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A STUDY OF THE GOODMAN SOCIO-PSYCHOLINGUISTIC APPROACH TO BEGINNING READING INSTRUCTION IN A FIRST GRADE CLASSROOM

A Dissertation Presented

By

Donna Park

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

September 1980

Education
A STUDY OF THE GOODMAN SOCIO-PSYCHOLINGUISTIC APPROACH TO BEGINNING READING INSTRUCTION IN A FIRST GRADE CLASSROOM

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DEDICATION

Many people have contributed to this endeavor. Thanks are particularly due to:

1. the members of my committee, Masha K. Rudman, Robert H. Suzuki and Robert Faulkner for their unfailing support and encouragement
2. my family who helped me in innumerable ways
3. my typist, Margaret Civello, for her skill and kindness throughout.

A special word of thanks is reserved for the chairperson of my committee, Masha K. Rudman. As mentor and friend, she has contributed more to my growth as a professional than anyone else.
ABSTRACT

A Study of the Goodman Socio-Psycholinguistic Approach to Beginning Reading Instruction in a First Grade Classroom

(September 1980)

Doctor of Education

Donna Park, B.A., Smith College

M.A.T., Smith College, Ed. D., University of Massachusetts

Directed by: Professor Masha Rudman

The research problem was to design, implement and evaluate a first grade reading program based on Ken and Yetta Goodman's socio-psycholinguistic approach to beginning reading. The subject population was the teacher-investigator's administratively assigned first grade class at the Jackson Street School in Northampton, Massachusetts in the school year 1979-1980. The study was limited to the reading acquisition process that took place during the course of the given school year in this class of eighteen children from a mixed socio-economic and cultural background.

The Goodmans theorize that learning to read is a natural process that is an extension of oral language learning. Given that premise, the instructional goal is to enhance the child's innate language learning facility so that reading proficiency results.

To that end, the teacher-investigator arranged a literate environment in the classroom and designed a reading program that enabled the students to use their own language capability as a basis for learning to read. The reading program was composed of activities that use written
language in functional situations and that are relevant to the lives and language of the students. Reading materials were self-made, teacher-made and came from a variety of trade books as well as commercially published reading texts.

The task of the teacher as investigator was to observe, record and evaluate the reading progress of individual pupils during the school year and to design, operationalize and evaluate the on-going reading program as an example of a method that produces reading proficiency.

The teacher-investigator used a variety of techniques to record and analyze individual pupil progress. Every week, the teacher-investigator conducted an informal reading conference with each child, noting pupil strengths and needs. Twice a year, the teacher-investigator summarized these data on individual pupil progress using a teacher-designed Reading Performance Inventory to do so. Also, at the end of the school year, each child taped a reading performance of his/her own choice. A daily log contributed additional data on individual and group reading behavior. The cumulative data were summarized on a final Reading Performance Inventory that provided evidence of reading proficiency at the end of Grade One.

The reading program was monitored and evaluated using a teacher-designed form that analyzed each reading lesson as an example of functional language use. An informal self-evaluation was conducted at the end of each instructional unit under the teacher's direction. This method provided data on student attitudes towards the reading activities. Upon completion of each four week instructional unit, the teacher-
investigator made a monthly written summary of the reading program in progress. These summaries enabled the teacher-investigator to describe and analyze the Goodman approach to beginning reading instruction in use in this instance.

Analysis of these data shows that children are motivated to learn when reading instruction is based on the Goodman method; teachers can design a reading program based on the Goodman method that enables students to learn to read; the Goodman method provides an example of how to modify a basal reading program; the Goodman method provides a means of teaching reading that does not rely on a programmatic sequence of instruction; the Goodman method produces more independent reading and writing than traditional reading methods and the Goodman method helps children learn to read and produces reading proficiency in most cases, because it focuses on strategies that engage the reader's natural language competence.
CHAPTER I

Thus to instruct men is nothing more than to help human nature to develop in its own way, and the art of instruction depends primarily on harmonizing our messages and the demands we make upon the child with his powers at the moment. (Pestalozzi, 1951, p. 92)

In this aphorism, Johann Pestalozzi asserts that to be an effective teacher one must nurture the natural development of human nature. Many reading specialists today are in agreement with this principle. They view reading as a complex social, cognitive and linguistic process that develops naturally as an extension of normal language learning by all children. The child begins this active process of making print meaningful long before reaching school age by encountering print informally and observing its various functions in his/her environment. If his/her society uses written language as an important means of communication, the child is naturally motivated to master its meaning and its uses. According to Ken and Yetta Goodman's idea of literacy acquisition, "Children learn to read and write in the same way and for the same reason that they learn to speak and listen. Language learning is motivated by the need to communicate, to understand and be understood" (1976, p. 3).

The problem is to create a core component for a first grade reading program in the culturally pluralistic classroom that will harmonize the teacher's instruction with the child's natural process of language acquisition. To that end, instructional strategies must consist of functional reading experiences that are meaningful to each child and appropriate to his/her stage of development. Educators must use materials and learning strategies that in the words of the NCTE resolution on language "...
affirm the students' right to their own patterns and varieties of language." (Language Arts, March 1976, p. 233) as well as their own experience.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is twofold: 1. to operationalize the Goodmans' theory of "natural" reading instruction in a first grade classroom and 2. to test their hypothesis that providing an instructional program composed of meaningful and functional encounters with written language will produce reading proficiency. The following research questions are probed:

1. Does the Goodman socio-psycholinguistic approach to beginning reading produce reading proficiency?
2. Can the Goodman approach be operationalized for effective use in the culturally diverse first grade classroom?
3. Is instruction in decoding skills unnecessary if not counterproductive as Goodman asserts?
4. Does the research design enable the teacher-investigator to evaluate
   a. the success of this approach to beginning reading?
   b. her implementation of the Goodman approach?
   c. the success of the research instruments in answering the above questions?
Significance of the Study

Jeanne Chall says that the function of research in reading is to "... make rational the basis for practical decisions in ... reading instruction" (1976, p. 18). This research project hopes to contribute to rational decision-making about how reading should be taught in the heterogeneous first grade classroom by operationalizing the Goodmans' theory that learning to read is a natural language process that can be facilitated by planning instruction around the ways children use language purposefully. I do this by designing a core component for a first grade reading program. Implicit in the work of both the Goodmans and Halliday is the belief that reading is a socio-psycholinguistic process requiring that reading instruction be put in a context that is personally and culturally meaningful if it is to be effective with all children. To that end, the learning strategies that make up this core reading component are highly individualized and multi-cultural in nature and offer many options so that each child can find himself or herself and be successful.

By implementing the Goodman theory in a classroom setting, the project expects to provide preliminary indications of how such an approach can be applied in a first grade reading program. Also, this study establishes criteria with which teachers and researchers can judge the effectiveness of the Goodman approach to beginning reading instruction.
As a consequence, it is hoped that this project provides an alternative methodology for first grade reading instruction that is an effective approach to reading fluency and a sensitive and fruitful approach to teacher-pupil interaction in the culturally diverse instructional setting.

A secondary goal is to examine the Goodman contention that learning to read must always be put in a meaningful context rather than being fractionated by instruction in decoding. In this way, the project hopes to contribute to future research and classroom practice by gathering evidence relevant to the great debate about reading methods.

**Delimitations of the Study**

There are certain dimensions that shape and delimit the nature and scope of this study. The fact that the same person is acting as both implementer and investigator for this project means that there may be bias in the gathering and analysis of data. While acknowledging the intrusive position of the researcher, the observation is carried out on a day to day basis in a detailed, systematic manner that facilitates replication by others. Ultimately, verification of all research depends upon confirmation by others in the field.

This research project is planned as an exploratory study, not an experiment under rigorously controlled conditions. What is called for is a research strategy that will enable the investigator as participant observer to implement and evaluate the Goodman approach to beginning reading in her classroom in a focused and systematic manner. This kind
of focused exploration of an instructional method in the natural setting of the classroom permits the identification of significant characteristics of the Goodman approach that will emerge from the implementation/observation process (Iannaccone, pp. 223, 226-227).

It is anticipated that such an exploratory study lays the hypothetical groundwork for later "... experimental or verificational research" (Iannaccone, p. 227).

The teacher/investigator has no control over the selection of the sample of subjects or the size of that sample. The sample consists of those children assigned to her by the Northampton School Department for the school year 1979-1980. It is anticipated that the sample includes no more than twenty-five pupils—a small sample by quantitative research standards but more manageable for doing detailed observation as is planned.

The smallness of the sample and its lack of randomness call into question the generalizability of the findings. However, by casting the research in the form of a study, the investigator acknowledges the constraints imposed by these conditions and focuses on a trial situation and its value as an example without claim to a larger frame of reference.

Another delimitation that narrows the scope of this project is the fact that there is a clear-cut time limit imposed by the length of the school year. The teacher-investigator must complete the implementation of the Goodman theory and gather data during the course of one school year; therefore, the problem cannot be approached from a longitudinal
perspective. On the other hand, the specific focus of the research problem is beginning reading. Being confined to a time period of one year in first grade fits the normal boundaries of a beginning reading experience.

These are the factors that influence the conduct of the research project as well as the eventual interpretation of its findings. The researcher will make recommendations for further study at the conclusion of this project.

Methodology of the Study

This investigation is an exploratory study that implements the Goodman socio-psycholinguistic theory of beginning reading instruction in a first grade classroom at the Jackson Street School in Northampton, Massachusetts. The research explores the feasibility of teaching reading with the Goodman approach as operationalized by the teacher-investigator in her classroom setting.

The investigator uses five observation schemes to systematically gather and organize data about the Goodman theory in operation. These schemes also provide information on the reading proficiency attained by the students as a result of "natural" reading instruction. They are described in detail in Chapter Three.

This methodology permits the researcher to study the same subjects with the same instruments over the space of an entire school year. In this way, the investigator can arrive at some preliminary indications about the strengths and limitations of the Goodman method in operation
in her first grade classroom as well as assess its role in facilitating proficient reading on the part of the individual pupils.

Chapter Outline

Chapter One defines the research problem, describes the scope and delimitations of the proposed study and outlines the procedures to be used in gathering and analyzing data. An overview of the literature is presented as a background to establishing a rationale for the investigation. The writer describes the way in which this study expects to contribute to our understanding of how the Goodman approach to natural reading instruction can facilitate reading proficiency.

Chapter Two provides a comprehensive review of the literature related to the research problem. The investigator focuses on the research of E. B. Huey, Jeanne Chall, and the psycholinguists--Ken and Yetta Goodman. Attention is also given to Jeannette Veatch, Bruno Bettelheim, Frank Smith and others who have contributed to our understanding of the reading acquisition process.

Chapter Three describes in detail the methodology used to carry out this study.

Chapter Four consists of the data gathered in this study and their evaluation as prescribed in the procedural section of the first chapter.

Chapter Five focuses on the investigator's findings about the efficacy of the Goodman theory as operationalized by the teacher-investigator in her heterogeneous first grade classroom. Recommendations for further research are made.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Since the turn of the century, reading research in this country resembles nothing more than Pandora's box. Theories generated by competing disciplines and competing viewpoints within disciplines abound—resulting in intellectual confusion and instructional cross-purposes. Anyone attempting to make sense out of this chaos is reminded of Edmund Burke Huey's premature optimism about the future of reading research as expressed in his landmark study *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading* (1908). Huey comments: "... the federated science of the world is making solid progress with specific problems, and bears promise of a day when education shall rest on foundations better grounded than were the individual and unverified opinions about reading even twenty-five years ago" (p. 184).

A survey of recent research in reading shows we are still very much in the stage of individual and unverified opinions about reading that compete for recognition. The research establishment is still trying to come up with a basic foundation for research and classroom practice that can provide an intellectual grounding for everyone's efforts.

This research project grew out of an awareness of the conflicting theories about reading and a determination to learn from all the relevant research that has gone before—the goal being to generate a working hypothesis about beginning reading instruction that is intellectually sound, socially responsive and effective in the classroom.
Of primary significance to this project is the continuing methodological debate over whether, generally speaking, children learn to read better with a method that emphasizes learning the alphabetic code or with one that emphasizes reading for meaning. This question is the principal subject of Jeanne Chall's classic research study, Learning to Read: The Great Debate (1967). Chall and her associates take on the enormous task of analyzing and reviewing research done in this country between 1912 and 1965 that compares different approaches to beginning reading.

In fact, Chall hopes to link theory, research and practice to discover "... where we have come from, where we are, and where we are going in teaching children to read" (p. 2). The main focus of this investigation is"... a critical analysis of the research already in existence" (p. 5). However, she and her associates take on five related tasks as well: to formulate precise descriptions of the various methods of teaching initial reading, to interview leading proponents of these methods, to observe these methods in the classroom, to analyze the most widely used reading texts, workbooks and teachers' manuals, and to design and implement a scheme for classifying reading programs as to method (twenty-two reading programs in current use are assessed by means of this scheme).

It should be noted that only commercially published reading programs are reviewed in Chall's investigation. As a result, many innovations in reading methods are left out of the treatment. Chall defends her research design in the text saying that "... just because some teachers
can create their own methods and achieve excellent results with them, we
cannot assume that all teachers can do so ... the majority of teachers
rely on published reading programs and on the manuals that have a built-
in method" (p. 308).

Ultimately, Chall et al arrive at some important conclusions about
initial reading instruction. Their survey of the existing research "... points to the need for a correction in beginning reading instructional
methods" (p. 307). Chall comments:

Most school children in the United States are taught to read
by what I have termed a meaning-emphasis method. Yet the
research from 1912 to 1965 indicates that a code emphasis
method--i.e., one that views beginning reading as essentially
different from mature reading and emphasizes learning of the
printed code for the spoken language--produces better results,
at least up to the point where sufficient evidence seems to be
available, the end of the third grade. (p. 107)

She rejects the claim made by some scholars and researchers that
teaching which emphasizes an initial code emphasis will produce "mechan-
ical" word-by-word reading that limits comprehension and enjoyment. In
fact she says, "... the evidence indicates that better results in terms
of reading for meaning are achieved with the programs that emphasize
code at the start than with the programs that stress meaning at the
beginning" (p. 307).

She finds that the basal readers which dominate reading instruction
in this country employ a method that emphasizes reading for meaning and
mastery of sight word vocabulary. The teachers' manual provide for
minimal instruction in decoding skills as a kind of follow-up to the
essential core of each lesson (Chapters 7-8). She concludes that based
on existing evidence, most children are being taught to read by methods and materials that are counter-productive.

However, Chall does not want to throw the baby out with the bath water. In contrast with some critics, she believes "... that most children need readers or some kind of structured materials, especially at the beginning, to gain mastery [of print]... and most teachers need them even more to impart this mastery" (p. 258).

In her view, these conventional basal reading systems have gained the confidence of teachers and administrators alike, a fact that gives their publishers a unique opportunity "... to translate what we know about teaching reading into classroom practice" (p. 258). To facilitate this process, a major goal of Chall's research, she calls on the large commercial publishers to change their reading materials so that decoding will be emphasized. Such a change would reflect her interpretation of the general research evidence.

Undeniably, the impact of Chall's recommendation to change the way we teach children to read is diminished by the fact that she is unable to specify which decoding methods and/or materials will produce reading proficiency. Nevertheless, one can only agree with her logic that "... we cannot wait for all the answers to be in before we try to improve the Present situation" (p. 306).

One of Chall's greatest strengths as a researcher is that she places her inquiry in the larger context of on-going research in reading by others. She acknowledges that "... we still have much to learn about the process of learning to read" (p. 306) and welcomes the efforts of
others as contributions to her own understanding. She says: "... the conclusions and recommendations I present here hold for now—for the present available evidence, for existing school conditions, and for the goals we seek now. As these change, I fully realize, so the theory, research, and practice in beginning reading instruction must change" (p. 306).

Finally, she maintains a healthy sense of proportion about her role in "The Great Debate" over beginning reading methods. She believes that "... method changes, if made in the right (i.e., flexible) spirit, will lead to improved reading standards" (p. 309). At the same time she says explicitly that there is no panacea, no new method that will eliminate all reading problems. Many ingredients go into the process of getting good results in the classroom (pp. 280-281).

Few educational researchers are this candid about the complexities of human behavior and of facilitating learning.

It is noteworthy that Chall and her associates begin their review of existing research on initial reading methods with data published in 1912. They neglect Huey's book which was published in 1908. Certainly the Pedagogy of Reading focuses on beginning reading to a great extent and provides an interesting preview to "The Great Debate." Chall responds to such speculation by commenting that "The body of knowledge and practices [of this generation] ... is the first to claim validity on scientific grounds" (p. 1). Because Huey did not do empirical research to support his pedagogical theories, Chall does not consider his work relevant.
In this researcher's opinion, Huey's research is a remarkable feat even by today's standards. Although he was essentially a psychologist studying the psychology and physiology of reading, his insight bears directly on this discussion because he tries "... to apply his psychological findings and insights to the resolution of these perennial issues [concerning] ... how reading should be taught" (Carroll, 1968, p. xi).

Huey proceeds much as Chall does later by reviewing the research in reading methods and critically examining the reading materials of his day; however, they disagree about the source of reading difficulties. He finds that phonics-based reading instruction is responsible for the "... mechanical, stumbling, expressionless readers, and poor thought-getters from what is read" (p. 302). Huey deplores the early emphasis on decoding claiming that "... much that is now strenuously struggled for... will come of themselves with growth... and that in the meantime [the child] should be acquiring own experiences and developing wants that will in time make reading a natural demand and a meaningful process, with form and book always secondary to own thought" (p. 303).

In reviewing the work of the Chicago Institute, Huey comments that "... the children learn to read as they learn to talk, 'from a desire to find out or tell something' " (p. 297). Reading is incidental and grows out of the child's experience rather than being made a technical process of word-pronouncing that is an end in itself (p. 300).

Based on his own research and the research of others, Huey advocates a very complex notion of reading as active thought getting. He says:..
... a false ideal has taken [hold] of us, viz., that to read is to say just what is upon the page, instead of to think each in his own way, the meaning that the page suggests. Inner saying there will doubtless always be, of some sort; but not a saying that is, especially in the early reading exactly parallel to the forms upon the page. It may even be necessary if the reader is to really tell what the page suggests, to tell it in words that are somewhat variant; for reading is always of the nature of translation and, to be truthful, must be free (p. 349). (emphasis added)

In a fundamental sense then, Huey believes that meaning resides in the mind of the reader who is actively engaged in a complex cognitive process of transferring and processing ideas from what is read rather than in words alone (Kolers, 1968, p. xxxiii). Thus the meaning that is found on the printed page is dependent on what the individual child brings to the task—his or her unique personality, prior knowledge, experiences, and socio-cultural background. That "equipment" gives meaning to the words or makes the words meaningless for that person (Kolers, pp. xxxv-xxxvi).

While Huey does not dwell on this point, the importance he places on the reader as an active participant who makes print meaningful has many implications for classroom instruction. If reading is an interactional process then the teacher can not view the child as a passive and impersonal "standardized" receiver of ideas from print on a page. Attention must be given to who the individual reader is and what his or her educational needs and interests are in the broadest sense of the word because that Identity is part and parcel of the learning process. The teacher must make reading a purposeful and vital extension of the child's life experiences and natural language.*

*Sylvia Ashton-Warner and Paulo Friere are notable examples of educators who believe that learning to read should be a process of self-discovery and self-determination. (See Ashton-Warner's Teacher and Friere's Education for a Critical Consciousness)
Huey feels strongly that the reading texts in general use at the time he is writing represent a serious impediment to effective reading instruction because of "... the inanity and disjointedness of their reading content" (pp. 278-279) and because they foster word-pronouncing (p. 280). His criticism of their content, language and instructional use in the classrooms of the early 1900's foreshadows the continuing controversy over the methodology and content of the basal reading systems of today.

It is unfortunate that Huey does not continue his inquiry into what reading is and how the reading process can be facilitated. Had he done so, one feels certain he would have empirically tested his theories about teaching children to read with the same brilliance he applied to the cognitive and perceptual aspects of the reading process.

In a recent article, Eller comments that today's basal reading systems employ decoding and meaning methods as well as others in an eclectic approach. He says: "Each of the several basal programs currently being used ... draws upon the strategies of at least six of the major methods of teaching reading recognized as effective with various kinds of learners" (1980, p. 75).

While there is no general agreement among researchers about what the methodology of today's basal readers should be, most acknowledge that the story content of the readers is often sadly lacking. Indeed,
the "stuff" that is read remains essentially the same as in Huey's day—insipid, stilted and pointless. Because children read for meaning, one cannot ignore the content of what is read and its role in facilitating learning.

Bruno Bettelheim, who is studying how reading is taught from the viewpoint of the emotional needs of children, comments: "Sadly our primers offer no meaning to children ... all of life is depicted as a row of tedious and senseless activities. Furthermore, since most stories in our primers suggest that children on their own act aimlessly, it is hardly surprising that children are turned off when they are asked to learn to read such content" (1976, pp. 6, 10-11).

Bettelheim claims that these texts alienate young readers because they do not take children seriously as developing users of language and as thinkers who try and apply what they read to their real needs and life experiences. This alienation vitiates the natural motivation that is present in all children to read and to use reading purposefully as adults do (p. 11).

While Bettelheim discusses this problem from the reference point of "the American child" as if we represent one culture and one language, the disaffection and confusion created generally by basal readers is an even greater obstacle for the minority child. He or she cannot find himself (or herself) anywhere in the language and culture of the basals. In the poignant phrase Ralph Ellison chose for his famous account of racial oppression in this country, the minority child is an "invisible man" to those around him.
Obviously, when the teacher and/or the methods and materials of the beginning reading program do not speak to the child in his or her own language (literally and figuratively), the learner is at an enormous disadvantage. The alienation and self-doubt that are fostered by the implicit rejection of the minority child's culture, language and identity further compound the instructional problem.

In a recent paper entitled "Black Dialect, Reading Interference and Classroom Interaction," 1976) Herbert D. Simons describes the self-defeating conditions that Black children face in the many classrooms where "reading simply gets defined as the production of pronunciations that no one uses" (p. 450).

By making reading and learning to read nothing more than an academic exercise for many children, we create the conditions for profound miscommunication and disaffection between student and teacher. Simons explains: "The problems that Black children encounter when learning to read in school may be in part at least the results of miscommunication of situated meaning between teacher and student that is caused by an unshared communicative background" (p. 443).

Thus the gap between the real language and life of the Black or Hispanic or Asian family and the white middle class culture and language of the typical teacher invites if not insure miscommunication in the classroom. A critical factor is the teacher's response to such differences. For example, Sims and Y. Goodman point out that it is not a mismatch in language per se that causes reading difficulties but the attitude people have toward non-standard dialect. "The way in which a
teacher accepts or rejects a student's language may enhance or destroy a positive self-concept, which has strong bearing on learning to read" (Y. Goodman and Sims, 1974, p. 841).

Simons believes that "... differences between various aspects of Black children's culture and the school culture ... lead to interference with learning to read" (p. 450). He proposes that less emphasis be placed on the revision of instructional materials as a response to the students' non-standard dialect. Instead, research should focus on teacher-student interaction generally and explore a wide range of "... teachers' strategies for teaching Black children that take into account their language and cultural differences" (p. 451).

In a sense he is saying that the problem of prestige dialect vs. native dialect is only part of a larger pattern of miscommunication. Profound differences exist between many learners and the total instructional environment in the classroom and these complex differences interfere with learning to read. Correspondingly, he is implying that acquisition of literacy is facilitated by a shared communicative background that incorporates and affirms the language and culture and identity of the child.

In fact, the claim that reading theory and practice have not adequately taken into account children's natural communicative background as a basis for instruction has been of concern to some researchers and educators for many years. Various attempts have been made to design more holistic reading programs that use the child's language and experiential background as a key to literacy learning.
Both the Language Experience Approach (LEA) and the Individualized Reading Approach make reading instruction more personal, more functionally relevant and more child-centered. In LEA, the child's natural speech shapes the form and content of the learning activities. Specifically, the child's thoughts and experiences written down in his or her own language becomes the basis for reading instruction (Veatch, 1978, p. 36).

The Individualized Reading Approach tailors instruction to the child and his or her communicative background by encouraging self-selection of reading materials from a wide range of sources and self-pacing of instruction. Teacher-pupil conferences assess progress and decide on next steps giving careful consideration to the child as active planner of his (her) learning (Veatch, p. 3).

Both these approaches to beginning reading rely heavily on the teacher's ability to generate, supervise and evaluate multiple instructional plans and activities that reflect the specific needs and experiences of each child and that enhance self-concept at the same time. They encourage teacher initiative and creativity (and express confidence in teacher ability) because they do not rely on a specific set of instructional materials. Instead, they offer an organizational scheme, the substance of which varies under the direction of the teacher to meet the reading needs and interests of the children.

Recently, Farr and Roser point out that "... basal readers [are] ... the major set of materials for teaching reading, and it is expected that they will continue to dominate for some time into the future" (1979, p. 445). These authors attribute the continuing success of the basal to
the fact that "... they provide a carefully sequenced set of instructional materials with complete teacher's guides for supporting a continuous program" (p. 444).

Despite the predictions of Farr and Roser, current literature expresses the view that methods of teaching children to read must be more adaptable, more integrative, more personal, and more language oriented if they are to meet individual needs and to support individual identities (Powers & Bobys, 1978, p. 2). More attention is being given to LEA and the Individualized Reading Approach by researchers and educators because they are based on ". . . strategies which are child-centered rather than materials-centered" (Powers & Bobys, p. 9).

Within the last ten years, cognitive psychologists, linguists and psycholinguists have made important contributions to reading theory. Perhaps the most influential group looks at reading as a complex psycholinguistic process during which the reader processes information from print. Carroll says: "[Psycholinguistics]... attempts to study how the individual learns linguistic systems, particularly that of his native language, and how he uses such systems in thinking and communicating...

But it is also interested in how the school child extends this knowledge of language by... learning to read and write" (1969, pp. 1-2).

The claim has been made by Gove and others that "Most of these psycholinguistic theories focus on the skilled reader. Few are able to present a satisfactory model of how children become skilled at the process" (1976, p. 326). However, in their paper "Learning to Read is Natural" (1976), Ken and Yetta Goodman, major spokespeople for the
psycholinguists, take on the task of applying psycholinguistic theory to the way children learn to read.

The Goodmans believe that all language learning is "... a natural social phenomenon, as well as a personal one" (p. 2).

Children learn to read in much the same way they learn oral language—out of a "... need to interact linguistically and communicate in order to survive and to participate" (Goodmans, p. 1). Most children acquire spoken language quickly and naturally while interacting with parents and others in "noisy" situations (p. 1). Similarly, children who grow up in a print-filled society such as ours encounter written language constantly in the form of signs, books, captions, labels, etc. and begin to use it.

Their contention that "... acquisition of literacy is an extension of natural language learning for all children" (p. 2) is corroborated by Kenneth Hoskisson (1979). He remarks:

Children must be immersed in stories when they learn to read, just as they were immersed in language in contextual situations when they learned to speak... The closer the stories are to their own experiences the more questions they will have answered, and the more additional hypotheses [about language] they will be able to generate and test. (p. 491).

It follows then that successful reading programs must be language oriented and must incorporate the natural language of the child. Instruction must begin with the premise that "... the child arrives at school as an accomplished learner and user of his [her] language" (Powers & Bobys, p. 2).

Frank Smith, another prominent psycholinguist, described how instruction can help children to use their own language strategies—
their own "prior knowledge" about language—to understand what they read:

If there is to be any chance that they will learn... they must do this by relating the situations they find themselves in to prior knowledge. Anything they cannot relate to what they know already will not make sense; it will be nonsense. (1975, p. 10)

The classroom teacher can make learning to read a natural process by acknowledging each child's innate language proficiency, his or her "prior knowledge," and using it as the basis for instruction. By teaching reading in a context of natural communicative purpose, the functions of written language are internalized by the learners (Goodmans, p. 8). This is the key to acquisition of literacy.

Motivation is not a problem when the child encounters "... meaningful written language which [he or she] needs and wants to understand" (K. Goodman, 1974, p. 826).

Reading, according to the psycholinguists, is a single process of constructing meaning from text (K. Goodman, 1974, pp. 824, 826). The process cannot be broken down into skill components or separated into a process stage followed by a content stage because language that is separated from communication has no meaning for the reader. When the reading lesson is a formal exercise in decoding rather than a relevant means to communicate, the child cannot use his or her natural language competence to make sense out of print (p. 825). So-called code emphasis methods that fractionate the process by separating reading from functional language use result "... in inefficient reading and at worst create barriers to effective comprehension" (p. 827). In other words,
such methods interfere with learning to read because they take the learners' minds off meaning (Goodmans, 1976, p. 6).

Given the Goodman position that "... both oral and written language [are] learned in the same way" (p. 5), they propose to apply Michael Halliday's linguistic model of how children acquire and use spoken language to written language (p. 9). Halliday theorizes that "the child knows what language is because he knows what language does" (1975, p. 244). His model categorizes how children in all cultures use language purposefully and effectively. The seven functions of language according to the Halliday scheme are:

- Instrumental: I want
- Regulatory: Do as I tell you
- Interactional: Me and you
- Personal: Here I come
- Heuristic: Tell me why
- Imaginative: Let's pretend
- Informative: I've got something to tell you (Goodmans, p. 9)

With this model, Halliday brings into focus the rich fund of prior knowledge of language which the school age child brings to reading instruction. The teacher must understand that "... function precedes form in language development and that children have acquired all functions before they come to school" (Halliday, p. 244).

Ken Goodman stresses the fact that every child is a capable user of language. He says: "Every child, in every strata of every society learns well at least one language form, the one most useful for purposes of communication in the community" (1974, p. 824). The terms "culturally disadvantaged child" or "linguistically deprived child" are labels which some educators and researchers impose on children whose language
is different and/or of lower status in our society (p. 824). Goodman
goes on to say:

Instead of this stereotype we must recognize the
competence of children in their own language, whatever
its social status. Literacy can become an extension
of the existing language competence of the learner if
we understand it and encourage children to rely on their
language strength in learning to read. (p. 824).

The gist of the pedagogical problem for the teacher of reading is
"... how to create programs and environments which enhance the natural
[capabilities], motivations, awareness, experiences, and cultural
variables so that reading is acquired naturally by all children"
(Goodmans, p. 3). The primary role of the teacher becomes that of envir-
onment arranger and integrator,"... creating the literate environment
which will facilitate learning... [by] constantly bringing kids in con-
tact with relevant, functional print" (Goodmans, p. 25).

The teacher emerges as the critical factor in translating this
socio-psycholinguistic theory of reading into classroom practice. In
the Goodmans' words, "... we see the teacher as making the crucial
difference between whether some or all will learn to read" (p. 25).

The Goodman approach to beginning reading instruction bridges the
gap between theory and practice because it offers the classroom teacher
a reading method that is based on how children learn language, how they
use language, and how the reading process is mastered individually (K.
Goodman, 1974, p. 823). The linguistic fact that "... all children have
immense language resources when they enter school, (1974, p. 823) is the
foundation for their method of instruction. If virtually all children
are able to communicate successfully by means of their native language
then it follows that this productive language ability provides the child with a natural capacity for learning to read, and the classroom teacher with a basis for instruction. 

Despite the Goodman insistence that "... reading must, like all language processes, be always related to the communication of meaning..." (K. Goodman, 1974, p. 825), the fact remains that the practice of separating the formal aspects of language from its function in a natural communicative context is a common feature of many reading programs today (Chall, 1976, p. 16). Because Jeanne Chall's research as described earlier provides much of the theoretical rationale for this practice, it is relevant to examine the methodological differences between Chall and Ken Goodman in greater detail.

Chall says, "... investigators disagree over the meaning of reading when each seems to be concerned with a different stage of its development" (1976, p. 40). For her, reading begins piece by piece as the child learns letter forms, his or her name and "what goes with what" (Open Discussion of Goodman Presentation, 1976, p. 481). Following this preliminary period of learning the reading process (Stage One), the child enters Stage Two, a confirmation stage, and begins to read for meaning (Open Discussion, p. 481).

She attributes the differences between her view of how reading begins and Goodman's to the fact that he focuses on Stage Two and never addresses the issue of "who teaches the child how the process works" (Open Discussion, p. 481).

This argument runs counter to the position articulated by the Goodmans that reading is at all times a single constructive process (p. 18).
They say: "There is only one reading process. Readers may differ in the control of this process but not in the process they use" (p. 18).

Sims elaborates on this fundamental psycholinguistic principle. Reading proficiency does not develop through separate progressive stages, and the child does not need to be taught "what goes with what" before he or she can focus on meaning. What distinguishes the beginning reader from the proficient reader is only the degree of control over the process. What happens is that gradually over time the reader has more control over the process (Personal Communication, April 11, 1979).

Goodman and the other psycholinguists categorically reject the notion "... that initial instruction that focuses on the technical details of form is either necessary or desirable (Open Discussion, p. 482). In fact, he suggests that such instruction may run "... counter to things the child already knows" (Open Discussion, p. 482). He states:

I believe firmly, as does Frank Smith, that it is possible that initial instruction that focuses on the technical details of form, does not facilitate the development of literacy. In addition such instruction may actually interfere with the development of literacy, because not only does it not build on function, it actually distracts the child at an age where, according to Piaget and others, the child is likely to have trouble dealing with abstraction; it makes learning to read dependent on the ability to deal with an abstraction. (Open Discussion, p. 482)

Instead of making the initial mistake of thinking we have to teach children the reading process, Goodman says we need to understand that maybe "it can't be taught; it has to be learned" by using written language (Open Discussion, p. 482). Over time, they will derive control of orthography the same way (Open Discussion, p. 496).
In summary, the Goodman position is that learning to read begins naturally and easily, and what happens at school in the classroom should not interfere with this development. Instead, the teacher should extend the development of literacy that is already well underway by "taking the language they bring and expanding what they can do with it" (Sims, Personal Communication, April 4, 1979).

In informal discussion, Goodman has linked many elements of his method explicitly to the Language Experience Approach to reading and to the tradition of "progressive education language experience" (Open discussion, p. 483).

In this investigator's opinion, the Goodman approach to beginning reading instruction offers socio-linguistic confirmation of LEA and its basic assumption that reading must be functional and relevant to every learner. For this reason it is the method of choice for a first grade reading program.

In response to the Goodman method, S.J. Samuels suggests that their hypothesis is oversimplified and almost untestable because they can attribute any reading difficulty a child may encounter to the fact that the teacher provided a "... social environment for learning that was unnatural" (1976, p. 810).

One therefore might question how the Goodman concept of reading as natural language learning can be translated into an effective instructional format for use in the culturally pluralistic primary classroom. The intention of this research project is to find out and to evaluate the results.
The Goodmans offer a partial answer to the question of what natural language learning would look like in a first grade reading program. They provide an extensive collection of learning activities that exemplify the kind of initial reading instruction they advocate, with the reservation that these activities "... are elements in a program; it is not yet a full program" (p. 22).

This research project provided a comprehensive program for the first grade based on the Goodman initial reading method. Because a "natural" reading program must reflect how the learners do in fact use language and what their needs and interests are, it is composed of flexible organic components that present many learning options.

These instructional components "... create the situations in which reading is most likely to develop" (Open Discussion, p. 487). They did not "... rehearse kids in the kinds of things that readers do ..." (Open Discussion, p. 487).

By extension, "The teacher...[cannot be] a technician carrying through somebody's structured program... [He or she] is there to monitor, to guide, to interact, to arrange the environment, to be so aware of what's happening in the classroom that he or she really becomes the director of learning" (Open Discussion, p. 487).

Clearly there is a lot of responsibility and initiative given to the classroom teacher under these circumstances. This method encourages the teacher to create a dynamic and highly complex pattern of instruction on his or her own terms within the framework of the Goodmans' basic assumptions about the reading process, and relies on his or her ability
and experience to do so. Jeannette Veatch captures the essence of such a program in her definitive text on individualized reading. She remarks: "There are certain procedures that must occur or our basic assumptions are not followed. Yet with these there are infinite possibilities of variety" (1978, p. 17).

This researcher demonstrated that the proposed reading program balances teacher initiative with strategic theoretical and organizational support so that proficient reading results.

Chapter Three describes in detail how this reading program was designed, implemented and evaluated.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

As stated in Chapter One, this investigation focused on the Goodman socio-psycholinguistic approach to beginning reading instruction in a first grade classroom at the Jackson Street School in Northampton, Massachusetts. The research explored the effectiveness of the Goodman approach as operationalized by the teacher-investigator in her classroom setting. It is hypothesized that the Goodman approach to beginning reading when operationalized produces reading proficiency. Reading proficiency is defined as the ability to read a range of first grade level reading materials independently by the end of Grade One. As a consequence of this study, the investigator makes suggestions for improving the application methodology of the Goodman theory in Chapter Five.

The sample population under investigation consisted of the first grade class taught by the investigator in 1979-1980 using the Goodman approach. While this group was not randomly selected, nor the size of the group pre-determined, the writer expected to demonstrate that based on kindergarten reading readiness scores and family characteristics (whether they come from one or two parent families, and the percentage of pupils that qualify for the federally subsidized lunch program) they were representative of the typical first grade class at the Jackson Street School.

Permission to use this class as the site of the study was received from the Northampton School Department (see Appendix A).
Educational research in this country has been characterized by considerable uncertainty about its goals and methods (Graham, 1979, p. 27). Reading researchers have contributed substantially to the formulation of a body of knowledge about the reading process but have not been successful at translating their research findings into effective instructional practice (Chall, 1967, p. 313).

The reasons for the "critical difficulties in educational research" (Graham, p. 26) have been analyzed by Dr. Particia Graham, Director of the National Institute of Education, in her perceptive article, "Let's Get Together on Educational Research." Dr. Graham deplores the lack of attention paid by researchers to educational activities in the classroom, particularly teacher attitudes and behaviors (p. 28). Also, she calls upon investigators "... to explore a variety of methods rather than rely too much on a few. Ethnographies, case studies, and observation techniques in classroom settings are examples of the types of approaches which can complement traditional quantitative techniques" (p. 28). Finally, she emphasizes the need for teacher participation in the research enterprise with a quotation from John Dewey:

It is impossible to see how there can be an adequate flow of subject matter to set and control the problems investigators deal with, unless there is active participation on the part of those directly engaged in teaching. (p. 28)
This research project planned as an exploratory study responded to the issues raised by Dr. Graham because it linked reading research and the researcher directly to instruction in the classroom setting. It did this by casting the teacher in the dual role of participant observer—systematically observing herself and her students in the process of learning to read.

The concept of the teacher as researcher is an important one that deserves serious consideration by the research establishment despite the obvious fact that the teacher cannot be an unbiased collector and analyzer of data. Even so, only the teacher can describe and evaluate "the natural state of education" (Stake, 1972, p. 49) unobtrusively and no one knows more about what occurs in that particular setting than he or she. This dissertation can provide a model for other teachers who wish to do research in the classroom.

The investigator hypothesized that an exploratory study undertaken by a practitioner would contribute to an understanding of how children learn to read in a first grade classroom in ways that have eluded traditional experimental research in the past.

There are several reasons why a qualitative research design in the form of a study that uses systematic observation techniques to gather data in the natural setting of the classroom was the methodology of choice for this investigation. This strategy fit the circumstances of the research project because it enabled the investigator as participant observer to design, implement, and evaluate a reading program derived
from the Goodman approach to beginning reading in a focused and systematic manner (Iannaccone, 1975, pp. 220, 223).

As a form of educational evaluation, the field study devises and tests practical solutions to a number of simultaneous operating problems with the understanding that "the practitioner needs to be able to refine and adjust his solutions continuously" (Guba, 1969, p. 4). In this instance, the problems related to the reading acquisition process and the use of a given instructional approach.

The observation techniques that were used to evaluate this reading program "... are rich with the sense of human encounter... [and with] perceptions and understandings that comes from immersion in and wholistic regard for the phenomena" (Stake, 1977, p. 4). They permitted the teacher-investigator to undertake a study of the formal process by which children acquire literacy in its natural setting, the classroom, and to explore the whole range of interrelated variables that comprise the experience of learning to read in the first grade (Stake, p. 8).

The investigator anticipated that this kind of process study of an instructional method in one first grade classroom would enable her to prepare a complete profile of the Goodman socio-psycholinguistic approach to beginning reading in operation, and to judge the efficacy of this approach as implemented in this instance. As Stake remarks in another paper, "Both description and judgment are essential--in fact, they are the two basic acts of evaluation... To be fully understood, the educational program must be fully described and fully judged" (1972, pp. 33-34).
Also, this investigator anticipated that the research study as planned would help to answer those questions that teachers really ask about methods, materials and classroom interaction (Stake, 1972. p. 32).

**Design of the Reading Program**

The goal of the reading program was to enhance the natural process of literacy acquisition in each child so that the child became a proficient reader by the end of Grade One. To that end, the researcher planned a series of three week instructional units that provided a framework for reading instruction during the school year 1979-1980. Each unit consisted of approximately nine interrelated lessons based on a unifying theme. Readings came from a variety of sources: basal readers, trade books, library resources, teacher-made books and student writing. Also, multiple instructional materials were used, largely teacher or pupil-made in response to the unfolding of each instructional unit.

The design of this reading program rests on several key assumptions about reading and how children learn to read. These are listed below with references to corroborative research.

1. An initial reading program must provide pupils with genuinely meaningful experiences and activities in which they encounter "... many uses of language and have the opportunity to practice them" (Black citing Halliday, 1979, p. 527). In a "Commentary on Relationships between Language and Literacy," Walter Loban calls this proposal a utopian principle that would revolu-
tionize reading instruction and give children power over language. He emphasizes that "The development of power and efficiency with language derives from using language for genuine purposes and not from studying about it" (1979, p. 485).

2. An initial reading program should respond to the child's own efforts to learn to read. Frank Smith says this is "the one difficult way to make... [learning to read] easy" (Smith, 1973, final chapter). This statement clearly implies the necessity for an individualized reading program that can be fitted to who the individual learner is personally and culturally and what he/she knows about written language. Such an individualized reading program requires a multi-cultural reading curriculum that reflects the variety of life experiences, interests, and learning styles that exist in our society today.

3. An initial reading program should be comprehension-centered. The only goal in reading is comprehension (Goodman, 1974, p. 827). Learning strategies must assist children "... to learn early that reading is a meaning-getting rather than a word identification process" (Powers & Bobys, 1976, p. 6). Loban elaborates on this point: "Polishing the pieces will never substitute for grappling with the dominating total constellation of meaning" (p. 486). Instruction should always focus on making sense of what is read because "The nature of reading is synthe-
sis or overall perception... not dissection..." (Veatch, p. 170). Also as Veatch points out, "... assisting children to focus on meaning eases the later more complex skill of finding central thought. In fact, it is a foundation for it" (p. 334).

4. An initial reading program should immerse pupils in reading connected discourse. Being immersed in meaningful reading parallels how children learn their native language by immersion in the language of one's community (Hoskisson, 1979, p. 491).

5. An initial reading program should use reading materials that incorporate the child's own language (Schwartz, 1975, pp. 321-322). In this way, children bring their natural competence in speaking and listening to their native tongue to the task of learning to read (Goodman, 1974, p. 824). Veatch adds: "Children are the masters of the words they speak and whatever any other group of children speak is of little importance in reading instruction" (p. 336).

6. An initial reading program should help pupils to develop their predictive skill because "reading is impossible without prediction" (Smith, 1975, p. 305). Learning to read involves learning to guess the meaning as one reads along. In K. Goodman's terminology, "Reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game" (1967). Frank Smith elaborates on this concept: "The advantage of prediction is that it facilitates precisely the kind of confident, successful, and meaningful reading experience through which all the critical skills of reading are acquired" (p. 311).
Reading initiates must have confidence that "... the teacher will provide necessary feedback [and] should feel free to hypothesize and take risks as they move through text" (Morris citing F. Smith, 1979, p. 499).

7. An initial reading program should function in an atmosphere of mutual trust and cooperative effort. A supportive learning environment depends on the skills and the attitude of the teacher if each child is to feel good about his or her self and experience success at learning to read. In describing the importance of love and concern—what social scientists call "charisma and the ability to communicate--" to good teaching, McDermott is direct. "In the classroom, teachers and children who cannot relate do not produce successful readers" (1977, pp. 154-155.

8. An initial reading program should provide opportunities to hear and read good literature every day. A strong and varied literature component exposes the child to new concepts, a wide vocabulary, a variety of literary styles and language functions and improves his or her critical reading skills and reading comprehension (Rudman, 1976, final chapter).

9. An initial reading program should evaluate pupil progress on a continuing basis, diagnosing each pupil's reading progress—strengths and needs—and determining instructional next steps accordingly (Veatch, 1978, p. 20 and Chapter 12).
How the teacher decides to implement these assumptions about reading and what he/she does with and for the children from day to day give life to a reading program. In truth, there is no reading program unless these precepts can be translated into specific teacher behaviors that nurture the natural process of learning to read in the first grade classroom.

Therefore, this teacher planned an inviting learning environment that adapted to the needs and the interests of the children and appropriate learning strategies that created a "pattern of instruction" (Veatch, p. 7) to promote as much reading as possible (Veatch, p. 44). In Ken Goodman's words, there should be "no language without experience and no experience without language" (1975, p. 632).

This investigator agrees with Hope Dunne that "Instead of the child being made to fit into an instructional system, the educational program is organized to meet his (her) individual needs" (1972, p. 2). The emphasis in teaching children to read should be on personalized teaching rather than on materials (Veatch, p. 6). This discussion dramatizes the fact that teacher/pupil interaction is a crucial factor in what happens when the child encounters the curriculum. Clearly, the teacher must focus his/her attention on the whole child--and nurture social and emotional growth as well as learning.

While teacher/pupil interaction, i.e., "the social context of reading activities" (McDermott, p. 154), was not the focus of this study, it must be said that the success of any reading method depends on the communicative context in which it occurs (McDermott, p. 156). McDermott
and Cazden, among others, emphasize "the primacy of teacher/student relations in the determination of a child's learning" (p. 161). It follows that the investigator could not mandate program contents that would guarantee certain results because methodology waits upon teacher behaviors. Thus reading theory and program content can only be proven or rejected in the context of inter-personal encounters that nurture or interfere with learning.

For this reason, the researcher discusses the fabric of inter-personal relationships in the classroom as part of the narrative describing the subject class in Chapter Four.

Having established the central role that teacher/student communication plays in learning to read, it is still true that the selection of appropriate learning strategies and reading materials—what McDermott calls "the prepared environment" (p. 156)—is important to successful reading instruction. Bridge (1979) cites the work of Frank Smith and Ken Goodman to confirm her suggestion that beginning readers be given predictable reading materials (p. 504). She says: "The key to making reading easier for the beginning reader lies in finding materials for initial reading instruction that are easy and meaningful, thus predictable" (p. 504).

Language experience stories which are dictated by children themselves and stories that involve structured or patterned language are recommended as "the two easiest and most predictable types of reading materials..." (Bridge, p. 504). Veatch concurs that "reading starts
with the language experience approach" (p. 36) when the language that children speak is written down for them to read. Stories with repetitive structures permit children to anticipate what is coming in the next line... (Bridge, p. 505). Also, Bridge adds: "There are many types of patterns based upon the cultural, linguistic, and rhythmic structures with which children are already familiar when they enter first grade" (p. 505). In this investigator's opinion, these suggestions are particularly appropriate for planning experiences and activities that build on the beginning reader's existing language competence and provide opportunities for modelling fluent reading (Forester, 1977, p. 165), thereby enabling the child to "approach the reading task with confidence" (Bridge, p. 505).

Appendix D of this study contains samples of specific lessons that were used during the implementation of this reading program. It is hoped that these sample lessons will provide the reader with a model of how the Goodman reading method can be translated into classroom practice.

Data Collection and Evaluation

The investigator used five observation schemes to systematically gather and organize data about the Goodman theory in operation and the reading proficiency attained by the students as a result of "natural" reading instruction. These five observation schemes were: 1. Observation Form One as prepared by the investigator to monitor each lesson and
its impact on the group's reading acquisition process; 2. Observation Form Two as prepared by the investigator to incorporate student self-evaluation of the reading method and their personal progress into the evaluation procedure; 3. informal reading conferences which assessed individual student reading strengths and needs on a weekly basis; 4. an investigator-designed comprehensive checklist that rated levels of proficiency for a wide range of reading skills related to underlying reading competency to be called the Reading Performance Inventory (RPI). This RPI was completed monthly; and 5. a daily log that documented teacher-investigator impressions of individual pupil behavior related to both reading proficiency and the Goodman methodology focusing on the following areas—expanding language use, expanding vocabulary, comprehension, motivation and interest, books read and self-image. A rationale for using these observation methods is presented later in this chapter. Copies of all these forms are found on pages 53-61.

The investigator analyzed data gathered during each three week instructional period from both Observation Forms 1-2 and the daily log entries and wrote a detailed review of the reading program in progress. Documenting and analyzing the reading activities and behaviors at three week intervals over the course of the school year provided a continuing profile of the Goodman method in operation and demonstrated how this approach facilitated the acquisition of reading proficiency.

Data on individual pupil proficiency were obtained from the series of informal reading diagnoses completed each week with each child and summarized monthly by means of an investigator-designed inventory of
reading proficiency. This reading proficiency inventory (RPI) is in the form of a comprehensive checklist that rates levels of proficiency for a wide range of basic reading skills. At the end of the school year, these cumulative data were used to evaluate individual pupil proficiency again using the RPI as the rating instrument.

In this way, the investigator arrived at some preliminary indications about the strengths and limitations of the Goodman method in operation in her first grade classroom as well as assessed its role in facilitating proficient reading on the part of individual pupils.

However, the essence of the Goodman approach is to base initial reading instruction on how the learners do in fact use written language meaningfully in their lives. Therefore the investigator reserved the right to alter this methodology if it was not fully responsive to the task of documenting, analyzing and evaluating the reading acquisition process in the classroom.

Iannaccone provides a rationale for this position:

The great sin for the field study research is that of keeping his initial propositions, his concepts, or his crude early theory constant throughout the process. Exploration and exploratory studies are undertaken precisely because one does not know enough to move directly to experimental or verificational research... The field study researcher takes a critical stance toward his initial proposition and problem definitions with a continuing modification of these to fit his data without waiting for verificational studies. (p. 227)

Gathering and evaluating the data in the manner described above, presented the investigator with three challenges: to develop a workable strategy that accurately documents the reading acquisition process in
the classroom for individual learners, to engage in the difficult process of self-observation, and to evaluate the Goodman methodology in practice.

Rudman says: "The structure of evaluation must respond to the goals of the reading program: (Personal Communication, June 7, 1979). The goals of this reading program all relate to comprehension, to "the competence to get meaning from written language" (K. Goodman, 1975, pp. 625-626). Goodman's prescription for diagnosing pupil progress in learning to read lies in the answer to this basic question: Can the child understand "... a wider and wider range of written language?" (1975, p. 632). He explains the difficulties of answering this question in another article saying that, "Objectives in reading relate to the efficient, effective control over the process and a flexible competence in the use of reading to comprehend a wide range of written language" judged in terms of observable, measurable changes in behavior" (p. 827). Goodman acknowledges that practitioners use reading tests or oral reading performances as evidence of reading competence. What we must realize is that such performances are not the competence itself (p. 827).

Veatch agrees with Goodman that reading cannot be reduced to a fixed set of language skills that can be taught and mastered in a clearly defined step by step process. She refers to Chomsky's criticism of B. F. Skinner that "... there is so much to language, any language, in any land, that it is impossible, if not ridiculous, to program every single small step of its learning" (p. 256).
Consequently, Goodman rejects existing reading tests outright, claiming that they focus on observable and measurable kinds of behavior in a superficial manner without relating such behavior to underlying competence (1974, p. 827). He comments: "Most reading tests fracture language, chop it into pieces, pull things out of their use, turn them into abstractions and then test the performance that kinds employ to handle the much more difficult task" (1975, p. 628).

In this investigator's experience as a classroom teacher, Goodman's characterization of standardized reading tests is right on the mark. Many authorities agree. Loban says that "... tests typically measure what is easy to measure, not what is important to measure... Almost every commercial test in the language arts can be likened to the inadequate actress who ran the gamut of emotions from A to B" (p. 486).

Livingston remarks that "The growing controversy regarding standardized reading tests has reached such proportions that every segment in education--administrators, classroom teachers, reading specialists, and school psychologists--sees the need for other means to measure achievement in reading" (1974, p. 878). Also, he refers to a comment made by Dr. Henry S. Dyer, Vice President of Educational Testing Service and a recognized authority on testing, to the effect that "... these standardized reading tests grossly distort a student's performance and the variation that exists among tests of different publishers can produce different results" (p. 878).
Not only are standardized reading tests considered to be unreliable instruments for evaluating reading competency—such tests commonly exhibit a pronounced cultural and linguistic bias (K. Goodman, 1975, p. 626). It is generally recognized that such biases in the test format put minority children at an additional disadvantage, and yet, these tests continue to be used by most school systems to evaluate student performance.

If the structure of evaluation employed in this research project was to get at each child's language competence "... that he can make use of when he chooses to do so, or when he feels comfortable about using it" (K. Goodman, 1975, p. 627), then evaluation had to assume a different form.

How and when to observe reading behavior as a means to evaluating underlying competence was the crux of the issue here. Goodman's earlier statements imply that evaluation should focus directly on the reading acquisition process as it takes place naturally in the classroom. Cohen & Stern say that "for the present, our best technique... [for understanding younger children] seems to be the careful gathering of evidence via on-the-spot records" (1958, p. 1). Black agrees, and emphasizes that "evaluation of children's... language competence should take place in a variety of social contexts so that children's facility with functions of language can be assessed in a more comprehensive manner... [and in the] particular communicative settings which determine their communicative competence..." (1979, p. 527).
In this investigator's opinion, Black's comments are well taken. Evaluation should take place in the very communicative setting in which the child uses language purposefully and competently every day. Only in this way, could the teacher-investigator hope to assess each child's true functional reading competence and answer Ken Goodman's basic question.

Also, evaluation benefited from a variety of data gathering strategies that are appropriate for the particular communicative setting where children use language purposefully, and where competence in reading is naturally displayed. Evaluation was then on going, comprehensive and holistic.

At the outset it is important to stress that "diagnosis goes on within the teacher, not on a checklist" (Agin, 1975, p. 372) or by means of any other evaluative tool. This teacher-investigator used many tools to gather data on a child's experiences with reading but she weighed all the evidence gathered and arrived at a diagnosis. As personalized teaching is essential to the reading program, so personalized evaluation is essential to the reading program and to understanding and identifying the salient characteristics of each child's developing ability to read and to evaluate the Goodman initial reading approach in application.

Personalized evaluation requires a repertoire of strategies that are sensitive monitors of the reading acquisition process. Many authorities consider the individual reading conference to be the most effective means to gather a wealth of diagnostic information on a child's reading
strengths and needs (Agin, p. 373). Veatch says: "Everything that comes before leads to it. Everything that comes after should be determined by what happens in it" (p. 154). Hollander notes that "Strengths and weaknesses in comprehension may be determined in a more detailed manner from a one-to-one reading encounter than from mass evaluation" (1974, p. 905).

In a very interesting article on using the individual reading conference as a tool for diagnosing kindergarteners' language competence, Harris describes how the teacher-pupil relationship is strengthened when the teacher gives his or her "... undivided attention to a single child without interruption from the others " (1958, p. 98). She remarks on the fact that the children's instructional needs are all bound up with their affective needs—the affection and individual attention given them during the conference are part and parcel of the personal attention paid to their reading. In effect, the individual reading conference provides "... a definite time for ... [observing] the child closely as a total personality" (p. 100) as well as a time for nurturing that total personality.

For all these reasons the individual reading conference was the cornerstone of this reading program. There is no question that the potential for rapport during the individual conference gives the skilled and caring teacher an unparalleled opportunity to diagnose functional language competence and to build a stronger relationship with each child. Both are critical if learning is to occur. Too often, the teacher is sensi-
tive to cognitive needs that emerge during the conference, but unable or unwilling to engage the child in the nurturing personal relationship that is vital to reading success (Robert Murphy, Personal Communication, August 15, 1979).

As an essential feature of this reading project, the teacher-investigator conducted weekly individual reading conferences with each child lasting between five and ten minutes during which time the child read something of his/her choice and then answered some open ended questions that focused on comprehension and attitudes towards reading. Veatch lists a number of such questions in her text. (See Chapter Six).

Having explained and role-played the procedure in advance with the class, the teacher-investigator noted reading strengths and needs—both cognitive and affective—as revealed during the conference. As part of establishing closure, she reviewed these reading strengths with the child and indicated one need—with the emphasis solidly on positive reinforcement and building a trusting relationship. Together, teacher and pupil decided on an instructional "next step" that the child took to improve his/her reading.

During and after the conference the teacher made a written record of the student's strengths, needs and the critical next step to be taken—as well as any additional information she considered pertinent to the child's reading acquisition process and/or to his/her total development progress. (See pp. 93-94 for samples of reading conference notes).
Once a month, the teacher-investigator examined the notes from all four conferences looking not for "... any one measure of behavior---but rather... a pattern of behaviors" (Mayer, 1975, p. 343). At this time, the teacher-investigator transferred these notes to a comprehensive checklist that was "... designed specifically to serve as a permanent record of such information..." (Hollander, p. 906). This checklist, the Reading Performance Inventory, focuses on specific characteristics of reading behavior that usually occur naturally over time during the reading acquisition process. In this way, the teacher was able to describe in detail what the individual child is doing when he/she reads.

It should be noted that the Reading Performance Inventory, designed by the teacher-investigator, is very different in function from the reading skills inventories that accompany commercially published reading programs. Such skill inventories establish a set of sequential reading skills that each child is to follow in a pre-determined instructional program. However, there is no sequence of behavioral objectives that can serve as a guideline for reading instruction, as discussed earlier.

Instead, this checklist focused on characteristics of reading behavior that contribute to functional reading competence in Grade One without determining a specific sequence or scope for each child's development.

The Reading Performance Inventory was organized around four categories—Comprehension, Vocabulary, Study Skills and Reading as Inter-
action. Listed under each category were three levels of accomplish-
ment—the skill has been attempted, worked on or mastered. See pp.
59-60 for samples of the Reading Performance Inventory Form.

At the close of the school year in June, the teacher-investigator
taped the final individual reading conference with each child. This
tape represents a record of a given child's reading competence at the
end of first grade. With it and all accompanying reading conference
notes throughout the school year, the teacher constructed an evalu-
tive profile in the form of a cumulative Reading Performance Inventory
that summarized in detail his/her underlying reading competence at the
end of Grade One.

While the individual reading conference notes systematized by the
Reading Performance Inventory provided the primary source of data on
individual pupil progress, the teacher-investigator kept anecdotal
records of pupil behavior, both individual and group, related to read-
ing as well. Strange notes that "Diagnosis is a tricky business, the
only chance to get reliable data is to get a lot of data" (1978, p.
179), adding that such anecdotal records are one of the forms that
management of a reading program often takes (p. 180).

Also, anecdotal records are one way to gather a good deal of first
hand information about reading that occurs naturally during the entire
school day—not just during "Reading Time" as defined by a schedule or
routine. Data from these log entries was categorized around six mag-
net areas related to reading competence. These were: expanding language
use, expanding vocabulary, comprehension, motivation and interest, books
read, and self-image. Two students were observed each day in turn.
In some respects, this daily log contributed the most interesting data on individual and group reading behavior because the behavior was spontaneous and self-motivated. See p. 61 for a sample of the Daily Log Form and Appendix C for excerpts from the Daily Log.

This investigator prepared two observation forms with which to evaluate this reading program. Observation Form One gathered and organized data on each pre-planned learning encounter of the reading program. The teacher-investigator completed Observation Form One after each lesson as a record of her specific impressions of the Goodman method in operation. Form One included the following:

1. preparatory activities
2. anticipated reading activities
3. functional language use
4. divergent student responses
5. spontaneous learning directions
6. interpersonal interaction during lesson
7. additional comments
8. appropriate next step for reading program

The purpose of this rating instrument was to gauge how a given lesson in the context of a school day's activities and experiences, contributed to the reading acquisition process as conceived of by Ken and Yetta Goodman.

Observation Form Two was an attitude measure that encouraged the young child to reflect on his/her experiences with reading during the course of a reading unit. It was designed so that the six year old child could respond to and rate his/her reading activities during each three week instructional period. See pp. 54-57 for samples of all Observation Two Forms.
The purpose of Observation Form Two in the overall evaluative scheme of this research project was two-fold. First, it acknowledged the primacy of the child over the materials and methods of the program by giving him/her a regular opportunity to evaluate his/her own learning in a way that is meaningful to a first grader.

The importance of appropriate student self-evaluation even for young children cannot be overemphasized. The child's total development, of which the reading acquisition process is an integral part in our literate society, calls for nurturing self-direction and autonomy so that the child can learn naturally and become an independent reader. Observation Form Two was of particular value to this researcher because she learned about the effectiveness of a reading unit by examining the responses. There was no scoring, but the patterns that pupil responses took revealed "what worked and what didn't" in a given instructional unit (Alexander & Filler, 1975, p. 376).
Observation Form One

Date ________________

Preparatory activities

Anticipated reading activities

How lesson generated functional language use

Divergent student responses

Spontaneous learning directions

Interpersonal interaction

Comments

Next steps
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guinea Pig Unit</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Guinea pig" /></td>
<td>I can make a guinea pig house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Guinea pig" /></td>
<td>I can make a guinea pig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Open book" /></td>
<td>I can make a book about Fluffy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Open book" /></td>
<td>I can read a chart about Fluffy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Open book" /></td>
<td>I can read a book about a bus ride.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Guinea pig" /></td>
<td>I can help care for Fluffy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image7" alt="Headphones" /></td>
<td>I can listen to a book about a bus ride.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Form Two Unit Two

- Read a 1-8 counting book
- Make My Bootle Shoe
- Make a calendar
- Make a gingerbread doll
- Make a Bus Story
- Make a book about ME
- Make a mask
- Make a face-maker story
- Make a letter home
- Make vegetable soup
- Make a witch story
- Make an old story
- Read a story to Mrs. Park
Form Two Unit Three

1. I can read some signs. Stop

2. I can make a sign. Fluffy

3. I can make a Halloween story.

4. I can make a rhyme train.

5. I can read a story to Mrs. Park.

6. I can make a round in a pancake book.

7. I can make part of Mr. Pine's city.

Name
Form Two

1. I made bubbles and observed them.

2. I made an African drum.


5. I made all about Silent words.

6. I know all about compound words.

7. I read with Mrs. Park.
## Individual Reading Conference Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Read</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next Step

Comments
Reading Performance Inventory

Comprehension

1. Can identify main idea
2. Uses context clues
3. Employs prediction skills
4. Is developing critical thinking sk.
5. Responds creatively to stories
6. Reads orally with clarity and exp.
7. Is becoming an independent reader
8. Understands a wider and wider range of written language
9. Can summarize

Vocabulary Skills

1. Is developing a basic sight word v.
2. Identifies color words
3. Identifies number words
4. Identifies word opp.
5. Identifies rhyming words
6. Identifies compound words
7. Recognizes figurative language

Name

Date
Reading Performance Inventory (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Skills</th>
<th>Attempt</th>
<th>Effort</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Follows directions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Uses picture clues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is developing punctuation skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Can use alphabetic word order</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Can use a table of contents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Can classify</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Is developing dictionary skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Is developing simple reference sk.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Self-selects books for reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Can skim</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading as Interaction

| 1. Stays on reading task                                                     |         |        |         |
| 2. Responds to teacher attempts to establish rapport                          |         |        |         |
| 3. Enjoys reading                                                            |         |        |         |
| 4. Feels good about self as a reader                                         |         |        |         |
| 5. Helps others with reading                                                 |         |        |         |

Books Read
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Expanding Lang. Use</th>
<th>Expanding Vocabulary</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Books Read</th>
<th>Self-Image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday
To summarize, these evaluation methods enabled the teacher-investigator to prepare the following as a contribution to future research and classroom practice:

1. an individual pupil profile in the form of a Reading Performance Inventory that traced the reading acquisition process for each child thereby proving or disproving the central hypothesis of this research project—that the Goodman socio-psycholinguistic approach to initial reading instruction produces reading proficiency.

2. a detailed account of the pilot reading program in operation over the course of one school year in a culturally diverse first grade classroom. This group profile traced the implementation process and provided preliminary indications of how the Goodman approach can be operationalized for effective use in a first grade reading program. These preliminary indications are the first steps toward an alternate methodology for initial reading instruction.

3. criteria with which teachers and researchers can judge the effectiveness of the Goodman approach to beginning reading instruction.

4. suggestions regarding future application methodology of a socio-psycholinguistic approach to reading.

5. an assessment of the effectiveness of the research design permitted the teacher-investigator to evaluate the success of the Goodman approach to beginning reading in this pilot
study, her implementation of the Goodman approach, and
the success of the research instruments in addressing
these issues.

Finally, the researcher gathered evidence on the role of decoding
in the reading acquisition process by applying an approach to begin-
ning reading that does not focus on decoding lessons. Because the
teacher-investigator found that the absence of an externally imposed
system of instruction in decoding became an issue in the course of
the implementation process, the circumstances are documented and
described in detail in Chapter Four.
The subject class consists of sixteen children assigned by administrative decision to the teacher-investigator's first grade class in the Fall of 1979 at the Jackson Street School in Northampton, Massachusetts. An examination of the class's social and academic characteristics reveals an imbalance in each of the categories (high percentage of one-parent families, low percentage of two-parent families, high percentage on free lunch, low scores on the kindergarten readiness test).

Thirty-eight percent of the class comes from one-parent families, sixty-three percent from two-parent families. Forty-four percent of the class received a free lunch daily under a federal assistance program to the school. A breakdown of scores on the Metropolitan Readiness Test for Grade One taken at the end of kindergarten shows that twenty-five percent had a cumulative score of A, nineteen percent of B, thirty-seven percent of C and six percent of D. Three students were not tested.

If these percentages are compared to the average of the entire pool of first graders (see Table One), one finds that they are consistent in one direction. The subject class is below average in every instance. Of particular interest are the readiness scores. Children with a grade of A or B on the test are underrepresented in this class. Correspondingly, children with a grade of C or D are overrepresented.
Table 1

Characteristics of First Grade Classes
Jackson Street School 1979-1980

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of 1 parent families</th>
<th>% of 2 parent families</th>
<th>% on free lunch</th>
<th>Kindergarten Readiness Scores*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunn</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Grade</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as a whole</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This test is given at end of kindergarten to indicate readiness for Grade 1.
The point to be made here is that whereas the teacher-investigator (henceforth to be abbreviated as t-i) expected her class to be a typical first grade class at the Jackson Street School, as a group it was in fact less prepared for learning to read than other first graders in the school in that year according to the test results.

For reasons discussed at length in Chapter Three, the t-i questions the validity of such tests. However, a brief examination of the fabric of interpersonal relationships in the class underscores the trend apparent in the statistics described above.

As a group, the subject class had considerable difficulty getting along with each other and accepting the school routine and teacher directives. The children's energy and attention was frequently diverted by bickering, silliness or other inappropriate behavior. For example, there was a perpetual argument about lining up to leave the classroom. Some children invariably ignored the class rule and let a friend or friends "cut" in front of them, an action which antagonized the person behind. Such disputes degenerated from loud complaints to fighting in a matter of seconds.

The t-i's experience was confirmed by comments from colleagues such as, "You've got the crazies this year." This comment, made half in jest, refers to the restlessness that plagued interpersonal dynamics in this classroom.

While it is true that the small size of the class was a considerable advantage in dealing with the emotional needs of the children, their disruptive behavior constituted an obstacle which the t-i and the
children worked hard to overcome. Clearly such classroom behavior is consistent with the lack of preparedness revealed in the statistical analysis.

Of significance to this study is the fact that the reading program—as the centerpiece of attention and effort in Grade One—was more difficult to initiate because of these problems.

**Preliminary Indications**

From the very start, reading in this classroom revolved around functional activities. On the first day of school the class observed the behavior of our new guinea pig, Fluffy, and recorded it on an experience chart. Then, the children made individual captioned pictures about her. Later that same day, the children made a simple "book" about themselves to take home as evidence of their success with reading. Almost everyone took great care in making this book. The t-i welcomed this early indication that the students viewed learning to read as serious business in first grade.

Informally, we used reading to give directions, to record attendance and to identify objects around the classroom. In both areas—formal reading instruction and informal classroom use—a premium was placed on making reading meaningful by grounding it in immediate personal experience.

True to the theory that, "Reading is best learned when learners use it to get something—information, a message, a story" (Goodmans, p. 24), the lessons that adhered to this maxim captured the children's interest completely. For example, the students were completely absorbed in preparing and cooking vegetable soup from a recipe written together.
Correspondingly, when reading activities were more abstract, there was less learner involvement as evidenced by a categorization lesson the class tackled as a group. About a third of the children tired in the middle of sorting everyday objects among food, animal and people categories.

This observation was confirmed by the self-evaluation of the children who preferred and remembered the hands-on, direct experiences that incorporated reading naturally and appealed to a six year old.

Many of these reading experiences produced immediate success with reading something, even if that something was only one's own name, or the name of the class guinea pig.

The t-i discovered that planning and implementing such reading strategies smoothly and effectively takes time and practice. The teacher must know the children, their personalities and individual strengths and needs, in order to provide encounters with print that tie reading to purposeful activity. This knowledge can not be acquired over night, and must be modified as the children and their skills change.

An important related consideration is the fact that the children need a relaxed initial period of adjustment to a longer school day (from half-day in kindergarten to a full day in first grade), a more rigorous school routine, and each other. The nature of the reading program demands that the teacher concentrate on establishing a warm, trusting relationship with the class. She did this by holding each child on her lap frequently, giving reassuring pats and/or hugs, and
expressing her concern during frequent group meetings as well as in many other spontaneous ways. This relationship is essential to the success of the reading program.

Within six weeks of the program's inception, the class was using reading in the following ways:

1. for cooking directions
2. for different kinds of classroom directions
3. to record experiences
4. to communicate with each other and with parents
5. to state preferences
6. to solve problems
7. to organize role-playing
8. to celebrate birthdays
9. to read stories
10. to focus on familiar nursery rhymes
11. as a reference for recording later experiences.

The materials developed by Bill Martin in his Sounds of Language series for Holt proved particularly effective in this program because the Martin materials use language imaginatively and repetitively in stories and verse that appeal immediately to children.

Already, at this early stage in the year (mid-October), the children were aware of and commented upon individual elements of written language such as rhyming, word opposites, punctuation, capitalization and initial sounds that occurred in a context of meaning. Their interest verified the Goodman contention that the individual pieces of language structure emerge naturally and children derive control of them if encountered in functional situations in the course of learning to read (Open Discussion, p. 496).

As a consequence of this bee-hive of reading activity, the children began to take more initiative in shaping and expanding the reading pro-
gram. By the beginning of November, many children read from the collected LEA charts, Bill Martin materials or simple trade books on their own. Much of this reading was shared with a friend.

At the same time, an expansion of functional reading in the "literate environment" of the classroom took place. Children demonstrated to the t-i and to each other that they could read the fire drill directions, the signs on the bathroom doors, the labels on the tape recorder, the sign-up charts or the morning message.

As part of the formal reading program, the class completed a variety of self-made books. Many of these books borrowed the clever repetitive format that Bill Martin uses. Making individual books gave every child an opportunity to complete the text of a simple story, to illustrate each page appropriately, to assemble the pages in order, and to bind the book with staples in preparation for reading at home. These books became an important aspect of the teacher-designed reading program. The combination of reading and writing in the creation of a personal book encouraged independent reading and laid the groundwork for the independent writing that began after mid-year. Understandably, the children felt considerable pride of authorship.

The t-i asked the children to take these books home for two reasons—so that parents could appreciate their child’s reading progress, and so that parents would participate more fully in the reading acquisition process. A major goal of this reading program is to encourage reading as a natural and useful activity outside the classroom as well as in it.
An example of the simple repetitive text that was used in these self-made books follows:

Brown Bear, Brown Bear
What do you see?
I see a ____________ (to be completed by pupil)
looking at me.

The morning message was the "launch" for the school day. In it, the t-i communicated to the class about their relationship and about activities and events in which they would be involved. Sometimes she commented on the world outside the classroom and on the children themselves. This morning message became much more than a means of getting the day started and a source of meaningful reading. It was instrumental in building a personal relationship between teacher and class and establishing a warm atmosphere in the classroom. For example, when the t-i came to school one day and wrote in the morning message "I need a hug from you. Do you need a hug from me?" the response was emphatic. The children read, understood, discussed and acted upon that message throughout the day and long after that. This incident and others like it underscore the crucial role that feelings of security and self-worth play in learning (see McDermott, Chapter Three, p. 37).

By November, the students had made the transition to Grade One and were successfully building a close relationship with each other and with the t-i despite the disruptive behavior that continued to complicate classroom life and learning.

The t-i continued to build the reading program on functional activities that were personally meaningful and that encouraged individual
response, and to integrate lessons as much as possible with other areas of the first grade curriculum. Lesson integration had a reinforcing effect on learning and created a sense of continuity that encouraged participation.

The unit on Signs undertaken during this period illustrates how this approach to reading unfolds around a meaningful theme. The students discussed signs and their uses, looked for signs in the school environment, dictated a chart about signs, made functional signs for home and school, mounted and used signs, constructed a "city" with appropriate signs, listened to stories about signs and read books about signs. In this way, reading was not an isolated exercise with little relevance to the real lives of the children but a natural extension of meaningful activity.

The informal reading conference (see Chapter Three, pp. 47-48) played a crucial supporting role in the reading program by enabling the t-i to get closer to each child's reading acquisition process and to systematically gather data on that process. This weekly individual reading conference also created a regular opportunity for the teacher to see each child as a whole person and to relate to that person and his or her reading strengths and needs.

The close connection between oral and written language was more apparent to the t-i once the children relaxed with each other and with her. They did more talking and sharing of ideas and everyone spent more time describing his or her feelings as the struggle to overcome the disruptive behavior continued. The daily story time was particularly useful
in stimulating oral fluency and nurturing an appreciation of literature. For instance, when the children heard William Steig's classic story of family love, *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*, they were enthralled by Sylvester's miraculous return to his parents. Afterwards, many students talked at length about what they would do if they found a magic pebble as he did. Many stories lend themselves to such higher order questions.* When teachers build higher order questioning into the reading curriculum, they are helping children to develop complex reading and thinking skills. Too often such skills are not taught in first grade for a variety of reasons--often because the teacher does not have the time or the training to do so. In this class, students were excited by the daily challenge to think hard and articulate an answer to the t-i's higher order questions.

In November, the external environment intruded on the classroom and its reading program. Teachers do not function in isolation and extraneous variables operate freely in real classrooms. Parents and administrators have expectations about instructional methods and the process of learning to read that must be considered. This reading program represents a departure from traditional classroom practice. Also, it does not impose a defined programmatic sequence on the learning process or present the teacher with uniform (norm-referenced) results since each child is actively learning and exploring written language in his/her own way and at his/her own pace albeit with considerable teacher intervention, encouragement and planning.

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* See Bloom's Taxonomy on Education Objectives for a guide to developing good questioning techniques (Sanders, 1966)
The parents of one child who was still at a pre-reading stage became very vocal about their dissatisfaction with the reading program. Ultimately, this concern was translated into an administrative request to the t-i to make changes in her program that would give beginning readers a more externally structured program in order to begin reading as soon as possible, ready or not.

In compliance with this request, the t-i took a close look at the children who were beginning readers (about half of the class at this time). These pupils experienced many instances of reading success, but they seemed to lack the ability as yet to link these instances together in a cumulative way. For example, the students were reading a story called The Missing Necklace (from the Scott Foresman Reading Systems Series, Level 3). Almost everyone could read the story smoothly due to the repetitive text and the visual cues provided by the illustrations. However, on looking closely at some of the readers, it was apparent that they were not looking at the print most of the time. With the help of the illustrations, they were reading the text from memory. Memorizing the text in this way is a means of practicing fluent reading and learning how the written language works. Such a learning strategy makes sense as a natural preparation for reading. Clay confirms this:

At some time during the first year at school visual perception begins to provide cues but for a long period these are piecemeal, unreliable and unstable. This is largely because the child must learn where and how to attend to print. (1972, p. 153)
Nevertheless, in late November, the t-i began to use the Ginn 720 reading program on a daily basis with the initial readers in addition to the teacher-designed reading activities and experiences. A typical reading lesson using the Ginn materials follows:

First, the t-i introduces the new vocabulary on the blackboard using a variation of the cloze technique (Pikulski, 1976, p. 317). The children are referred to a group of sentences on the blackboard, each one with a missing final word. For example:

The raccoon is under the _____.
The raccoon is in the ________.
The raccoon is near the ________.
The raccoon hides from the _____.

The students, in turn, complete a sentence with a word that makes good sense to them. In this way, the vocabulary is presented in a meaningful context rather than as isolated word drill.

Then, the t-i and the students read the story in the Ginn text out loud together. Reading the whole story in unison is a form of assisted reading (Hoskisson, p. 494). This technique gives the learners more actual time spent in reading text and also provides an opportunity to practice fluent reading, since the teacher is providing a means of being immersed in the telling of the story.

Finally, the lesson concludes with two or three comprehension questions to insure that the students understand the story and to make the story content meaningful to them. Such a question might be, "Why do you think raccoons make their home in trees?" To conclude the lesson, the t-i gives the pupils an indication of where the focus of instruc-
tion will be on the following day as a kind of preview and to establish continuity with today's efforts. She might say, "Tomorrow we will take turns reading the raccoon story and practice the reading skill of skimming and as usual, visitors who want to read the story with us are welcome."

Although many educators object to the highly contrived, restricted, and sometimes irrelevant text of published reading programs, the pupils who were beginning readers in this class seemed to benefit from the repetition of vocabulary and the predictability of the sentences. The Ginn 720 reading materials met a need these children had as evidenced by their growing ability to read connected discourse. McClenathan supports this position:

Those of us who teach children in the primary grades know that challenge is important and it should be offered in due time. However, we recognize the value of early success with simple reading experiences. If mushy food (controlled vocabulary books) provides that success then surely it fills a critical need. To the first-grader who is just beginning to take his or her first steps in the world of books, the satisfaction of independent performance is paramount. (1980, p. 62)

In the t-i's opinion, the Ginn 720 materials provided that satisfaction of performance which was a necessary ingredient in the truly independent reading that followed.

The impact of this decision was enormous. The Ginn 720 program in concert with the teacher-designed reading program produced almost immediate success with reading connected discourse. As word recognition grew steadily from the carefully controlled vocabulary, the children could see their progress tangibly. They glowed with a sense of accomplishment.
Within six weeks of combined instruction, these children were more motivated and felt less frustrated by written language.

The t-i observed the following changes:

1. Learners were not overwhelmed with print because the Ginn materials focus on a highly structured and limited context. Children could deal with the simple repetitive text and read the stories successfully.

2. Learners felt more successful and more interested in reading because they felt that they could read.

3. Learning was cumulative because it built on a controlled sequence that expands very gradually.

Self-confidence is essential to learning to read. As a result of the feelings of success generated by the combination of the Ginn Readers and the teacher-designed program, every child in the class could get meaning from at least simple text and could see themselves making progress in terms they, their peers, and their parents understood.

In fact this modification of the reading program as planned does not constitute a violation of the principles on which this study is based because the modification was in response to the frustration that the children were experiencing. The Goodmans themselves say that what "... turns out to be essential in building initial literacy... [is the educational premise that] education takes the learners where they are and helps them grow in whatever directions are legitimate for them" (p. 22).

The month of February saw dramatic progress in reading for all children. The children reading in Ginn plus the teacher-designed program demonstrated the following gains:
1. A focus on task that was not there before
2. An increase in involvement in reading group
3. An ability to follow directions better
4. More active participation in reading activities
5. More reading 'aha's' took place
6. More self-discipline
7. Reading was more productive, relaxed and integrated

The children doing the teacher-designed reading program were reading more challenging stories, practicing reading for fluency, giving reading performances and sharpening their critical reading skills.

These pupils made frequent visits to the kindergarten to read stories and to discuss reading with the five year olds. The couch in the reading corner became a favorite spot to share a book with a friend, and trips to the school library were a daily occurrence.

All the children showed an increase in classroom behavior that reinforced and extended reading instruction. Specifically, the t-1 observed a consistent increase in:

1. informal individual and pair reading
2. interest in, use of, and sharing of library books
3. child-initiated reading with or to the teacher
4. interest in the reading behavior of others
5. interest in reading written language in the environment of the classroom and beyond
6. discoveries about how language works
7. an interest in writing messages—the beginning of independent writing (see Appendix F for samples of children's writing)

During this month, the t-1 was joined by a student teacher and a bilingual tutor. The intensive personal teaching that two more adults in the classroom for part of each day made possible enhanced the learning of every child. Particularly with regard to the two bilingual children in the class, the individual instruction they received made a significant difference in their progress because this instruction in-
creased the time they spent reading text. The time spent actually reading text is a key factor in learning to read because as Frank Smith argues, "... children learn to read by reading..." (1976, p. 297).

One of the underlying assumptions of the teacher-designed reading program is that instruction should support the natural language and life experiences of the students and should reflect the variety of cultures that exist in our society today. In an effort to affirm the Hispanic culture represented in this classroom by two children, the t-i read stories simultaneously in Spanish and English (several side by side translations of simple picture books are available), wrote comments on student papers in Spanish as well as in English, communicated with the bilingual students in Spanish when it seemed appropriate, and demonstrated to the class as a whole that the same meaning can be conveyed by different languages. She modelled the view that it is a considerable advantage to speak two languages, and eventually to be able to read two languages.

During a school-wide multi-cultural fair (to be discussed later in this chapter) the class focused on African culture and geography. The fact that only one child in the class is of African heritage played only a secondary role in the decision to study Africa. Historically, people of color world-wide have been singled out as targets of racism and their cultures ignored if not denigrated.

The t-i sought to affirm the lives of African children and their culture to counter the ethnocentric self-absorption of the dominant American culture and its educational system. She hoped to expand the pupils' awareness and appreciation of the variety of cultures that
contribute to American society. In fact, the emphasis placed throughout the curriculum on recognizing individual differences was a broader based effort to do the same thing.

By April 1st, there was a noticeable shift in the classroom toward fewer teacher-planned reading activities and more pupil-initiated reading activities. The t-i was still using Ginn materials with some pupils in addition to the teacher-designed reading program, but gradually more of the children's reading time during the school day was given over to self-initiated, self-directed and self-paced reading of library books, trade books and reading texts. As the children learned to use written language for their own purposes, they assumed more responsibility for their own learning. The t-i observed many reading activities that were initiated by the students.

Some children read with a friend or went down to the kindergarten to give a reading performance. Others made simple illustrated books or wrote (or copied) a message for family or friends. One child drew elaborate pictures on the spare blackboard and added carefully written text. Her efforts encouraged others to use the blackboard for creative writing as well as drawing.

Because of the open grouping policy in the classroom, many children took advantage of the opportunity to read not only with their teacher-designated group but with other groups as well. Sometimes, pupils did this in an effort to change their reading group designation (to move up to the "top" reading group), but often, they simply wanted to read a good story that was on the agenda for another group.
By now, every child in the class had begun to make discoveries about the structure of the written language and to share them with the t-i. These so-called reading "aha's" did not generally occur until February of the school year. While there were isolated instances of such discoveries prior to this, the students did not begin to make totally spontaneous personal discoveries about how written language works until then. The Goodmans remark that children "... build a sense of form and structure within their functional, meaningful experiences with language" (p. 21). The reading "aha's" are the external manifestations of this internal process of developing rules about the structure of written language. A transcription of these discoveries follows. All student names were changed to preserve their right to privacy.

February 25
Reva said, "This is yellow, this is yellow and this is yellow." Then she pointed out that and fits and is needed before the final clause.

February 26
Annette made a captioned picture of her parents and incorporated the number word one in her caption. Then she commented to the t-i that she had used a number word by herself.

February 27
Stewart added the word hibernate as a label for his picture of a bear and showed his work to the t-i. (The word had been written on the blackboard earlier in connection with a discussion of bears and their behavior in winter.) He made it very clear that he wanted to use the appropriate label to display his knowledge or what the teacher had called a "fourth grade" word.

February 27
Jane, Jessica and Sara among others regularly used a dictionary to complete sentences. They now possess the skill to use a dictionary efficiently and therefore search for "the right word" that meets their specific needs.
February 27  Stewart said, "If you take the 's' off of books, it will be book."

February 28  Susy said, "To get read, you spell red and put an a in it."

February 29  In response to the t-i's question, "What word in the morning message joins two things?", Mandy said, "And joins two names, the names of two teachers."

Mandy commented on the teacher's reading of Chitty, Chitty, Bang, Bang (in a primer version) that, "The book was different from the movie."

March 3  Rob recognized and identified the abbreviation U.S. in a library book and said, "They forgot the A."

March 5  Having written zoz, John asked the t-i, "Is this word zoo?" When the t-i responded by saying the word in question slowly, he corrected his written word by himself.

March 5  Susy changed all the he's to she's while reading The Magic Fish with the t-i.

March 6  Jessica, Sara and Lisa added written labels to their Book of Opposites. (See children's work samples, Appendix F).

March 7  Annette said, "You get you if you take the r off in your."

Eva became intrigued with using the dictionary and produced her own dictionary of types of dogs. (See children's work samples.)

March 10  John said, "Who rhymes with do," having skimmed the morning message.

March 11  Sara wrote the entire text of Happy Birthday from memory on the small blackboard.

March 11  Rob, Pam and Annette wrote the title for their math wizard books on their own.
March 11
Mandy discovered the power of sending secret notes to classmates. This discovery led to the either/or note referred to in Chapter 4, p.96 which caused considerable turmoil among the students.

March 13
Susy wrote and illustrated her own story about losing a tooth while at home, and brought it to school to read to the class. (See children's work samples.)

Sara again wrote Happy Birthday from memory and this time, Annette copied it.

Valerie was using the teacher's pointer to read the morning message by herself before the morning bell called the class to order.

March 14
Sara, Annette, Lisa and Mandy, among others, assumed responsibility for the weather chart. The chart shows the correct day of the week and describes the weather outside.

When the weather changed abruptly, Susy changed the chart.

March 18
Annette said, "I like reading."

March 19
Rob noticed the word ladybug on a work paper and said, "That's a compound word."

Jessica experimented with writing in script. She wrote loves in script. Eva became interested in script and began experimenting with her name.

March 24
Stewart said, "That doesn't say to, it has two o's." His discovery led to a whole class lesson on the uses of to, too and two.

March 25
Susy made a beautiful illustrated alphabet frieze for the classroom. It was mounted in the corner cupboard where students go to work and read quietly.

March 27
Annette said, "Look at these... big, medium size and small pencils."
March 28 Reva said, "It says big, bit would have a t."

April 2 Stewart went to the bathroom door to copy the word boy for a work paper.

April 7 Jane used the room charts as a source of vocabulary for her personal writing.

April 9 Reva said, "Jellybeans is a compound word."

April 14 Eva was proofreading a note Stephen had written. She pointed out to him that it said, "Stephen I love you" because he had not put in the necessary spacing. She also recommended that he add punctuation.

April 16 Pam remarked, "That e is silent," (in kite).

April 28 Jane asked the t-i, "Why is there a big L at the beginning of the sentence and not a small one?" Her question generated the whole class lesson.

Andy said, "Snake has a silent e in it."

Stewart said, "You can turn ten into tent by addint a t at the end."

(Spring Vacation and more than two weeks of standardized testing caused a break in this anecdotal record)

April 29 Rob used the table of contents to locate the story for today and to locate other stories he has read in the past.

Mandy said, "All three of these words end with g--dog, king, and frog."

May 20 Susy noticed a sign in an illustration from a reading text. She read it and talked about the relationship between the story and the picture.

May 22 Mandy skimmed the morning message on her own and went back to correct herself saying, "It doesn't say "As quick as a grasshopper", it says, 'Quick as a grasshopper.' "
May 23  On the class field trip to Burger King, many children read signs they saw on the walk to the restaurant as well as signs inside the restaurant. Reva read the words on her coins and dollar bill.

May 29  Mandy sorted out how alphabetic order works and said with reference to names of class members, "Andy should come first."

Jane commented that Janie has a long e sound at the end.

Many children noted that the Ginn 720 story "As Quick As a Grasshopper" uses figurative language to make a picture in the mind of the reader.

It is likely that the initial reading success students achieved with Ginn materials played a considerable role in the independent reading that these children now demonstrated.

Belying the fears of some critics that children are inhibited by the impoverished language of basal readers, the pupils reading in Ginn did not seem aware of its overly simple and stilted sentences. Instead, they focused on getting meaning and felt proud of their success.

The t-i took steps to minimize the potentially negative impact of reading a steady diet of such stilted language by reading the Ginn text with the children in as natural a voice as possible, by focusing on comprehension in instructional strategies, and by encouraging the readers to participate in the functional reading activities of the teacher-designed reading program.

Late in April, regular classroom routine was disrupted by nearly two weeks of standardized testing, a requirement of the school department. While it is possible that the reading tests given at.
this time had an impact on the reading acquisition process in the classroom, the t-i took steps to minimize the likelihood of that happening by repeatedly distinguishing test-taking activity from all regular classroom activities. The issue of using such tests is addressed later in this chapter.

In May, the final full month of the school year, the teacher-designed reading activities and the reading activities that the children initiated and managed on their own took up more than half of each school day. During this period, the entire school held a multicultural fair. This experience reinforced the emphasis on individual differences that was a guiding principle of the reading program from the start. The students of this class made a book of captioned pictures about animals of Africa that was displayed as part of a school-wide Multi-Cultural Exhibit. In connection with this instructional unit on Africa, they read and heard many folktales. Thus reading became a window on the world at large.

With most of the children reading proficiently, there was a wider interest in refining reading skills. Many children enjoyed skimming for information, using a dictionary or a table of contents, or perfecting their oral reading with a reading performance. There was a substantial increase in requests for word cards (teacher-made upon pupil request) to assist personal writing. As a group, the children went back to work on personal dictionaries they had started earlier in the year and then put aside when interest flagged. This time, interest was high because now most of the students had acquired the skills to use a self-made personal repository of words as a reference for independent writing.
In summary, the children themselves were "... involved in creating the literate environment" (Goodmans, p. 23). The Goodmans mention this as an important goal of their approach to reading (p. 23). It is useful to examine the factors that contribute to the evolution of this literate environment.

The fact that all three reading groups were open to every student in the class encouraged children to spend more time in actual reading than is possible when the child is limited to his or her own group. Predictably, almost all the students wanted to be part of the most advanced reading group. With the open grouping option, they were free to do so. To accommodate the range of ability and the expanded size of the "top" reading group that resulted from open grouping, the t-i asked the pupils to arrange their seating so that visitors alternated with regular group members. Each regular group member was put in charge of assisting a guest sitting next to him or her. This arrangement helped to minimize the impact on the group created by the influx of less able readers. Incidentally, the guest readers more than made up in motivation for what they may have lacked in skill.

The introduction of a regular time each Friday afternoon for pair reading reinforced the informal sharing of books already taking place in the classroom, and also increased the time all pupils spent reading. In this class, pair reading was structured so that each pair of students took time to self-select something to read to each other and then managed the task without direct teacher supervision. In a sense, pair reading represented a peer support system for the reading program.
At the same time, the t-i was encouraging the many individual reading projects that students initiated on their own, she read student-made books at Story Time, set aside special sharing times so that pride of authorship could be swiftly recognized, assisted student efforts to write independently and provided extra materials for illustrations and binding.

The t-i's decision to send home a steady stream of school-owned reading texts and trade books was crucial to pupil progress in reading. The opportunity to bring home a favorite book to read with a parent or to a parent gave family members a means to participate in the work of the reading program and to support and recognize their child's efforts.

As the year drew to a close, the class was focusing its reading energy on the interactional function of written language. This interest was due in part to the frequent letters the students were receiving from the ex-student teacher (now departed for home, having completed her student teaching requirement). As a parallel development, message writing and sending, particularly to the teacher, was a daily occurrence (see Appendix F for samples of children's writing).

The reading program ended with a creative flourish. The children were intrigued with the idea of figurative language after the t-i read Natalia Beltings book, *The Sun is a Golden Earring*, to them. This is a beautiful book of simple poems drawn from folk cultures. The poems are rich in figurative language. During the last weeks of the school year, the Belting book (published by Holt) triggered a good deal of discussion about how words can create a picture in your mind. On many
occasions, pupils recognized examples of figurative language in a story and called it to the attention of others. Finally, one child presented the t-i with a lovely crayon drawing that combined elements of nature (obvious references to the Belting book) in a striking pattern. She said, "This is my figurative language."

At the end of the school year, every child could read stories from a selection of first grade materials and most were ready to read or reading second grade level materials. A few were even talking of reading *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White, a masterpiece of children's literature. Most of these children had become proficient readers during Grade One by the criterion this study established.

The final self-evaluation which the students carried out confirmed their sense of accomplishment. The t-i asked each child to think about and respond to this question, "What did you like doing this year that you think important for children to learn in first grade?" We collected the responses on a chart and then each child used his or her response to complete a captioned picture for the class book which was presented to a kindergarten class. Out of fourteen pages in the class book, *What We Do in First Grade*, eight dealt with reading or reading related activities. The text of these eight pages provides a glimpse of the children's perspective on the reading program we created together.

1. We make books to read.
2. We learn how to write.
3. We use a dictionary to finish sentences.
4. We read in groups.
5. We talk about different countries.
6. We read by ourselves with Mrs. Park.
7. We learn about letters. (A, B, C, etc.)
8. We make collages.
The Reading Acquisition Process

Becoming a proficient reader like all other developmental milestones is unique to each individual. The sixteen children who arrived in the classroom in September each had some degree of control of the reading process. Seven of them were able to read simple stories and Language Experience charts with a fair degree of accuracy and understanding. These children entered first grade with an individual constellation of reading skills that enabled them to make sense of print.

The remaining eight children began the school year at some point in the pre-reading stage of development. In other words, they were trying to make sense of print, each in his or her own way, with his or her particular language learning style, but they were not yet ready for the task.

The sixteenth child in the class was left out of the treatment because her reading program was designed and carried out in another classroom by another teacher in compliance with the guidelines required by Massachusetts State Law 766 which provides for children with special needs.

In the process of observing and recording the reading behavior of the children over the course of the school year, the t-i gathered a wealth of information on the reading acquisition process, using the RPI Form to organize her data. However, the data consisted of applications of the reading acquisition process, not the process itself. This is an
important distinction. It became obvious to the t-i fairly quickly that a child's reading acquisition process is incredibly complex and that its progression is not easily discernible given the methods available to the researcher in the natural setting of the classroom. In part this is true because much of that growth is going on internally.

It is true that observing and recording data on individual reading behavior gave an indication of the child's reading acquisition process, but it is a piecemeal and incomplete picture of how reading proficiency develops. At best the t-i identified two patterns in the reading acquisition process of the students. These patterns relate to the degree of control of the reading process that a child had attained. Hopefully, the patterns illuminate aspects of the reading acquisition process for all children. A discussion of these patterns follows.

**Beginning Readers**

Students who were pre-readers at the start of the school year approached reading by practicing how to read, often memorizing a favorite story in the process (as described earlier in this chapter). Researchers acknowledge that practicing fluent reading or language rehearsal appears to be an essential period of gaining information about how written language works. Hoskisson remarks:

The children have memorized the story. What the children have been doing though, is paying attention to meaning. They have stored the meaning, not the exact words, of the stories... This memorization aspect of children's knowledge of the written language appears to be a very important component and should receive more attention than it has because all children seem to go through this phase of constructing their knowledge of the written language when learning to read naturally. (1979, p. 492)
It seems reasonable to conclude that by memorizing stories, the beginning readers in the class were gathering linguistic information and organizing it into an efficient cueing system that precedes reading.

Because of the parental and educational expectations described earlier in this chapter, the t-i could not simply accept and support the natural reading progress the children were making, she had to quicken their pace—fitting the children into a system of instruction that would seemingly accelerate their progress and produce a kind of reading proficiency that was acceptable to the system.

It bears repeating that reading instruction does not take place in a vacuum. We impose standards in our schools that ignore the differences among children. Ashley Montagu comments:

Then we treat children of the same chronological age as if they were developmentally of the same age, too.

This is a damaging idea, and it has done an enormous amount of harm to children. Every child has his or her own developmental rate. To treat children, even children the same age, as if they were all equal is to commit a biological and social absurdity. The equal treatment of unequals is the most unequal way of dealing with human beings ever devised...

Even though many teachers recognize the great differences among children, they are not in a position to do anything about them because of the way school systems are organized... (1980, p. 48)

Because of these external factors impinging upon the children and the reading program, the initial readers felt frustrated and unsuccessful at reading. They could and did compare themselves to others in the class who were reading stories on their own and demonstrating a competency as yet beyond the initial readers' means.

As Montagu notes, the t-i was not in a position to dispute the matter, nor did she wish to ignore the negative self-concept that was emerging in these children.
Her response to the situation was to make changes in her instructional methods that would produce the desired reading breakthrough and hopefully bolster the children's self-image.

A common sense observation is that one does not learn very much when threatened. These children felt very threatened by their lack of tangible progress as compared with their peers. Data from individual reading conferences and the Daily Log show that intervention in their natural developmental pace with the use of Ginn 720 reading materials did in fact accelerate their reading acquisition process and of equal importance, did eliminate their sense of failure. This is apparent if one compares a student's reading performance (at an individual reading conference) before the addition of the Ginn materials to her performance (under the same circumstances) after the addition of the Ginn materials.

Individual Reading Conference Form

Name Reva

Date Oct 18

Book Read Cats and Kittens (Scott Foresman, Level 2)

Strengths
improvises the story
recognizes a few words
recognizes and understands question mark
reads kittens in context
left-right orientations well established

Needs
still at pre-reading stage
uses picture clues to assist comprehension

Next step Use listening center

Comments: self-confidence needs bolstering
Individual Reading Conference Form

Name  Reva  Date  Dec. 20

Book Read  A Pocketful of Sunshine (Ginn 720, pre-reader)

Strengths

- read the text up to p. 21 smoothly and with confidence
- word recognition is excellent
- self-confidence greatly improved
- comprehension—adequate

Needs

- has some difficulty keeping place
- is easily distracted by normal classroom noise and movement
- needs to develop predictive skills

Next step  a small group cloze lesson

Comments: progress with Ginn has been dramatic

The t-i saw no evidence that priming the reading acquisition process with these materials runs "... counter to things the child already knows" (Open Discussion, p. 482) as Ken Goodman suggests. Perhaps this kind of mis-match was avoided because all the children were engaged in the functional reading activities of the teacher-designed reading program every day to some extent.

Instead, as one child's experience illustrates, the predictability and structure of the Ginn pre-reader texts made it possible for these children to read simple stories. Discovering they could read, they became readers.

It seems obvious that if their reading had been allowed to develop naturally without the introduction of the Ginn materials, they would
have read on their own eventually, according to their own developmental rate. However, there is little tolerance for postponed achievement in schools today.

**Independent Readers**

Once students could read at least pre-primer level stories successfully, they had the necessary skills to approach reading with confidence, and to begin to read a wider and wider range of written language. As their interest in reading grew, the independent readers sought out more challenging stories. The open grouping policy with reference to reading groups in the class, accommodated this assertion of self-confidence and self-direction because it encouraged the child to read what and with whom he or she preferred.

It should be noted that the teacher-designed reading program utilized the Scott Foresman Reading Systems Program much of the time. The Scott Foresman texts are a varied collection of stories and informational mini-books written in natural language and picturing a variety of American cultures and life styles. In the t-i's opinion, they are the most sensitively written and most original reading series on the commercial market.

Independent readers progressed from reading simple text to independent reading of a wide variety of materials in this way over the course of the year:

1. Child reads simple texts successfully
2. Child reads more challenging texts successfully
3. Child reads formally and informally for longer periods of time
4. Child engages in more reading related activities
5. Child's reading discoveries become an important part of teacher-child interaction (see Appendix C for samples of reading "aha's")

6. Child practices reading skills on own--skimming, using a table of contents or a dictionary, looking for verbs, etc.

7. Child begins writing self-initiated messages

8. Child writes many messages and/or mini-books (see Appendix F for samples)

The messages and mini-books written by the students during the second half of the school year were in a real sense the crowning achievement of the reading program. The children's control of the reading process now enabled them to communicate personally by means of print. They were able to make use of the productive function of written language as well as the receptive one.

It is revealing that the children's need for recognition and approval was the favorite theme expressed in their message writing, just as it was the theme that dominated interpersonal relationships in the classroom. An anonymous note written in May and posted conspicuously on a classroom wall epitomizes this need. It said:

I am in the room Love, me.

The children learned very quickly that positive messages expressing love led to positive responses in return. However, recognizing the power of positive communication is only one step removed from experimenting with the power of negative communication. Mandy's positive/negative message to a classmate (one side saying "I love you," the other saying "I don't love you") demonstrated a sophisticated awareness of the power of her own written communication. The class discussion arising from this incident focused on the meaning of responsible communication.
The fact that to the best of the t-i's knowledge, no other negative message was written or sent in the classroom after this one instance is an indication that the children took to heart what was said.

The significance of this incident to the t-i is that it assumes a degree of functional reading competence on the part of all the children in the class and it dramatizes that children no less than adults can learn to use their words in a caring way.

Reading Proficiency

By the end of Grade One, every child had greatly expanded his or her control of the reading process and could read from a selection of first grade materials with accuracy and understanding. Judging from the final summary Reading Performance Inventory and the reading tape made of each child's reading performance at the end of the year, four of the children had a reading level that was still somewhere in the second half of Grade One. The rest of the class was reading at a level appropriate for entry into Grade Two or better.

Clearly, the Goodman socio-psycholinguistic approach produced demonstrable reading proficiency in the seven children who entered first grade already reading simple text. Their own natural development set the stage for the Goodman method. In the t-i's opinion, these children benefited immediately from the Goodman method because the timing was right—the method suited the skills they brought with them.

For the children who entered first grade as beginning readers, essentially unable to read connected discourse, the Goodman approach supported and stimulated their natural development as readers during the
first ten weeks of the school year but did not produce dramatic reading progress. The t-i hypothesizes that given the time and freedom to learn to read naturally at their own developmental pace with the Goodman approach nurturing that process, these children would have become proficient readers like the others, but probably not during Grade One.

As discussed earlier, the Ginn 720 reading program materials were grafted onto the Goodman approach for these beginning readers. Ginn enabled the children to progress at a much faster pace in line with their peers.

One cannot deny the sense of accomplishment that Ginn generated in these beginning readers. That initial success was a crucial factor in learning to read. Obviously the Ginn materials met a temporary need for most of the beginners just as McClenathan suggests is the function of such controlled vocabulary books.

With the exception of four children who will continue reading in Ginn next year at the t-i's recommendation, the children using Ginn materials gradually moved away to the more varied and challenging materials that were featured in the teacher-designed reading program.

It is the t-i's conclusion that these beginning readers would not have achieved the degree of reading proficiency and independent reading and writing they did by the end of the school year had they been exposed to the Ginn materials alone. The stimulation they received from their functional experiences with written language as part of the teacher-designed reading program contributed substantially to their progress.
The investigator concludes that the Goodman socio-psycholinguistic approach to beginning reading instruction produced readers who do read and write, and who use language for many purposes.

Furthermore, she concludes that over time, every student in the subject class will meet the most important goal of any reading program, to value reading and to use it effectively in their lives. The t-i is grateful to the Northampton School Department for the opportunity to focus her instructional efforts on these principles.

The Emergence of Decoding as an Issue

The t-i did not plan to provide opportunities for the children to develop their decoding skills in the formal reading program because phonics runs contrary to the Goodman approach. Ken Goodman's position on decoding is clear:

I believe firmly... that it is possible that initial instruction that focuses on the technical details of form, does not facilitate the development of literacy... because not only does it not build on function... it makes learning to read dependent on the ability to deal with an abstraction. (Open discussion, p. 482)

Instead, she focused on developing the children's predictive ability. Frank Smith explains the important role of prediction in reading and gets at the limitations of the phonetic approach as well. He says:

[With prediction in reading]... the reader is working already at the level of meaning... Instead of trying to slog through thickets of meaningless letters and words in the fond hope that eventually some nugget of comprehension will arrive, the reader is looking for meaning all the time. If any possibility of meaning is to be found in a text, the predicting reader is the one who will find it. (1975, p. 309)
By strengthening instruction on how to be a predicting reader, the teacher was strengthening the child's ability to play what Goodman calls the Psycholinguistic Guessing Game. He says:

... reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game... Efficient reading does not result from precise perception and the identification of all elements, but from skill in selecting the fewest, most productive cues necessary to produce guesses which are right the first time. (1967, p. 126)

In interaction with a child in the classroom this principle was translated as "read it so it makes sense" followed by much praise for a willingness to use one's skills to guess carefully and predict meaning. The t-i also conducted small group lessons on how to predict meaning more effectively by using semantic and syntactic clues as well as graphophonetic ones.

At the same time, the teacher was open to encouraging any skills that the children brought with them to first grade and were successful at using. She expected decoding to emerge as an instructional issue precisely because it is so often introduced in kindergarten and/or by parents reading with the child at home, and it did.

When students made spontaneous attempts to "sound out" words, the t-i offered help. For example, Gerald always tried to use a phonetic approach when he could not read a word. He would say 

for start, using phonics to analyze the sounds aloud in order to put them together and figure out the meaning. Sometimes this strategy worked and he would say after a minute, "That's start!" and go on reading.

When it didn't work, the t-i would remind him to use the other cue systems to "read it so it makes sense." His eyes would flit back and
forth to the context surrounding the word looking for semantic and
syntactic clues. Clearly he was trying hard to guess the meaning from
these cues. However, when all else failed, he invariably went back to
phonics. At this point, the t-i would write the word in question on the
blackboard, separating it into initial blend-vowel-final consonant so
that Gerald could study the word parts visually as well as aurally and
see how they sound together to make a meaningful whole. In this way,
she gave support to his own efforts to read but tried to broaden his
skills to include other strategies that assist prediction of meaning.

Often as a finale to reading and discussing the morning message,
the t-i would challenge the students to skim over the text of the message
and look for patterns such as rhyming words, color words, words that
began with a blend, or compound words. When the message contained a
pair of rhyming words, she would list them adjacent to the message and
ask for others. This list became the basis for a teacher-made silly
oral story.

This activity which came to be known as the Silly Story Game was
an idea that grew out of the teacher's determination not to teach
decoding as isolated word drill but to put language elements in a
meaningful context. An example of a teacher-made silly story follows:
In summary, the teaching of decoding either responded to a child's own efforts to read using phonetic strategies or provided another cue to getting meaning in a story. There was no elaborate phonics drill that so often characterizes traditional first grade reading programs. The t-i never wavered from her commitment to the Goodman approach and its comprehension base, but instead integrated decoding strategies when they seemed the reasonable response to a given set of circumstances. This flexibility in the face of individual differences is consistent with the principles on which this study is based.

While the reading program studiously avoided phonics in isolation, the standardized tests that the children were obliged to take in late Spring did not. Several sections of the reading test were devoted to recognizing sound symbol correspondences. When the t-i saw the test for the very first time, a few weeks before administering it, she realized immediately that the test violated both the spirit and the substance of her entire reading program. She could not ignore these questions—how would the children score on these tests? and how would these scores be used by the school to judge their reading proficiency? The answers were obvious. The children had to be prepared for taking the test. To that end, the teacher began twice a week test-taking practice sessions. She never referred to the test or the practice sessions as having any relationship to reading or the reading program. She explained to the class that because they were going to be given an important test they were going to learn how to take tests.
The practice papers imitated the directions and format of the various reading test sections to familiarize the children with such a task.

The children accepted the teacher's explanation of this activity and prepared conscientiously. Because some of the practice exercises dealt with phonics, this activity may have in some way carried over to the reading program and the reading acquisition process but the teacher never made that connection in any way.

Similarly, the actual test taking, which preempted the formal reading program for two weeks, may have had short-range or long-range repercussions for the development of reading proficiency. The teacher can only say that in her opinion, taking the tests was a negative experience for all but a very few students for the following reasons. The testing situation:

1. generated a high level of stress despite teacher efforts to create a relaxed atmosphere
2. involved a new and very demanding set of tasks
3. involved complicated multi-step directions
4. involved extended periods of testing time
5. negated reading theory and common sense about how to evaluate learning (as a number of critics describe in Chapter 3 on pp. 45-46)

The directions to the students for the "first sitting" of the reading test, a test of auditory discrimination, are reproduced here in order to provide the reader with a sense of what this task involved for first graders.

We're going to be working with pictures and sounds. I'm going to say a word while you look at the pictures in the box. I'll tell you the names of the three pictures, and then I will say a word. You must listen carefully to the
word I say and to the names of the pictures. Then you will find the picture whose name starts with the same sound as the word I've said. Remember, you have to match the beginning sound of the picture with the beginning sound of the word. Let's try it together...


Predictably, the children's body language and their verbal comments communicated their frustration and their despair eloquently. Some children drew on their desks and/or the test booklets, others stopped trying to do the test completely, or daydreamed—thereby wasting precious time on the timed sections of the test—others got out of their seats, ignored directions, or cried. The t-i heard again and again, "I can't do this," "I don't want to do anymore," and "Mrs. Park, why do we have to do this?"

This experience is still a source of considerable anguish to the t-i. She was obliged to give the tests and see the children through the task no matter how they responded or how irrelevant it appeared to be to their learning.

There was one small positive note during the testing period. One of the children, on her own initiative, made a sign for the door saying Testing—Do Not Enter to replace the original teacher-made sign that had wilted in use. It was the only example of functional language learning that took place in connection with the test taking.

The t-i hypothesizes that if the testing had an impact on the readers and/or the reading program it was in the form of undermining learner self-confidence. Certainly the attitudes displayed during the reading tests expressed self-doubt and a sense of failure. Hopefully these feelings were temporary.
The fact that administrators in the school use such tests to evaluate student performance and send the results to parents as an indication of their child's performance means that whether valid or not, these tests were used to evaluate what went on in this reading program and the individual child's reading proficiency.

It is true that educators must be accountable to parents and to the Society as a whole for what happens in classrooms. However, the data in this study support the claim that schools need to change their "job specifications." Schools must expect and support more personalized teaching in the classroom and employ more personal means of evaluation that are both accurate and relevant to the real lives and learning experience of every child. Also, schools must welcome parents as partners in this process.

Research Design in Operation

A basic premise of field research is its adaptability (Iannaccone, p. 227). The researcher carefully draws up a plan for conducting an exploratory study in a natural setting like the classroom, expecting to modify theory and research design as circumstances require. This critical stance is essential if one is to study behavior in a natural setting.

In this instance, the research design was composed of five observation schemes to systematically gather and organize data on the Goodman theory in operation and the reading proficiency attained by the students as a result of "natural" reading instruction.
Observation Form One permitted the t-i to list the precise instructional objectives for a given lesson and the learners' anticipated reading activities and then compare her intent to what in fact took place during the lesson. Lesson outcomes were organized around these categories—how the lesson generated functional language use, divergent student responses, spontaneous learning directions, interpersonal interaction during the lesson and final comments on the lesson. A sample of Form One is found in Chapter Three on page 53.

Form One incorporated a bridge between lessons by requiring the investigator to examine her intentions and the outcomes and arrive at an instructional next step.

This linking strategy built into Form One proved to be its greatest strength because it enabled the researcher to use the experience of a given lesson to plan the lessons that followed.

The overall format of Form One allowed the investigator to assess the lesson as an expression of the Goodman approach to reading. The inclusion of divergent student responses and spontaneous learning directions was particularly valuable because the presence or absence of data in those categories was a constant gauge showing the t-i how much of a given lesson was teacher-directed and how much was learner initiated and directed.

The investigator found no limitations in the design of Observation Form One given her particular purposes for it.

Observation Form Two, a series of teacher-designed attitude rating instruments with which the students evaluated the reading activities
themselves, proved to be another matter. As a concept, Form Two was in the best tradition of progressive education. In practice it proved unworkable for six year olds. The simple visual charts which the teacher prepared for the self-evaluations of the first three instructional units (see pp. 54-57) required the learners to select their favorite and least favorite activity. By the completion of the second self-evaluation, it became apparent to the researcher that the children were overwhelmed by the choices and tended to select the most recent activities as favorites. After verifying her conclusion with a third trial run of Form Two, the t-i decided to substitute an informal means of student self-evaluation at the conclusion of each instructional unit instead.

The sharing time held at the end of each school day provided a natural opportunity for informal self-evaluation. At this time, the students gathered to discuss the events of the day and to share their feelings and experiences. All sorts of topics were discussed and/or objects displayed from a seed found on the playground to a self-made book that the author had just completed. Often, the t-i would ask, "What was the best thing we did today?" or "What did you learn today?" so the students were accustomed to a casual form of self-evaluation. The t-i simply expanded this format to encompass a three to four week instructional unit. She asked, "What activity did you like best in our unit on Indians?" Such a question generated a host of individual responses from the students. During the dialogue that ensued, the children expressed their feelings much more meaningfully than was possible with
Form Two as planned. The t-i made careful notes after such sessions to document student responses.

Late in the school year, the t-i returned to the original Form Two format to see if the children had matured enough over the course of time to use the attitude measure. The answer was still negative.

The researcher concludes that this kind of attitude rating is too complex a task for the average first grader. At this age, children are making the transition into the concrete operational stage of cognitive development (Waller, 1977, p. 4). The t-i hypothesizes that they cannot compare experiences over a time sequence of three to four weeks because only the experiences that occurred in the recent past (two to three days ago) are still fresh in their minds as concrete events. When they try to recall activities that occurred a few weeks past, these experiences have receded in their minds to the level of an abstraction and therefore are less accessible to the child.

That is why the students in this study responded more meaningfully to teacher-guided informal self-evaluation. The dialogue which the t-i initiated as described above, served to make past activities concrete again, long enough for meaningful discussion and informal review.

At the end of the school year to provide a kind of summary self-evaluation, the class made a book for the kindergarteners about what happens in first grade. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the making of the class book crystallized the children's attitudes at the end of Grade One in a tangible and useful form.

As predicted, the individual reading conferende proved to be the cornerstone of the research design. It enabled the t-i to assess indi-
vidual reading strengths and needs on a weekly basis and to put those strengths and needs into perspective as part of the total development of a particular child. The reader is referred to p. 93 in this chapter where the investigator inserted two samples of the reading conference form in use.

Like Form One it established a link with subsequent learning by requiring the teacher and child to decide on an instructional next step. The process of deciding together on a next step builds learner self-confidence and encourages the child to make decisions about his or her own learning.

The RPI designed by the investigator to rate levels of proficiency for a wide range of reading skills related to underlying reading competence on a month by month basis was an ambitious effort (See pp. 59-60). In a sense the reach of this instrument far exceeded its grasp. The data obtained from the series of informal reading conferences completed each week for each child defied monthly summarizing into neat categories on the RPI. The t-i had no difficulty finding categories that related to reading behavior demonstrated in the informal reading conferences but she realized after three months of doing so that this instrument was not documenting the development of reading proficiency. As best, it provided the researcher with partial evidence for evaluating individual pupil proficiency.

In light of the time consuming and cumbersome task of summarizing data on individual reading behavior with the RPI, the teacher decided in January to draw up only a mid-year profile and an end of the year profile using the RPI form. Modifying the use of the RPI in this way did not
prevent the t-i from documenting reading behavior in a meaningful form and in fact made it easier to see a progression of skills that contribute to proficiency.

The Daily Log was designed as a catch-all method of collecting free-floating data on classroom reading behavior. Initially the t-i organized the entries under six categories—expanding language use, expanding vocabulary, comprehension, motivation and interest, books read and self-image (see p. 61). Using these six categories as a screening device she focused on two children in the class each day. This format proved too confining because behavior in the classroom spilled over these restrictions. Other children were doing interesting reading related things and the behavior did not fit one category usually, but several. Therefore the t-i kept an unrestricted daily log of the reading behavior that occurred informally in the classroom instead. As it turned out, no student dominated the entries and no one was neglected. Excerpts from log entries are cited at length on pp. 81-85 of this chapter.

This modification in the design of the daily log enabled the investigator to document the many meaningful reading experiences that the children initiated themselves, particularly in the second half of the year when most of the independent reading and writing took place. It is the t-i's considered opinion that she learned as much about a child's developing reading proficiency by studying the log entries related to a specific child over time as she did with any of the other research instruments. The simplicity of its design without elaborate schemes to match data to an hypothesis allowed the behavior to speak for itself.
In summary, the investigator found that it is a mistake to construct elaborate research instruments such as checklists or inventories that prove cumbersome and inaccurate for the teacher as researcher to use. These can get in the way of gathering meaningful data and do not add to verificational power. Above all, the research design should not dominate the data but facilitate an understanding of it.

This research design as modified enabled the researcher to study the same group of subjects, over time, with a consistent format. In this way, the research design facilitated an understanding of the Goodman socio-psycholinguistic approach in operation and provided partial evidence for evaluating the reading proficiency of individual students.
CHAPTER V
FINDINGS

Characteristics of the Goodman Approach

The Goodman approach to beginning reading as applied in this instance makes learning to read an active, constructive process of getting meaning from print. The individual child learns to make sense of print by using written language in activities that "... are relevant to the functional needs of the learners" (Goodmans, p. 19). See pp. 67-68.

The Goodman approach does not subscribe to formal instruction in phonics because a preoccupation with mechanical elements takes the minds of the readers off comprehension (Goodmans, p. 6) See pp. 99-102.

The Goodman approach is responsive to individual differences, be they developmental differences, personal differences, cultural differences or differences in ability or creativity. All children can participate at some level in the process of learning to read by encountering written language in functional situations. Once independent reading begins, each child explores a wider range of written language, much of the time following his/her own inclinations. This is a major advantage of the Goodman method. Because it emphasizes meeting individual language needs, it can accommodate the gifted child, the typical child, as well as the child who needs extra support in learning to read. See pp. 79-80.

The Goodman approach encourages self-direction, self-pacing and self-evaluation of learning because the pupil is given considerable
freedom to decide how to use the resources of a lesson for him/herself. The child takes responsibility for his/her own learning to a degree appropriate for a six year old. When self-direction is encouraged in this way, the child learns to take more responsibility for evaluating his/her own reading progress as well. See pp. 80-81.

The Goodman approach encourages personal creativity in the child because there is no premium placed on one lesson outcome. Instead, there is a premium placed on meeting the challenge of the learning situation in a way that is appropriate to the task, and pleasing to oneself. See pp. 86-88.

The Goodman approach builds self-confidence by enabling all children to experience the satisfaction of accomplishment. With open-ended lessons that encourage an individual response to a functional situation, it is a reading method that builds in success. It accepts who the child is and what he/she brings to the reading task, and encourages him/her to go in a direction that is legitimate for that child. See p. 72.

The Goodman approach encourages cooperation rather than competition in the classroom because no model of successful participation is held up but the child's own best efforts. Also, many reading activities require group effort and decision-making. See p. 72.

The Goodman approach is flexible. There is no hierarchy of skills presented in a strict sequence because their research has convinced them that "... the skills displayed by the proficient reader derive from the meaningful use of written language and that sequential instruction in those skills is as pointless and fruitless as instruction in
the skills of a proficient listener would be to teach infants to comprehend speech" (p. 21). There is instead a framework of assumptions about reading and how children learn that supports the reading program. These assumptions keep the teacher and the children going in the right direction. The program is based on teacher and learner interests, reading strengths and needs of the pupils, teacher-pupil interaction, and discoveries made along the way about reading and each other. See pp. 81-85.

The Goodman approach encourages many learners to make an early transition from basal reading materials to trade books because the child encounters a variety of reading materials and explores them. This process of self-discovery nurtures the self-confidence and the ability to read more widely. See p. 78.

The Goodman approach encourages the development of independent writing for much the same reasons. The child practices writing as meaningful communication in many classroom activities and over time, begins to use written language productively for his/her own communicative purposes. See pp. 86-88.

The Goodman approach is in agreement with the spirit and substance of multi-cultural education because it is based on the principle that the reading program content must be relevant to the lives and the language of the learners in the broadest sense of the word. The teacher must meet the challenge of affirming all children and the cultures they bring with them. See pp. 79-80.

The Goodman approach presupposes a method of evaluating reading proficiency that is personal, on-going, and focused on underlying read-
ing competency. Evaluative techniques that meet these criteria are now emerging in the field. Hopefully, the evaluative methods used in this study are effective, sensitive, and adaptable to the continuing development of the child. See p. 72.

The data in this study confirm that these characteristics of the Goodman approach in operation in this instance facilitated natural language learning in the students of the subject class and contributed to the reading proficiency achieved by most class members.

Therefore, the researcher suggests that these characteristics of the Goodman socio-psycholinguistic approach to beginning reading instruction provide preliminary indications of an alternative methodology for reading instruction in the first grade. Also, they provide criteria with which to evaluate the effectiveness of the Goodman methodology as applied in other classrooms.

Recommendations for Improving the Program

The introduction of journal writing to the reading program would encourage earlier independent writing and put such writing on a more formal basis. The teacher could use the model of the informal reading conference as a format for personal writing conferences. In this way, he/she can tailor instruction about many aspects of written language to the strengths and needs of the individual writer, and together they can plan an appropriate instructional next step.

The expansion of opportunities for dramatic performance in the reading program would provide students with a rich learning experience
that combines the functional use of oral and written language, group participation and creative self-expression. Also, performances of this kind constitute an excellent means of bringing parents closer to the reading program in operation.

The expansion of folk literature in the curriculum of the reading program offers many advantages. Educators from a variety of perspectives recognize the universal appeal and meaningful content of folk tales.* Children respond in powerful ways to the imaginative language and the existential predicaments on which such stories turn. The classroom teacher can tap this power to encourage reading and writing, to teach critical reading skills and in a variety of other creative contexts. Also, such materials permit the teacher to use the folk cultures around the world as a major resource for curriculum content.

The greater use of inter-class peer teaching would expand the dimensions of the reading program. When first graders work with sixth graders on a regular basis they can tackle creative reading projects (and other projects) that otherwise would be beyond the range of capability of six year olds. Conversely, when first graders work with kindergarteners on a regular basis they can assume the teaching role and use their knowledge of reading to help others learn. Such exchanges reinforce learning and enhance the self-concept of all participants.

Evaluating reading proficiency over the course of the school year would be facilitated by taping each child's reading performance at regular intervals four times a year. These reading tapes would add to the teacher's understanding of the development of reading proficiency without burdening him/her with excessive record keeping. Similarly, devising a system to keep track of all books read informally by each child over the course of the school year would provide the teacher with a better picture of how independent reading develops. Such a system needs to be unobtrusive and non-competitive so that the pupils do not see it as a "reading contest" but simply another form of record keeping on the part of the students and the teacher.

In general, first grade reading instruction should emphasize reading as comprehension rather than word analysis. The reading program must be comprehension centered because in F. Smith's words, "It is the ability of children to make sense of the printed word that will enable them to make use of the mechanics" (1976, p. 299).

Having said this, teachers at work in classrooms must be responsive to individual learning styles and the spontaneous attempts children make to use decoding skills when they read. Teachers must be flexible about teaching and mechanics of reading. If an opportunity presents itself to show children how to use decoding strategies to predict meaning, then the teacher should make use of it.

In summary, the teacher should teach decoding when it seems the appropriate response to cues from the learners, and he/she should teach decoding as one set of language cues that contributes to meaning.
These recommendations are based on the data gathered and analyzed by the teacher-investigator during this study of the Goodman approach to beginning reading instruction in operation in the subject class.

**Conclusions**

As a result of these findings, the investigator has arrived at several conclusions about the research project and how it answers those questions about method, materials and motivation that teachers really ask.

The researcher concludes that children are highly motivated to learn to read when reading instruction is based on the Goodman method. Such a reading program engages them in meaningful activities where they can use written language purposefully. For example, reading directions in preparation for cooking vegetable soup motivates children to attend to print because reading is linked to an activity that captures their interest.

The researcher concludes that teachers can design a program based on the Goodman method which enhances the identities, motivations, experiences and cultural backgrounds of their students so that these students learn to read (Goodmans, p. 3). (Examples of representative reading lessons are provided in Appendix D.)

The researcher concludes that the Goodman method provides teachers with an example of how to modify a basal reading program. Basal readers can be used in combination with many other reading materials to create a reading program that focuses on the functional needs of.
the learners. In this way, readers who need the security of a controlled vocabulary text can use it as a foundation for participating in other reading experiences.

The researcher concludes that the Goodman method offers teachers an effective way of teaching reading skills that does not rely on following a pre-established sequence of instruction. The teacher can use the individual reading conference to provide one to one instruction in the reading skill that the child is grappling with at that moment in his/her reading. By timing instruction to "the teachable moment" when the child is experiencing difficulty, learning is optimal. Some teachers prefer to use the individual reading conference purely for diagnosis of reading needs scheduling a follow-up lesson for students with the same need.

The researcher concludes that the Goodman method produces more independent reading and writing than traditional reading methods because students are not constrained by the limits of a controlled vocabulary text as a steady diet of reading material. Also, the self-confidence that is engendered by this highly individualized approach to reading encourages children to begin writing for their own communicative purposes.

The researcher concludes that the Goodman method helps children learn to read and produces reading proficiency as defined by this study in most instances. It is an effective method of reading instruction because it focuses on strategies that bring "... the reader's natural language competence into play" (Goodmans, p. 5) to solve.
problems, to make something, or to express oneself. As a result, children become readers who do read and who read confidently.

The researcher concludes that this exploratory study contributes to our understanding of how reading proficiency develops in ways that have eluded traditional experimental research. By its very nature, research conducted in a controlled laboratory setting cannot provide information about the complex process of transforming "... an initial idea into a viable operational program" (Guba, p. 4) in a classroom.

In contrast, this study was conducted in the natural setting of a classroom in conjunction with the regular business of teaching. While the teacher-investigator identified certain variables as being particularly significant to the research project, she recognized that a host of extraneous variables would impringe freely upon the classroom and all its transactions. These "conditions of invited interference" (Guba, p. 4) were crucial to the success of the study. Only by inviting the real circumstances that attend the efforts teachers make to teach children to read by a given method, could the researcher hope to provide practical information about the success of the Goodman approach in a real classroom.

Also, this study was conducted with the understanding that the process of operationalizing a reading method would involve a number of problems which the investigator must solve simultaneously by refining and adjusting her procedures (Guba, p. 4).

As a result, this study contributes to our understanding of how reading proficiency develops because it documents the difficult
process of transforming the investigator's initial premise about beginning reading instruction into a viable educational program in her classroom. Also, it does so in an ethnographic style that is accessible to practitioners and their own experience in teaching. That information is very useful to practitioners and can contribute to decision-making about the reading methods generally used in first grade reading programs. The investigator's success with the Goodman method provides an example of an alternative to traditional methods of beginning reading instruction that proved effective in this instance.

Recommendations for Further Research

The following is a list of possible research projects for future investigation:

1. A comparison of individual and group reading behavior in the same classroom using one investigator to observe the reading behavior of two individual students and another to observe the reading activities of the whole class

2. A follow-up on this study in later grades focusing on a student's reading habits and/or reading behavior in class

3. A replication of this study using outside observers to chart student behavior

4. A research design for participant observation research in the classroom
5. A replication of this study incorporating the modifications suggested by the teacher-investigator in this chapter and focusing on the reading behavior of only two students

6. An exploratory study of the problems and advantages inherent in the dual role of teacher/observer

7. An experiment focusing on reading behavior in the classroom that uses two match groups of students and different reading methodologies

8. An investigation that correlates reading scores on standardized tests with qualitative data on pupil performance.

Because the dual role of teacher-investigator is an arduous one that carries with it inherent limitations in perspective, later exploratory studies may want to consider modifying the role of teacher-investigator to one that involves teachers and investigators as a team in collaborative research. I agree with Bussis and Chittenden that collaborative research offers many advantages when the intent is to study children's learning in the classroom (1979, p. 2).

In a sense, the experience documented in this study provides a first step for later exploratory research that involves teachers as "contributors to knowledge" (Bussis & Chittenden, p. 31).

Finally, this project lays the groundwork for changing classroom instruction and teacher education. Inservice teacher-training programs can use this study as a resource for planning a reading program based on the Goodman approach to beginning reading instruction and for training teachers in their crucial role as facilitator of the reading process.
Also, as Bussis and Chittenden mention with reference to their own research project, this project provides "... public access to descriptive information that can be re-examined by others. The potential significance of ... case histories as 'data banks' in the social sciences is only beginning to be acknowledged and has yet to be realized" (p. 5).

Most of all the teacher-investigator hopes that other teachers will find this study relevant to their own individual efforts to help children learn to read. In the final analysis, it is the teachers in classrooms who will put these findings to the true test.
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APPENDICES

A. Letter of Permission for Research Project
B. Letter of Permission to Reproduce a Paragraph from the Metropolitan Achievement Tests
C. Three Sample Entries from the Daily Log
D. Ten Samples of Observation Form One in Use
E. Instructional Units in the Reading Program
F. Samples of Children's Work
April 12, 1979

Mrs. Donna Park
31 Dryads Green
Northampton, Ma.

Dear Donna:

I was pleased to see you once again. Dr. Graves has approved your project and has elected me to work it out with you. As I mentioned to you, the next step would be to clear your project with Mr. McKenna and Mr. Young.

If you sent me a brief description of the overall project it would be helpful. It could be placed on file and I could refer to it as needed.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Moriarty
Director of Elementary Education

RMM:mb
July 15, 1980

Mrs. Donna Park
31 Dryads Green
Northampton, Mass. 01060

Dear Mrs. Park:

In response to your letter of July 10, you may reproduce one paragraph from the 1978 Metropolitan Achievement Tests Reading Instructional Teachers Manual, Primary 1, page 13, in your dissertation.

Please include the following notice of copyright and permission:

"Reproduced from the Metropolitan Achievement Tests 1978 Edition by permission. Copyright ©1978 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. All rights reserved."

Sincerely,

Irene Neuvelt
Supervisor
Rights and Permissions

IN:rws
Appendix C
Three Sample Entries from the Daily Log

Daily Log Entry for Monday, October 15, 1979

Jessica picked up the repetitive story pattern in The Bus Ride quickly and using visual cues was able to read the story successfully

read a Bill Martin mini-book (Brown Bear) to me, again capitalizing on the repetitive story pattern

Reva lost her place frequently in reading group, could not grasp the repetitive story pattern and use it to assist prediction

is socially unsure of herself--this problem affects her reading and her ability to concentrate on other activities

her word recognition appears to be almost nil--she is anxious about her inability to read

Daily Log Entry for Tuesday, February 26, 1980

Rob began to read written language on charts and signs around the room using my pointer. He called me over to witness a demonstration of his reading ability.

Later on, he began playing school (with imaginary pupils) using the pointer to read to his class.

Pam and Jessica read together on the couch in their free time--a Ginn story. It is particularly nice to see Pam engrossed in reading and sharing a calm moment with a friend.

Stewart incorporated hibernate in his bear picture. He wanted to use the appropriate label to display his word knowledge.

Daily Log Entry for Wednesday, April 9, 1980

Mandy made an alphabet frieze (inspired, I think, by the lovely one that Susy made earlier) and commented to me that into is a compound word.

Susy used the dictionary to copy a personal word list on her own initiative. Also, she made a copy of the morning message as a surprise for me.

Jessica suggested that she could find a certain word by herself by skimming. She did.
Annette marked the short u sound in *hugs*. Later, she read Mr. Pine's *Signs* to me at her request--very fluent reading.

Stewart and Rob read together this afternoon on their own initiative *(May I Come In)*.

Reva said, "*Jellybeans* is a compound word". Such discoveries bolster her confidence.
Appendix D

Ten Samples of Observation Form One in Use

Preparatory Activities

Date September 10

1. to discuss plans to make individual guinea pig houses
2. to dictate a class letter to go home requesting shoe boxes for the above
3. to proofread the letter together
4. to copy the letter individually
5. to proofread the letter individually with teacher

Anticipated Reading Activities

dictation, proofreading and copying a letter to parents

How lesson generated functional language use

we use language skills to communicate purposefully (we need shoe boxes for our project)

Divergent student responses

---

Spontaneous learning directions

1. conventions of letter writing
2. a letter = speech written down to communicate personally

Interpersonal interaction

some frustration with copying letter

Comments

This lesson demonstrates to the students that reading and writing are purposeful

Next Steps

we make model guinea pigs
Date September 27

Preparatory Activities

1. to listen to Frances Face-Maker (Cole, a book about expressing feelings
2. to role-play our own feelings using the format from the book
3. to write and illustrate an individual book about feelings using a simple repetitive format based on the book
4. to proofread the book with the teacher and assemble it for reading at home

Anticipated reading activities

1. to write and illustrate an individual book about feelings
2. to proofread the above with teacher
3. to assemble for reading at home (involves skimming, sequencing skills)

How lesson generated functional language use

we translate our feelings into written language

Divergent student responses

many individual ideas for role-playing—l feel pretty, crazy, sexy, mean

Spontaneous learning directions

how to make and assemble a book

Interpersonal interaction

pride of authorship very apparent

Comments

role-playing is a powerful launch for using written language to express feelings

Next steps

plan another role-playing based language activity
Preparatory Activities

1. to dictate a list of signs we need in the classroom
2. to make a functional sign for the room (each pupil)

Anticipated Reading Activities

1. to make a sign to be used in the room referred to list if needed
2. to mount the sign where it belongs
3. to participate in a sign-reading group activity

How lesson generated functional language use

The Goodmans note that children are interested in "... signs which help them control their lives" (p. 16). We make such signs in this activity.

Divergent student responses

Suggestion for signs: Fluffy The Record Player
Mrs. Park's Desk The Globe Books

Spontaneous learning directions

Expanded sight vocabulary the function of signs as communication in our everyday environment

Interpersonal interaction

motivation--excellent
increased learner awareness of the literate environment and their own capacity to create it

Comments

pupils took great care in making the signs and mounting them. This lesson is truly open-ended with long-range ramifications

Next Steps

see a filmstrip about signs in our community
Preparatory Activities

1. to dictate a class book using this format:
   Just around the corner
   I can see
   a ___________________________
   looking at me.
2. to write, illustrate, proofread and assemble individual books using the same format

Anticipated Reading Activities

1. to proofread the class book together
2. to complete individual books using the same format and proofread them to go home

How lesson generated functional language use

authorship is an important creative language use

Divergent student responses

"I can see a (an) indian, kitten, baby, snake, tiger, snowman, Santa, my name or the name of family member or friend."

Spontaneous learning directions

expanded sight vocabulary how rhyme works

Interpersonal interaction

considerable pride of authorship and interest in group book

Comments

We read the finished books one to one with the sixth graders. This peer interaction on a regular basis greatly reinforces learning and increases time reading test for each first grader.

Next Steps

a formal rhyming lesson that focuses on what makes words rhyme
Preparatory Activities

1. to dictate a class chart using an "I shop for ________" format
2. to complete an individual book on shopping for food based on above
3. to proofread this book with teacher in preparation for reading at home

Anticipated Reading Activities

to write, illustrate, organize and proofread a book about shopping for food

How lesson generated functional language use

we use written language to express our preferences

Divergent student responses

"I shop for french fries, cake, ice cream, pizza, candy canes, milk"

Spontaneous learning directions

sh sound in shop

Interpersonal interaction

food and eating are very motivating

Comments

everyone completed the task

Next steps

cooking!
Preparatory Activities

1. to discuss what is little in the world around us
2. to dictate a class chart titled What is Little
3. to make an individual What is Little Book using the format:
   A __________ is little.

Anticipated Reading Activities

discussion, dictation, making an individual book using the format from the class chart
proofreading the book with teacher in preparation for reading at home

How lesson generated functional language use

we use written language to describe personal experience

Divergent student responses

Many individual ideas about what is little—pebbles, a rose, a dinosaur (this response is appropriate because the pupil had seen several pictures of small dinosaurs that lived during the Age of Reptiles)

Spontaneous learning directions

expanded sight word vocabulary   categorization that reflects personal interests and experiences

Interpersonal interaction

lots of discussion took place during the book making part of the lesson that involved explaining one's choices

Comments

several requests were made for word cards to assist personal writing

Next Steps

relate this lesson to word opposites—little/big and others
Date February 15

Preparatory Activities

1. to discuss families—animal and human and list family words on board
2. to listen to family book Around and Around Love
3. to make a picture of our own family and labels and a title or caption

Anticipated Reading Activities

1. to review the family words listed on the board
2. to label family members in our picture and complete a title or a caption for the picture

How lesson generated functional language use

we use language to describe our own families

Divergent student responses

Children realized that everyone's family is different. There was a lot of picture comparison and discussion during the lesson

Spontaneous learning directions

pupils struggled with drawing family members to show their relative size to each other

Interpersonal interactions

pre-vacation fatigue is evident today but children were generally interested in the task

Comments

this book is a gem—the children are drawn to its beautiful photographs showing many cultural backgrounds and life styles

Next Steps

a family of bears art project
Preparatory Activities

1. to make a pea and toothpick sculpture
2. to complete a drawing of the sculpture with an explanatory caption (each pupil)

Anticipated Reading Activities

1. to write an explanatory caption for the drawing he/she made
2. depending on the outcome of the above, we may bind these pictures into a group How to Do It Book on Pea and Toothpick Sculptures

How lesson generated functional language use

we use written language to explain our activity and to instruct others

Divergent student responses

many different sculptural forms in evidence—space planet sculptures, animals, ladders, houses, three-dimensional designs

Spontaneous learning directions

the word sculpture

Interpersonal interaction

making the sculptures took a lot of time and concentration but was a very popular activity

Comments

I should have ended the lesson with the sculpture activity and set the stage for a second lesson that would include drawing our sculptures and making a class book. Because I pushed it, the drawings were not that successful.

Next Steps

Remember that these six year olds can only attend to a task for 35-40 minutes of continuous effort. After that, they are too tired to do their best and enjoy what they are doing. Expand on their understanding of sculpture with books from the library and later on, another sculpture activity.
Preparatory Activities

1. to participate in an oral dictation game "Who goes walking on the king's drawbridge?" (Pupils suggest visitors to the castle, the teacher draws them on the drawbridge and labels each figure)
2. to complete a king's drawbridge work paper individually with self-selected visitors drawn in and labelled

Anticipated Reading Activities

1. to participate in the teacher-directed dictation-drawing-labelling game
2. to illustrate and label your own drawing of visitors to the king's drawbridge

How lesson generated functional language use

we use written language as part of an imaginative activity

Divergent student responses

a wide variety of visitors to the king--the queen, assorted pets, a knight, a dragon, a butterfly, a cookie

Spontaneous learning directions

ordinal numbers silent gh sound in knight

Interpersonal interaction

the pupils enjoy this kind of make believe game on the blackboard that combines drawing with appropriate labels

Comments

we should do more with fantasy land themes--the pupils are very drawn to make believe stories and activities that stretch their imagination

Next Steps

we compose a group story about a brave knight focusing on other words that have a silent gh
Preparatory Activities

1. to discuss What We Want to Know About Soap Bubbles in preparation for a science activity
2. to dictate a class chart based on the above questions
3. to use our chart for reference during the activity and afterwards, to answer those questions on the accompanying chart

Anticipated Reading Activities

1. to dictate a list of questions about soap bubbles
2. to dictate answers to those questions after the science activity
3. to review our questions and answers to sum up what happened

How lesson generated functional language use

we used written language to organize our investigation into soap bubbles and their characteristics

Divergent student responses

the pupil questions and answers were very inventive—
  What do they feel like?
  How big can they get before popping?
  What are they made of?
  How far can they travel?
  What is the light inside?

Spontaneous learning directions

how complex these bubbles are in terms of their behavior

Interpersonal interaction

following directions was of the essence in this lesson—the children took turns with the bubble mixture and had a wonderful time experimenting

Comments

This is the way to combine reading and science it seems to me

Next Steps

more integrated reading and science activities
Appendix E

Instructional Units in the Reading Program

The following list of instructional units comprises the units covered in the curriculum of the reading program. The first couple of units were designed and implemented as three week units. The subsequent units were expanded to a four week format. During a given instructional unit, most of the formal reading activities related to the theme of that unit. However, to preserve the flexibility that is characteristic of the Goodman approach and to incorporate spontaneous learning directions that developed out of planned activities, some reading activities were not directly related to the instructional unit and its theme.

- Unit 1: Our Guinea Pig, Fluffy
- Unit 2: The Self
- Unit 3: Signs
- Unit 4: Indians
- Unit 5: The Supermarket
- Unit 6: Dinosaurs
- Unit 7: Families
- Unit 8: Weather
- Unit 9: Fairy Land
- Unit 10: Africa
Appendix F

Samples of Children's Work

I love you
BC
MLK
will
Feb. 25

(March 6)

Tree
day

A Big Cookie

A Little Tree

Stars

Night

page 2

Page 7

War. 6

Big

Little
Chihuahua

Cocker Spaniel

Monopoly

Police dog
spaghetti
I LOVE YOU

I DON'T LOVE YOU

MAR. 1 1980
APR. 14 1960

This is I

I love

To MIS

From 92

ICE ICE

ICE ICE

ICE ICE
by
Stars - Words.

by

FOX PIE MAP INK
ZOO SUN BOX
EYE CAP HEN BUS
RUG DOG HIE
JAR MAN
BUG
CAR
FLY
HAT
OWL
KEY
BOY
INK
MAP
SUN
BUS
tis -
CAT
BED
BOX
joe

early May
Hello,

Please do not come in.

Dr.
I am a math wizard.

Boo ka.

Mid-May
a lady bug is a little bug. To mom
my lady bug is a she and it loves me. do you have a lady bug? do you think my lady bug likes you too? I think so.
my lady bug eats leaves. if you had a lady bug would you feed him or she leaves too? I think so.

the end

MAY 20 1990

love
May 23

Love,

Marie

536-04

Phone number

May 23

Love,

Marie

Do you love me?

Da Na Park

I love you.

I'm out.
I am IN The

Room Love me

found posted on wall
on MAY 29 1980

(Anonymous)
Dear Mrs. Parks.

I liked it here and I will miss you. I am going across America and will sleep in a tent. Love

June 17