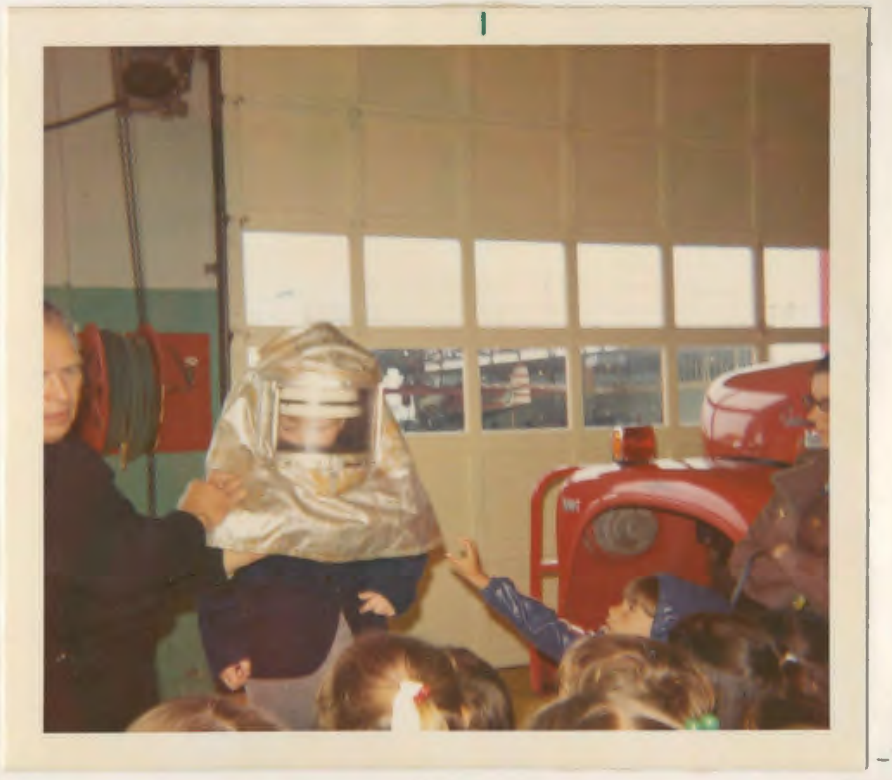

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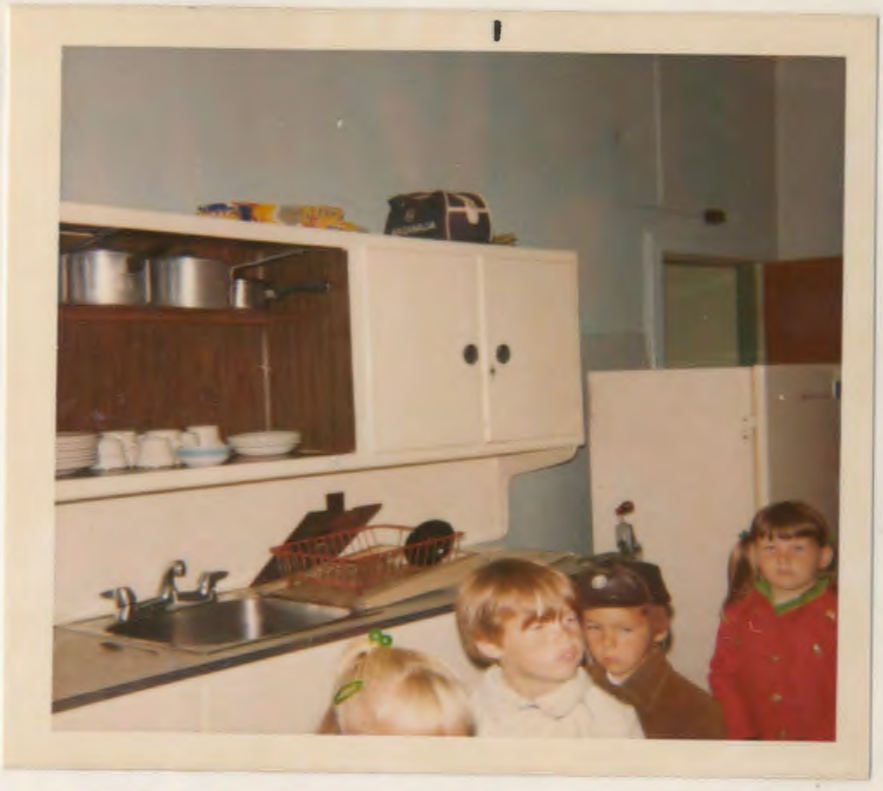

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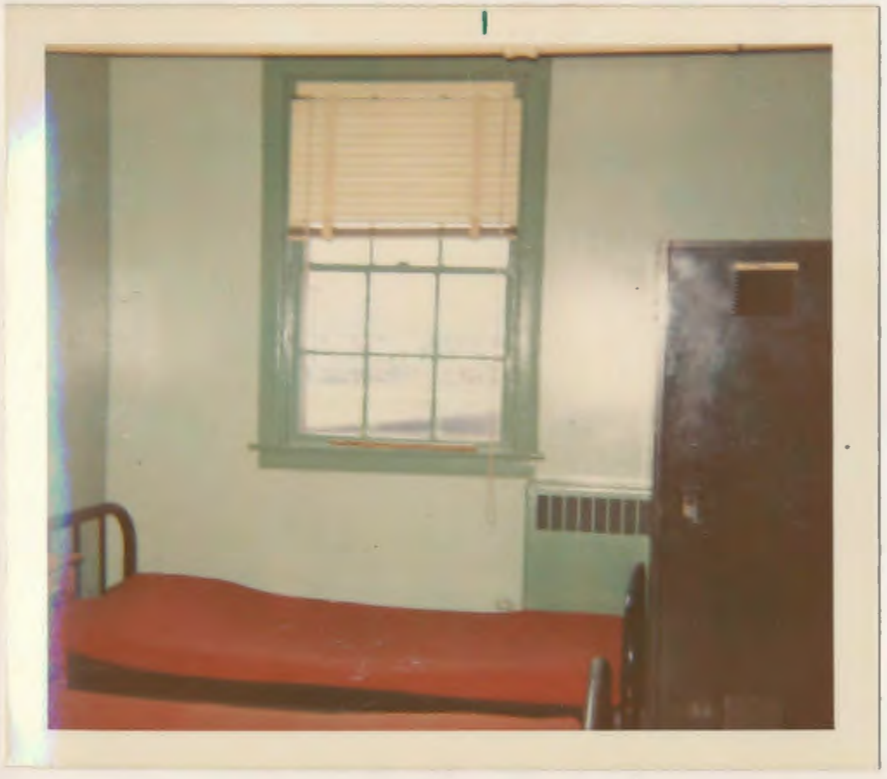

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A Trip to the Meteorological Station and the Airport

37

38

39

40

A Trip to the Beach

41

Pursuing Individual Interests

Prints

42. The children try to identify shells and insects seen on the beach.

43. They "listen" to shells found on the beach.

44. The "Beach Corner" with shells collected on the beach, the model lobster pot made by a fisherman who visited the classroom, and the book Hide and Seek Fog which provided the stimulus for the activities.

45. A group of pupils simulate a fire after a trip to the fire station.

46. After the carpenter's visit to the classroom, the boys build towers, buildings, and bridges.

47-48. Several children bring their pets for the other children to play with.

49-50. Children listen to a taped story.

51-52. Small groups view filmstrips

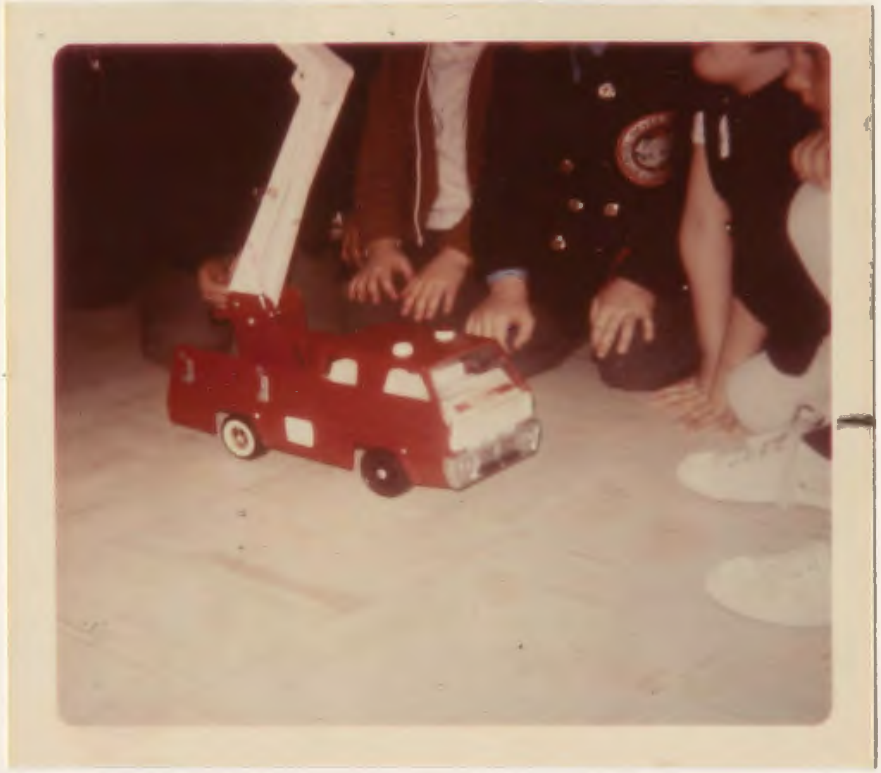
53. Children pursue different activities individually.

54. A boy types a one-sentence description of his illustration.

55. While two girls type their stories, a group compares the sizes of two globes.

43

44



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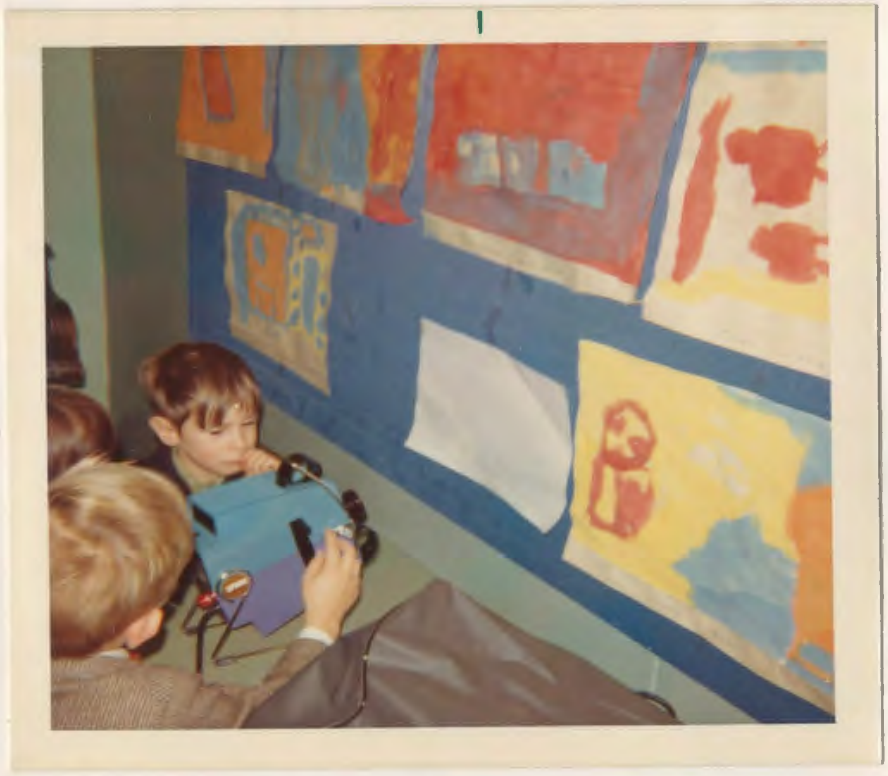

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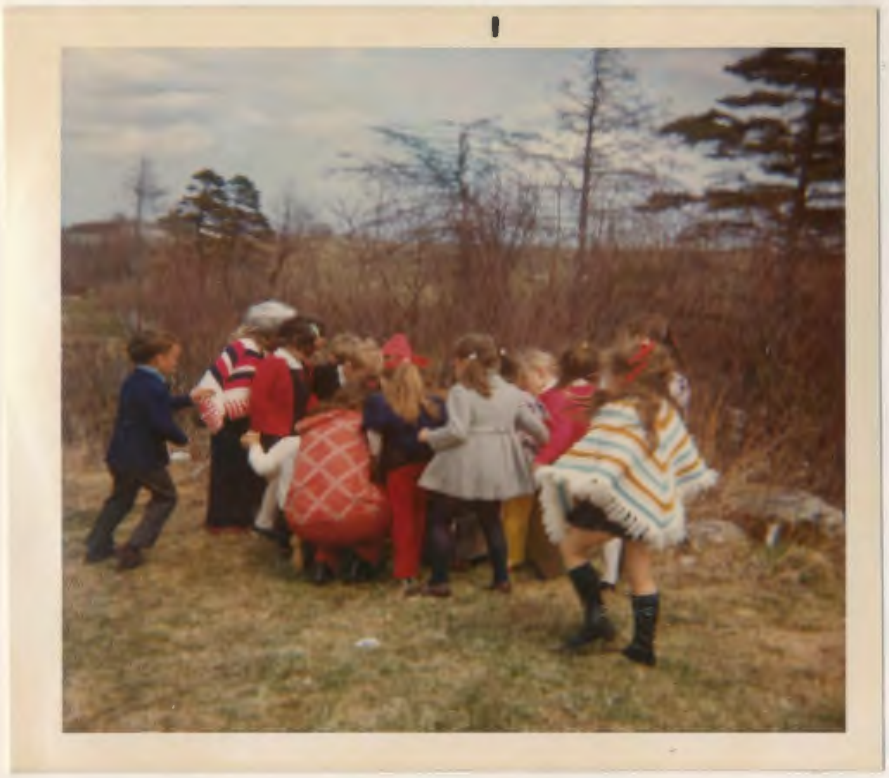
Outdoor Activities

Prints

56-58. The children examine the trees and bushes to observe the growth of the buds and leaves.



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57

58

Special Group Activities

(Reluctant Speakers)

Prints

59. The group views a filmstrip at the table which has been set up in the corridor, outside the classroom.

60-61. They illustrate the story while the large group is involved in another activity.

59

60

61

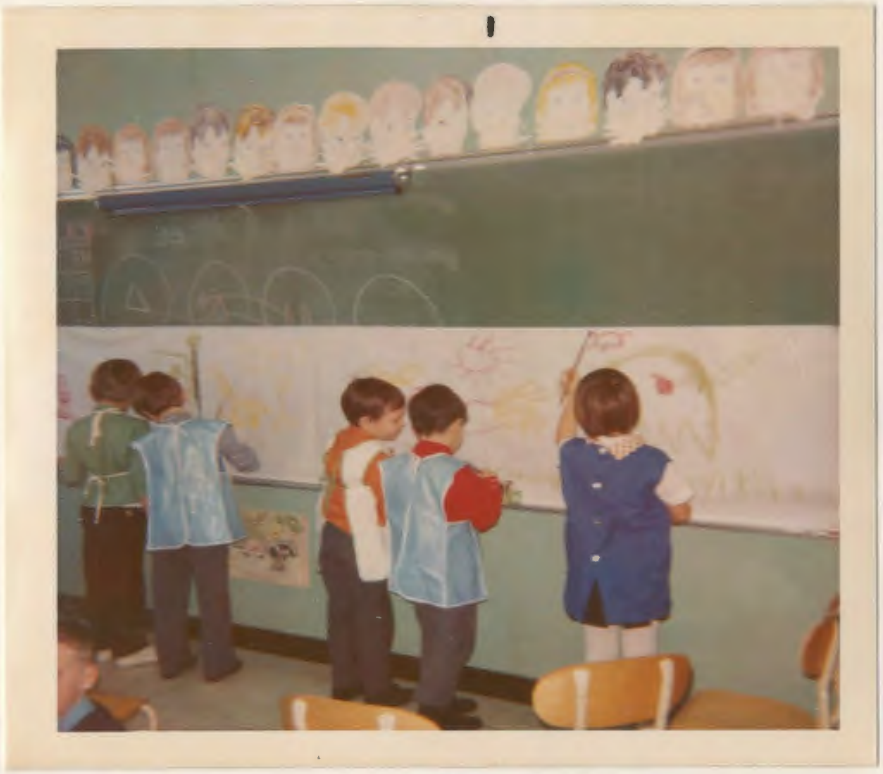
Utilization of Space and Materials

Prints

62. The children use the walls as easels for painting.

63. Groups of four or five lie and kneel on the floor to share materials.

64. The corridor outside the classroom provides space for audio-visual activities.



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A P P E N D I X B

Slides

Slides of Class Activities