

TRANSITION TO READER: MULTIPLE PROSPECTIVES

By

Anna F. Lyon

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Curriculum and Instruction

Barbara Hutson, Co-chairman

Marvin G. Cline, Co-chairman

Thomas Gatewood

Gloria McDonnell

Jan Nesper

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Abstract

The observation of first grade children as they became readers led the researcher to this study. Some children found reading an effortless task, some progressed as expected with instruction, while others struggled. An effort was undertaken to gain insight into the various paths children took on their way to independent reading. The goal of this qualitative study was to describe the reading experiences of first grade children in order to enhance understanding and to describe their paths to look for similarities and differences.

Five themes emerged from this study. First, the study found differing definitions of reading among the children, parents, and teachers. These conflicting definitions sometimes led to complications as the children learned to read. Second, the social construction of learning to read was clearly demonstrated by these children. Children in this study read together, held conversations about how to work their way through text, and engaged in joint decision making. While the children learned from and with each other throughout the study, a third theme that emerged was that of the personal nature of learning to read. In addition to reading and learning with peers, the children also chose to read alone. This seemed to be a time to try out and internalize new learning, as well as time to practice what was known. The various paths that the children took as they learned to read yielded a fourth theme. While the path for some was rather linear, others took a more circuitous route. The ability of the children in this study to identify more able readers and to seek them out to read and listen to emerged as the fifth and final theme.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Many children learn to read during their first grade experience. Reading is, indeed, a major curriculum focus in schools and great effort is made to ensure all children are given every opportunity to become independent readers. Young children enter first grade with the expectation that they will learn to read. Schools, communities and parents share this expectation and are, generally, anxiously watching for progress. Children who experience difficulty learning to read in first grade are the cause of much concern among school and community members.

Early in the researcher's teaching career students who weren't successful readers in the heterogeneous first grade classroom became the object of great concern. In spite of the researcher's best efforts, every year there were children who did not respond to reading instruction. No one, the children, their parents, nor the researcher considered them readers. Since it did not seem reasonable to blame a six year old, the researcher searched for answers and turned to the university for enlightenment. The university lectures considered different learning styles and different modalities. It was helpful but it wasn't enough in that it didn't address the range of issues observed in the classroom. At the end of each school year, there were children who had not made the transition to reader. It seemed that there were pieces to the reading puzzle missing. Clearly, a deeper look was needed.

The differences and similarities between the children experiencing difficulty and those who seem to take to reading easily were pronounced. The researcher set about watching for behavioral similarities and differences. There were very obvious differences in book handling and other "readiness" skills. Developmental differences were taken into consideration but these differences did not appear to be the only determining factors in the reading process. While initial observations were intended to study children experiencing difficulty, the observations of average and high progress readers allowed the researcher insight into successful reading. The researcher felt the observation of successful readers could enhance understanding of productive approaches children have used to become readers. This new understanding could then assist the researcher's facilitation of reading for all children in the class.

As observations continued, other phenomena emerged. The researcher was intrigued with an event that occurred with regularity as some of the children made the transition to reader. The children sometimes noticed the transition at the moment they realized they could make sense of text unaided by others. The moment seemed to signify internalization and coming together of the pieces necessary to read independently.

The realization they could read triggered different reactions among the children. Some children simply smiled, others looked startled, while some laughed out loud. Some children looked up and around the room to see if others had noticed. Other children did seem to notice and would make remarks such as, "Did you know Bryan can read?" or simply, "Bryan can read now." Sometimes the child himself stepped forward to declare he had become a reader.

These innocent statements reaffirmed the teacher's role as simply a facilitator and that true learning is within the individual. No credit was offered to parents, teachers or others who may

have assisted in the process. The children now realized that they could control text and that the power to do so was within them.

Attempts to interview or discuss the transition with the children yielded scant data. These young children seemed unable to articulate their thoughts and feelings during this transition. The very personal and individualistic nature of the reading process required the researcher to look at overt behaviors and attempt to determine what was happening inside the child. Since the children could not articulate their internal process for the researcher, it became the researcher's task to puzzle with those who made a smooth transition to reader.

Reading is a complex task requiring an understanding of how to bring together all the pieces necessary to construct meaning. Clay refers to this as "orchestration". (1991, p. 211) The researcher's observations of these first grade children led to the notion of the child's "desire for books." (Roberts, 1989, p.32) The researcher observed children as they continued the struggle toward independent reading, even though, for some, the struggle continued past their first grade year. The desire seemed to make the struggle worthwhile.

Not all children in the classroom experienced the transition to reader during their first grade experience. Some children had long since experienced the transition upon entry into school, others made the transition during first grade, for yet others the transition had not occurred when they left first grade. These differences caused the researcher to broaden the study. The focus shifted from the specific moment the transition occurred to include the journey these first graders took while learning to read.

Issues Under Study

The goal of this study was to describe the reading experiences of children as they came to realize they could read. In this study the researcher described initial reading behaviors, noting changes as the children moved toward independent reading. Once it was determined that the child had become a reader, new behaviors and observations were described. The parents interviewed offered opinions of what constitutes a reader that differed from those of the children. Their perceptions, along with those of the Title I and classroom teacher, were reported.

Issues regarding reading behaviors and the experience of children who entered school as readers were explored through interviews with parents and the children themselves. Two children were chosen as case studies based on the researcher and classroom teacher's opinions that they would allow for discussion of the transition to reader. Their different, yet successful paths to reader allowed the researcher to contrast the two divergent paths to the same outcome. A third child was also included to provide an interesting contrast to the two case studies. Her unique approach did not afford her the same success as the other case study children.

From a class of eighteen children, twelve children were chosen as the target group. Children who were identified as readers upon entry into the class and those with identified learning disabilities were excluded from the target group. The remaining twelve children could not read upon entry into first grade but were expected to become readers during their first grade experience. With the goal of observing what occurred as these twelve children became readers,

the researcher believed the approach described above yielded valuable insights into these developing readers.

Importance of Study

The Fauquier County (Virginia) Public Schools handbook states, "The basic purpose of the school system is to educate students in the knowledge, skills and values necessary to become self-sustaining and productive members of a democracy." Public schools nationwide share this philosophy and structure their school systems accordingly. Few would disagree that reading is a very vital and basic need if this philosophy is to be fulfilled.

The importance of reading is felt in the workplace, and in everyday life in the United States. Common events, such as obtaining a drivers license, are complicated without the ability to read. It is generally agreed reading helps one lead a fuller life. In addition to the information and pleasure gained from reading books, magazines and newspapers, the ability to conduct one's personal business often relies on the written word.

This universal acceptance of the importance of reading has led to a great deal of research and has produced a wide array of commercial products and services. While many of these products and services are useful, the fact remains that some children attend school for twelve or thirteen years and are not readers by any definition upon leaving the school system. This fact calls for researchers to continue to study the reading process.

Since reading is such a complex task requiring physical, mental, and social energy from the reader, the task of studying the process is also complex. This led the researcher to the desire to record what was observable as children learn to read. The researcher used the experiences of the children themselves as a vehicle to better understand what occurred as these children made the transition to reader. The study of behaviors, adult opinions, and the Observation Survey allowed the researcher to study readers from several perspectives.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND LITERATURE

In an attempt to clarify thinking regarding child development and to revisit the theoretical underpinnings of the learning process, the researcher conducted a literature search. The philosophy of learning and cognitive development served as background on which to build. The researcher found it useful to explore and clarify theoretical foundations. The understandings gained from the literature search allowed the researcher to better understand classroom observations.

Background, literacy experiences, and child development all play a role in reading development. Piaget (Flavell, 1963, p. 262-266) feels a child will move through the stages of development as maturation, experiences and environment allow. He cautions us not to accelerate the growth of basic concepts. While a child could be taught to respond appropriately under certain conditions, there would be little generalized effect. This is due to the limited number of learning experiences relevant to the given concept. This does not provide for many sorts of experiences to come together into new concepts.

Although Piaget's theory is one of child development, it also serves as a theory of learning. Piaget's theory states that knowledge is developed gradually as the child interacts with his environment. Environment, maturation, socialization and equilibration are the forces Piaget says shape learning. Most children learn to read during the latter part of the pre-operational stage, between five and seven years, as described by Piaget.

Piaget's notion that knowledge acquisition is a developmental process that evolves as children interact with their environment continues to influence how some schools function. Curricula decisions often reflect Piaget's theory of learning following development. Reading readiness measures were developed to help determine when a child was developmentally ready for formal reading instruction would begin. Retention of young children sometimes occurred because it was determined they weren't ready for formal instruction.

In his theory of learning, L.S. Vygotsky (1978, chap. 6) states that learning and development are interrelated and that they both begin on the child's first day of life. His view is that learning should be matched with the child's developmental level. He defines the Zone of Proximal Development as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers." In order to teach in the child's Zone of Proximal Development, the teacher must be a careful observer of the child and then act as a facilitator. Vygotsky asked children questions from two different conceptual realms (everyday life, and concepts learned in school and other formal settings). The results showed that concepts learned in school develop more rapidly. Vygotsky concluded that education precedes and thus, supports development. Following this concept, the child could learn the necessary reading strategies and only declare himself a reader when he becomes developmentally ready.

The theories of Piaget and Vygotsky provide a background for research conducted by Marie Clay (1982). Clay advocates the close, systematic observation of children when attempting

to understand how they learn. She underscores the role of the teacher as one of observer and facilitator. Clay insists that "noticing" teachers offer support, as needed, as the child moves toward independence. This would require the teacher to teach in the child's Zone of Proximal Development.

Clay defines a high process reader as someone who "operates on print in an integrated way in search of meaning, and reads with high accuracy and high self-correction rates." (1993, p.9) She calls the coming together of all necessary pieces orchestration (1991, p. 211). This is the time when the child is able to use the three cuing systems (semantic, syntactic, and graphophonic) to decode and is able to read in a phrased and fluent manner indicating comprehension.

Children who are less successful readers often rely on a small set of skills and strategies. Often these children have not learned a sufficient number of strategies, cannot choose which strategy is appropriate at a given time, or over use a particular strategy. They tend to spend so much time and effort at the skill level that meaning is lost.

In order to assist children who have not been successful during their first year of schooling (Kindergarten), Clay developed the Reading Recovery program (1993). The results of an Observation Survey (Clay, 1993) are used to guide the teacher to a starting point for instruction. In addition, the first two weeks are spent "Roaming In The Known". This time allows the teacher to understand fully what the child can do and where to lead him or her. Clay (1993, p.20) notes "In complex learning, what is already known provides the learner with a useful context within which to embed new learning." During a Reading Recovery lesson a child rereads familiar texts, reads a book introduced and read the day before while the teacher takes a running record, works with letter and word identification, composes and writes a sentence or two, reassembles the now cut apart sentence, and is introduced to and reads a new book. The children are asked to think about and verbalize their reading and writing strategies. For example, after a child has self-corrected an error the teacher might ask, "How did you know that word was rabbit instead of bunny?" If the child wants to write the word rabbit the teacher might ask, "What letter would you expect to see at the beginning (end and/or middle) of rabbit?"

Clay (1993) feels that "Most children can become literate. They can learn literacy behaviors if the conditions for learning are right for them as individual learners." (p.10) Her work suggests close observation of literacy behaviors by teachers who are able to use the observations to inform instruction. She says, "They are all ready to learn something, but are starting from different places." (p.6)

Clay's work leads to a study of the role the field of metacognition (Brown, Flavell, Garner) plays in the child's realization that he can read. The ability to think about and reason through one's thought processes allows readers to self-correct errors and to internalize concepts. As the child becomes more and more able to think about and understand their thought processes during reading, they becomes more adept at controlling the reading process. It seems reasonable to conclude that a child would consider himself a reader when he believed he had control over text.

Many factors influence human behavior and, therefore, learning behavior. The child's environment at home, in the community and in school play an active role in learning. Teachers have struggled to find the optimal learning environment and have attempted to create such classroom environments. Brian Cambourne (1991) and others (e.g., Peterson, 1992) feel that certain conditions must be met in order to create proper learning conditions. Among his Conditions for Learning, Cambourne lists: immersion, demonstration, expectation, responsibility, approximation, employment/use, and response. While these conditions are goals for teachers and communities to strive for, many children have passed from readiness to reader in a less than optimal physical environment.

The transition from readiness to reader has been called a "turning point" (Bussis, Chittenden, Amarel, & Klausner, 1985), while others explain that the transition occurs but do not elaborate (Spache, 1972). There seems to be agreement among those involved in the reading process and in reading research (Francis, 1982; Durkin, 1966; Garner, 1987) that this realization one can read is an important event; however, scant attention has been paid to an in-depth study of this important issue.

George D. Spache noted the "ah-ha" some children experience at the point of transition and offered this description of the passage to reader,

Gradually and sometimes painfully the child progresses to the point where one day a sentence he manages to read actually says something to him. The sentence conveys a more complete thought than individual words. He then realizes that if he repeats the sentence he has just read, it will deliver a message. Only at this point (and this may not happen for some children until they are long past the first grade experience) can we say the child has passed from the readiness stage and has become a reader. (1972, p. 13)

Issues of "reading readiness" have been much studied and often debated. For the purposes of this study, the researcher has taken the position of Ian Morrison who stated, "Readiness makes no sense from the learner's perspective. It is the teacher who needs to be ready. The teacher needs to decide where the child is at and adjust the program accordingly" (1994, p.37).

While there is debate among educators regarding how best to teach reading, reading definitions vary little among adults involved in teaching young children to read. Most agree with Clay (1991, p.6) when she describes reading as "a message-getting, problem-solving activity which increases in power and flexibility the more it is practiced." Frank Smith, however, suggests, "we should stop looking for definitions of reading and consider instead what is involved in reading" (1978, p.102).

The personal nature of reading is expressed by Geoffrey Roberts in his book Teaching Children to Read and Write (1989), where he states,

Underlying everything else the child must have a love of stories, a desire for books, a disposition to interact with stories, often in a creative way, and the child must be inquisitive about the interpretation of print and the information that can be obtained from it. These are assertions that do not require experimental proof, for the simple reason that for children to

accomplish anything so complex as reading they must need to do it in the sense of wanting to master something for the thrill and joy of doing it and for the satisfaction of completing the task even though the final goal for some may be distant. Thus we might venture towards the assertion that when a child wants to learn to read is the time to begin to teach him. Whether he reaches this point naturally or whether the need and desire have to be created for him by the teacher is another matter. (1989, p. 32)

Some researchers (Clay, 1991; Mooney, 1990) express the need to foster independent reading at all levels of reading progress. In independent reading, children assume responsibility for reading. They do not need assistance since the books can be read at 90% to 95% accuracy. All children can participate in independent reading providing text difficulty is adjusted to meet individual needs (Dupree & Iversen, 1994).

The teacher's role as children learn to read is another topic of much research. While once basal reading texts carefully scripted the teacher's lessons and responses, many researchers now feel the teacher's role is to observe reading behavior and scaffold learning (Clay, 1982 1991 1993; Mooney, 1990; Smith, 1978; Vygotsky, 1978). Ralph Peterson added another aspect to the process when he stated, "We want children not only to learn how to read, but also to become readers." (1992, p.6)

In Basics of Qualitative Research, Strauss and Corbin define a grounded theory as "one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents . . . One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant is allowed to emerge." (1990, p. 23) This last statement precisely fit the nature of this study. No theories were developed. This study endeavored to describe what was relevant in the experiences of twelve first grade children as they become readers.

These readings and understandings helped clarify the researcher's previously held views. These views were developed during the researcher's educational experiences and reading. By clarifying the theoretical base from which the researcher had operated, the researcher was offered an opportunity to observe children more objectively. Upon completion of the data collection, the researcher returned to the literature once again in order to address issues that emerged during the study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The goal of this study was to follow children through their first grade experience as they made the transition to reader. The researcher described early behaviors, followed the developmental stages until the children declared they could read, and continued to describe behaviors after the children believed they could read. This study used the child's definition of reading, as well as those of the teacher and parents. These descriptions were an attempt to better understand the developing reader.

A qualitative study was used since no prior hypothesis had been developed, no experimental treatment was applied, and there were no statistical results to manipulate. The researcher observed the children and their reading behaviors as they occurred in a natural classroom setting, allowing issues to emerge.

The researcher had served as a Reading Specialist in the school for two years and as a Reading Recovery teacher since the program was instituted in the county in 1994. The researcher's inclusion in the classroom did not seem unusual to the children, as they were familiar with her in the role of Reading Specialist in the school. The researcher had read to kindergarten classes the previous year so those who attended the school during their kindergarten experience saw the researcher as a familiar presence. Children at the school viewed the researcher as a part of the school family and had opportunities to observe her as teacher, as well as a participant in school duties in the cafeteria and at bus time. Indeed, children often requested to come read with her since they knew of her interest in this area.

Site

The study was conducted at an elementary school in a small town in Virginia located approximately forty miles from Washington, D.C. The county where the school was located consisted of small towns and rural areas, and had approximately 5,000 children enrolled in ten elementary schools. The children from one first grade classroom at the school served as subjects for this study. The school had a population of approximately 400 students in grades kindergarten through grade five. These students were from the small town and neighboring rural areas.

Participants

The subjects in the study were in a first grade classroom formed due to overcrowding of the other three classes. While forming the class, attention was given to balance resulting in the following:

- Gender balance
- Ethnic balance
- Academic balance

The class consisted of nine boys and nine girls. One child was Asian and two were black, resulting in ethnic balance based on school population. Twelve of the eighteen children were selected for inclusion in this study.

All parents of children in the classroom were invited to participate in interviews. In addition to a formal interview, the classroom teacher was available for collaboration daily during data collection.

Procedures

The use of systematic observation yielded insight into the reading progress of the children studied. Clay (1993) offers insight into systematic observation. In An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement, she examines systematic observation and lists the following characteristics it has in common with other good measurement instruments:

- A standard task
- A standard way of setting up the task
- Ways of knowing when we can rely on our observations and make reliable comparisons
- A task that is like a real world task as a guarantee that the observations will relate to what the child is likely to do in the real world.
-

She warns against the many error sources in observation, such as bringing preconceived beliefs about the task to the observation. One, therefore, needs to use a wide range of observations and measures. In order for observations to be valid, they must be conducted during authentic literacy tasks.

Clay's Observation Survey was selected to determine the literary profile of each child in the classroom at the beginning of the academic year. This instrument has six parts:

1. *Letter Identification Test* - Children are asked to identify letters of the alphabet (including two print styles for g and a) in random order on the page.
2. *Word Test* - Children read from a list of twenty high frequency words.
3. *Dictation* - A sentence is read slowly and the child is asked to write the sound he/she hears in each word.
4. *Concepts About Print* - Using a small book, children are asked to point out features of text, including directionality and return sweep, that print carries the message, to identify word boundaries, and to match voice to print. Additionally, children are asked to identify and define punctuation, to locate some "reversible" words (on, no) and to locate a small number of often confusing upper and lower case letters (b, d).
5. *Writing* - Given a ten-minute time frame, children are asked to write the words they know.
6. *Reading Level* - A reading level is established, using books of increasing difficulty. The child's instructional level is determined by finding the highest level they can read with at least 90% accuracy.

The Observation Survey was administered to all children included in this study in order to develop a baseline of information. Once the child declared himself a reader or at the end of the study, a follow-up Observation Survey was administered to determine whether the child had achieved first grade reading level as determined by Clay. Survey results can be found in Appendix A.

School records, including attendance data, previous test results and teacher reports, were consulted and opinions from kindergarten teachers were sought. Since the class was formed due to overcrowding, the children had spent approximately three weeks in different first grade classrooms. These first grade teachers were also consulted. As the result of this process, three children were identified as fluent readers, twelve were identified as average, two were labeled as below average, and one child received services from the learning disabilities program.

The twelve children described as average were the focus of this study. These children were not identified as readers upon entry into first grade. They were expected, however, to respond to standard reading instruction in the first grade classroom basal reading program.

From the target group of twelve, three children emerged as case studies. Two full case studies were developed and reported. The third child was added to provide contrast to the others. However; there was not enough data to provide a full case study.

Observations, running records, writing samples and field notes were systematically gathered for each child in the target group over the course of their first grade year. The twelve target children in the class were video taped for one half hour each morning as they engaged in independent reading. Although the camera sought out children in the target group as they participated in reading tasks, other children were also captured on tape. No effort was made to exclude other children in order to avoid making the class aware of any special interest in the target group.

The researcher's attempts to interview the children in the class were met with limited success. While most children were unable to articulate their reading experience, the interview transcript of one child was used. (see Appendix C, interview 6) The child in this interview was not able to articulate his reading experiences but was present at his mother's interview. His comments during the interview are few and inconsequential.

The researcher spent an additional half hour per day informally interacting with several children during language arts time. The researcher assumed the roles of observer and teacher. During this half hour, the researcher compiled field notes on the twelve target children using 3x5 cards bearing each child's name.

Interviews were conducted with willing parents of the children in the class. Parents were asked for their impressions and recollections of the reading history of their child. Their opinions of when and how the transformation to reader took place, if indeed it had, were elicited.

Each week, the data were assembled, transcribed, reviewed, and coded. The software program *The Ethnograph* A Program for the Computer Assisted Analysis of Text Based Data (Qualis Research Associates 1990) was used to assist in data organization.

Coding Procedures

The researcher relied on triangulation to insure reliable observations and comparisons. Since the children were being studied in their first grade classroom and the researcher was a recognized part of school personnel, the task was a real world task asking the children to behave as they normally would while reading.

Transcripts of field notes, observations, audio and video tapes, and interviews were entered into *The Ethnograph* as soon as possible after each day's data were gathered. At this point the procedures described by Strauss & Corbin (1990) as a part of their model for grounded theory was carried out. This involved the following steps:

Open Coding - During open coding, the data are analyzed, and concepts are grouped and named. Throughout the process, new data are constantly being compared and code names examined to ensure continued fit

Axial Coding - During axial coding, data are put together by making connections between categories. In axial coding, subcategories are linked to categories through the paradigm model of causal conditions, phenomenon, context, intervening conditions, action/interaction strategies, and consequence.

Selective Coding - In this stage, the core category is selected, and systematically related to other categories. Categories needing further development are filled in.

This is a technique in which information from the raw data is categorized and the categories are constantly restructured by comparing them to others and to new data. This restructuring takes the data to higher and higher levels of concept evaluation thereby allowing concept, constructs, and certain theoretical structures to emerge. As code restructuring occurs, they are fewer in number and broader in meaning, taking the form of patterns and constructs. Constructs were then integrated into a thematic model that served to explain the object of study. Strauss and Corbin (1990) refer to this as *substantive theory*. This is a theoretical statement of the object of study and not a basic social science model, which goes beyond the object of study. The later model, called *formal theory*, is not a goal of this study.

In order to assure that data were accurate, several sources of data were gathered and compared to each other. This is called triangulation and was used throughout this study. To assure that each stage of coding and recording was performed plausibly, several procedures were employed. The major procedure involved regular debriefing by a group of peers and the research advisor to the dissertation. This involved a presentation of the raw data output from *The Ethnograph*, the codes and re-codes, memos describing the basis of the coding, and when appropriate, alternate coding decisions. The debriefing group would then challenge coding decisions, discuss data sources for the decisions, and require the researcher to fully justify the

plausibility of themes and constructs that were identified as emerging. In addition, both teachers and parents were asked to comment on the researcher's conceptualizations as they emerged, to further establish their plausibility. This analytic procedure was applied to the data of the primary subjects from the time that each was clearly identified as a reader. The study summary and the model which emerged that best captured its central themes, is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The transition to reader for the target first grade children took many paths, with several factors influencing the process. Personality traits played a large role in the manner in which the children responded to teaching and learning. Background and education experiences were influences. Social standing and peer relationships were factors. Language skills and intelligence played vital roles. In spite of the many paths taken and the influences felt, the target group of children in this study became readers with varying degrees of proficiency during their first grade experience.

Case Studies

Two children, Brian and Daniel, took very different paths to reading. The researcher found Daniel's path to be illustrative of the social construction of learning to read and also an example of children learning from each other. Brian took a very different path and is illustrative of the personalization of the process of learning to read. In addition, Brian took a circulative route to becoming a reader. For these reasons the boys were selected as case studies. A third child, Sharon, was added at certain points to illustrate the impact of personality differences, as the children became readers. A full case study was not prepared for Sharon, as she did not appear in enough videotape segments to create a definitive case. When she is seen, it is often in the background. Since Sharon rode a bus that was the last to arrive at school and the independent reading session began as the children entered school, the opportunities to videotape Sharon were limited. She was included to offer a helpful contrast to Daniel and Brian.

Definition of Reading

It is evident that the implicit definition of what constitutes "reading" varied greatly among the subjects studied and interviewed. The case study children did not always believe themselves to be readers even though the teacher felt they could read and had test scores to confirm that belief. An example of this was Brian, one of the case study children. Based on kindergarten performance and teacher recommendation, Brian was placed in a Title I remedial reading program. He was dismissed early from the Title I program because the Title I and classroom teachers believed he no longer needed special services. They saw evidence of strategy use and comprehension. Title I testing procedures (including an Informal Reading Inventory) held positive results. It was, however, several weeks after he left the Title I program before the researcher observed behavior indicating Brian believed himself a reader. (Appendix D, p. 94-98)

During initial observations of Brian after he left the Title I program, the researcher observed him continuing his pattern of sometimes reading with and listening to more able readers, then returning to simple text and choral reading with less able readers. (Appendix B, lines 179-184) Brian demonstrated behavior indicating he was aware reading was about getting meaning from text, yet he was not able to control all that was needed to read as he felt he should. This was illustrated as Brian closed books when meaning was lost. As the text became too

challenging, his usual response was to look around the area, close the book, and then replace it on the shelf. (Appendix B, lines 144-160) His shift to confident reading behaviors occurred gradually and slowly.

The second case study child, Daniel, shared the definition of reading as a meaning driven activity. Much time was spent listening to and watching his best friend, Jim, a very proficient reader. Jim helped Daniel define reading not only as a meaning driven activity, but also as a desirable one. By listening to more complex text being read by someone in his age group, Daniel saw proficient reading as possible for himself (Appendix B, lines 40-52).

In contrast, Sharon, the third child studies, was willing to skip words and phrases, thus losing meaning. She almost always read in a loud, clear voice. Taped sessions showed Sharon *performing* with a book. (Appendix B, lines 370-386) Her initial definition of reading was vocabulary driven and seemed to be one of saying words.

Early Behaviors

Evidence from the data showed children who clearly were aware that they could not yet read. While Brian hid behind a book (Appendix B, lines 390-392), Daniel looked away when the teacher tried to offer praise. Both boys read in quiet, sometimes inaudible voices. Both Daniel and Brian seemed further along than Sharon in their understanding of what reading entailed. While they had not yet acquired the needed strategies, they knew they didn't know. Sharon seemed less aware and concerned about her lack of skill (Appendix B, lines 165-174).

Early reading behaviors, however, emerged quickly for the case study children. They reread familiar texts, pointed to words, and enjoyed their successes. Brian found pleasure in familiar rereading although he read alone approximately half the time. He read in a confident voice and displayed shy smiles. (Appendix B, lines 179-184) When the classroom teacher, the classroom teacher, was present, Brian often asked for her help. He would keep his finger under the word and look up until the teacher responded. (Appendix B, line 570) Instead of supplying the word, she encouraged Brian to practice strategies. (Appendix B, lines 99-125) When he was immediately successful in the use of a strategy, Brian continued reading. However, when Brian and The classroom teacher spent a long time working, Brian would stop reading when the teacher left. (Appendix B, lines 144-160) Even though the teacher always offered praise, Brian did not seem to enjoy the praise for unsuccessful attempts. His facial expression did not change and he would simply return to the task at hand.

Daniel read almost exclusively with his best friend, Jim. He often assumed the listener's role but was comfortable sharing a simple text with Jim. Jim was an excellent listener to even the most simple, repetitive stories Daniel read to him. (Appendix B, lines 438-456) He was always encouraging and helpful. When asked to describe Daniel's behavior before she felt he was a reader, the teacher said, "He was more timid. He would read the repetitious books like *Silly Sally* and things like that and he could read those comfortably. And he did get the words right but I thought it was just by memory that he was doing all this. He could pick out words in a book that were familiar to him but if he wasn't sure, he would say can you tell me this rather than trying to

figure it out. He likes to do pair reading, reading with others, but he would be more of a follower.” (Appendix D, p. 119-120)

Sharon happily read for the camera and extended great effort to keep other children from blocking the camera’s view of her. Her voice was always loud and clear. Although she was not a proficient problem solver, it did not appear bothersome to her to skip words, miscall words (often losing meaning), or to skip pages (Appendix B, lines 261-366). Sharon’s initial strategy was to ask the teacher to supply words (Appendix B, line 263).

The Transition

The researcher felt Daniel was able to move through the transition quickly due to his relationship with his friend, Jim. Since Jim read well above grade level, Daniel enjoyed listening to him read books and magazines. Gradually, Daniel took over more of the reading task. (Appendix B, lines 438-444) The friendship and comfort level between Daniel and Jim allowed Daniel to anticipate acceptance of his attempts and help with unknown words. Daniel was able to continue reading books he chose, thanks to the assistance he received from Jim. (Appendix B, lines 483-524)

Brian continued to progress but still relied on the teacher to suggest appropriate strategies. He seemed to progress and then regress with regularity during February. February 8 found him reading a very simple text learned much earlier in the year. (Appendix B, 687-688) He had reverted to the use of a very quiet voice. (Appendix B, 744 and 831) On the fifteenth of February, he was observed working his way through a difficult text. (Appendix B, 706-707) On the nineteenth he is observed again reading very familiar text with little interest. While reading a difficult book during the same observation, when an unknown word was encountered Brian closed the book and replaced it on the shelf. (Appendix B, line 713) By the end of February, Brian had taken on more of the reading task and was observed using strategies appropriately. He listened to better readers and continued to read familiar text repeatedly. (Appendix B, lines 760-768)

During this time, Brian enjoyed reading to less able readers (Appendix B, lines 700-702 and 721) but did not read in the presence of those with more reading skill. The pattern of progress followed by regression continued through March and April. Brian’s progress would seem steady for days and then would stop while he reverted to familiar text and low-level strategy use. (Appendix B, lines 876, 903, 951, 979, 992) He continued to rely on the use of initial sounds, picture cues, and sight words. He would only use other strategies when the teacher suggested them. While these regressions allowed Brian to read with ease, the simple texts he chose did not seem to satisfy him. The stories may have been too familiar or too simple to be rewarding.

Sharon showed her new understanding of the reading process while attempting to help others. On one occasion (Appendix B, lines 186-245) Sharon joined Fred as he attempted to read. Sharon pointed to the words in Fred’s book and began to read. Fred repeated after her. When the teacher suggested they read the book together rather than Fred repeating after Sharon (often without looking at the text), Sharon stated, “Fred can’t.” She had noticed differences in what she

and Fred were able to do. While this was a small step, it does indicate a better understanding of the reading process.

On March 5, Sharon was observed reading with greater fluency. She attempted to use letter sound relationships to decode an unknown word. She reread to gain meaning on one occasion. She was successful and read in a loud, clear voice. This observation showed Sharon had learned some useful strategies and now looked for meaning in text. (Appendix B, lines 789-801)

Appendix B, lines 955-956 offer a typical glimpse of Sharon. She read at the table, finished a book, and wrote on a paper. She stopped to talk to other children before leaving to get another book. When she returned, Sharon leafed through the book, turning several pages at once. She stopped to talk to others before she returned to the book. She wrote on her paper indicating she had read the book. It was difficult to determine which reading strategies were in use as so little actual reading took place. Observations indicated Sharon remained in the early transition stage for a large portion of the school year.

After The Transition

These observations of Daniel were made by the classroom teacher, “He said, ‘Well I don’t want to read a book that I have written. I want to read a book that I’ve brought from home.’ And it was this book about trucks that had numerous words in it and there was no way he could have memorized all that and he just started reading it. And from that day on he was able to be more confident. He would try harder... he would try to figure everything out for himself rather than immediately coming to me. He would try it himself or even say IS this this word and he would get it correct rather than saying what is it. He was able to take off and kind of be the leader. He felt like he was stronger.” Although there were signs he was moving toward independent reading, Daniel’s declaration to the class came weeks after the teacher’s observations.

By early February, Daniel had moved to more complex text and mostly read alone. His questions for the teacher changed also. On February 8, he asked, “What is this word? Watcher?” The teacher confirmed he was correct. (Appendix B, lines 690-692) While he continued to listen to his friend, Jim, Daniel took over more and more of the reading. On one occasion the boys decided to take turns reading. Daniel insisted on having the first turn. After completing one book Daniel got another and announced he would be first again. His good friend Jim allowed him two turns. When reading to his friend, Daniel declined his offer of help. (Appendix B, lines 444-458). One observation found Daniel reading with a different friend. The two children enjoyed the story and stopped to laugh at a funny part. They clearly understood the meaning of the story. (Appendix B, lines 969-972) As he gained more control of reading strategies, Daniel became more confident. On April 9 he told some classmates, “I read this whole chapter and I’m going to read 27 of them.” (Appendix B, 939-940) He let his classmates know he could read when he covered his ears and told another child, “I don’t need to *hear* that book. I can read it.” (Appendix B, lines 1006). It was not until the final observation in June that the researcher observed Brian was a confident reader. On June 14, the last day of school, he read a book with complex text in a loud, clear voice. He did not know all the words on sight but was able to choose among known strategies and was successfully able to decode without loss of meaning. Another student came to

listen. His interest level was such that he was neither distracted by the listener nor by other activities in the room.

The final observation of Sharon took place on April 30. She sat on the floor with a big book. Alice, a less able reader, joined her. Alice listened as Sharon read the familiar story fluently. When the classroom teacher came by Sharon informed her, "I'm helping her with the words." (Appendix B, lines 1024-1028) At the end of the story, Sharon left and moved to the reading table where she moved from seat to seat, talked to other children, and read little. An Observation Survey administered on June 5 assessed Sharon's reading level as 12. This indicated she was low average in the class.

Multiple Perspectives

By using multiple sources of information, the researcher attempted to triangulate the data. In addition to observations of the children themselves, the classroom teacher and consenting parents were interviewed. These adults were included in the study to add depth and perspective. (See Appendix C) Further, three data collection procedures were employed. Observation Survey (Clay, 1993) results were obtained, videotaped observations were transcribed, and face-to-face interviews were conducted. What follows is a reporting from each data source.

Target Group

The target group consisted of twelve children including Brian, Daniel, and Sharon. Early observations found the target children reading simple, repetitive text. (Appendix B, lines 140, 63, 179, 251, 370, and 390) These texts had been read to them in classroom read aloud and shared reading situations. Books were read and reread with great frequency. The strong patterns and familiar contexts in the books offered strong support. The children demonstrated pleasure and confidence. (Appendix B, lines 42, 69, 83, 176 and 184). The researcher felt this was where these children began to understand the reading process and build the desire to read on their own.

When feeling confident with the text, the children often emulated the teacher's behavior. They read a page, and showed the picture to others. (Appendix B, lines 253 and 370 – 386) The children often imitated the teacher's tone and modulation of voice. As the children became able to read simple stories and books they had written, similar behaviors occurred. (Appendix B, lines 460, 610)

Memory and picture cues were the reading strategies most often observed. The children were observed looking closely at the pictures, noticing additional features, and discussing them with each other. Once they were able to recall the pattern of the book, often collaborating and trying several times on the initial page, the children were able to complete the book. Some children seemed bothered if their attempts to read did not make sense. Initially they were not observed drawing on more complex strategies to correct the error. These children asked the teacher to assist or simply replaced the book on the shelf. (Appendix B, lines 20, 28, 160, 263,316)

On many occasions two or more children were observed reading together. When they reached an unknown word, the group talked among themselves and shared knowledge. If the group could not reach a satisfactory conclusion, they asked the teacher. Unsuccessful attempts caused some children to drift away from the group. The target group members were observed reading quite loudly while reading familiar text, but became quieter when the text was less familiar. (Appendix B, lines 259-366, 700-702)

Early observations also found members of the target group listening to other children read. These readers were able to read more interesting and complex text than the target group members. While all members of the target group were observed listening to more able readers (Appendix B, lines 38-52, 471, 819), some spent more time in their own reading attempts. (Appendix B, lines 5-7, 744, 776)

The insights gained in these early experiences built the foundation for the next steps toward reading. As the children came to a better understanding of the reading process, they began to make the transition to reader.

All children in the target group, with the exception of Sharon, felt self-conscious about more able readers hearing their early attempts. Behaviors included soft, quiet voices, glances at others to be certain of who was listening, and avoidance of the reading task. Kelly was observed scooting behind a shelf in order to avoid being heard or seen by others. (Appendix B, line 477) Facial expressions made clear their discomfort and uneasy feelings. Sharon, however, often read in a very loud voice and read for the researcher whenever possible. She was not observed avoiding any reading task.

All members of the target group, as they emerged as readers, were observed relying on other, more fluent classmates. The reading was seldom questioned even when it seemed clear meaning was being lost. The researcher noted with interest that the membership in the group of better readers changed regularly and was relative. Once a child had acquired the needed strategies to read with relative ease, other less able readers seemed to notice right away. (Appendix B, lines 418 and 819, 77 and 967) They would then listen to this new member read and look to the child for assistance. As reading behaviors became more spontaneous, emulation of the teacher gave way to more individual interpretation of text.

The researcher was also struck by the willingness of all the children observed to work at learning to read. Even children such as Gary, who was always ready with a comment or distraction, put forth great effort. The children were often observed patiently laboring to decode a word or to complete a sentence. (Appendix B, lines 600-602) Observations of body language and facial expressions conveyed the depth of their experiences. Frustration at unsuccessful attempts was clearly displayed.

After experiencing the insight that they could read, these children underwent a change in reading behavior. They became willing to take more risks. They understood what was involved in the reading task and were more willing to work on tricky pieces of text. Based on their new understanding of what the reading task demanded of them, they now seemed to make more efficient use of the reading strategies they had acquired. The children realized when they made a

reading error, reread, and were often able to correct their errors. They read for meaning. This transformation to reader became real to the children when they decided they could read, not when the teacher or others thought they could.

Parent Interviews

In an effort to gain additional insight into the reading of the children, the researcher invited all parents of the children in the classroom to be interviewed. Ten parents accepted and were asked to discuss the reading progress of their child. (See Appendix C for transcript) Of these, the classroom teacher considered two to be poor readers, three average readers, and five above average.

One parent stated her child could read before entering kindergarten (Appendix C, line 239), five felt they learned during their kindergarten year (Appendix C, lines 40, 127, 382, 632-634, 702), and two during first grade. (Appendix C, lines 529, 1009-1011) One parent did not directly answer the question and the final parent did not feel their child was a reader. Clearly, parental definitions of reading varied greatly. While four parents reported they were aware their child could read when the child read unfamiliar text unassisted (Appendix C, line 44-45), three parents said their child could recognize some words (Appendix C, lines 550-551, 596-601) and one parent wasn't sure.

Nine parents reported reading to their child, especially when they were very young. One mother spoke of reading to soothe her son as an infant. (Appendix C, line 591) Others mentioned bedtime stories. Two parents discussed making up stories and songs together with their child. (Appendix C, line 133-136) Books and other reading materials were available in the homes of all ten children.

Phonics and sight words, including environmental print, were the reading strategies most frequently reported by the parents. Others spoke of memory and picture cues, but some felt these were not desirable strategies. (Appendix C, line 276-278) The parents of the better readers spoke of the children in terms of independence. They reported the use of word chunks, meaning, self-correcting errors, configuration, context, and concept of story.

Parents of the more able readers also found many side benefits from their child's reading. They mentioned the increase in confidence. They spoke of curiosity and the child's interest in reading and finding answers independently. Excitement about reading was also mentioned. One mother expressed it as her daughter's "power" once she became an independent reader. (Appendix C, line 33-34) Another spoke sadly of the child wanting to read for himself and no longer asking her for stories. These parents also noticed an increased attention span and an ability to sit and concentrate for longer periods of time. One mother mentioned her son's increased conversational skills. (Appendix C, line 267)

Three parents mentioned writing. One mother of an above average reader reported that as he became a better reader, her child became less concerned about spelling errors and more concerned with committing his ideas to paper. (Appendix C, line 177-182) Another mother said her child would type pages of random letters on the computer and then proceed to "read" a story

from the typed pages. (Appendix C, line 339-344) The mother of a poor reader said her daughter could decode unknown words by writing them. (Appendix C, line 903-9040)

Two parents mentioned their child's preference for non-fiction to read to themselves, and one reported her son's desire for fiction when she read to him. One parent allowed her very young son to follow his interest in wrestling in order to facilitate his reading. (Appendix C, lines 211-218) Siblings were reported sources of role models.

The parents of the two poorer readers said their children were easily frustrated and that the children felt they were poor readers. The father of one child who learned to read in first grade insisted his child select from the library only books the child could read independently (476-479). He then asked the child about the stories. Their children reading for pleasure was not mentioned by these parents. Parental frustration was very apparent. (Appendix C, lines 778-787, 950-952, 966-968).

The data gathered from the ten parents suggests the children in this group who learned to read quickly and well were given many opportunities to explore literacy in a comfortable, non-threatening environment. The children learned to use language by exploring storytelling themselves and by listening to stories being told. They learned the flexibility needed to use language well through songs, books, and stories. From the beginning, the sound of stories and the rich language they contain filled their days. Additionally, the people sharing these experiences were their parents, those they had learned to rely on for other more basic needs.

The willingness to follow the lead of the children seemed also to facilitate early reading. By allowing her son to follow his interest in wrestling, one mother was able to get him to use configuration, initial consonants, and to show him the desirability of reading.

Praise from parents and teachers were frequently mentioned by the parents of the good readers. (Appendix C, lines 13-15) The parents of the poorer readers said that they told their child they could do it but the researcher found little evidence of any offer of support beyond suggestions to use phonics. When their children were successful, praise was offered but usually in terms of "I told you you could do it."

Poorer readers also seemed to be subjected to more structured programs such as *Hooked on Phonics*. Both parents and children seem to feel the frustration and disappointment when these programs weren't as successful as hoped. (Appendix C, lines 490-491)

All ten parents realized the importance of reading in the lives of their children. Their expressions of pleasure or disappointment were directly related to how successful they felt their child to be.

Teacher Interview

Teacher opinions were sought in an effort to gain additional perspective. With her daily interactions with the children, the classroom teacher had the most opportunities to observe their reading behaviors. While she had many opportunities to observe, the classroom teacher also had

the responsibility for reading instruction. The researcher believes this fact led the classroom teacher to react in certain ways.

The classroom teacher believed in learning new strategies and then in offering the children daily opportunities to practice these skills. During the free choice reading time, the classroom teacher allotted approximately thirty minutes each morning for practice. While the children selected books and reading partners, the classroom teacher moved among the children acting as facilitator. She encouraged the use of previously learned skills and strategies. The classroom teacher was not observed asking a child not to read a book due to text difficulty. If a child determined the book to be difficult, she/he could ask her assistance or read it with a more able peer. The researcher feels the classroom teacher's willingness to allow this free selection of reading material caused some children to raise their expectations of themselves. The children were given the opportunity to puzzle through difficult text and to stretch their reading ability.

Her frequent use of praise extended to all children in the classroom teacher's classroom. While the praise was not usually specific, it sent each child the message that the classroom teacher believed they could and would be readers. The children felt comfortable seeking her assistance.

The classroom teacher was also observed during reading instruction. Although she now chose the group and materials, the classroom teacher used children's literature to demonstrate teaching points. Her careful choices allowed the children to read at their instructional level during these lessons. The children were often assigned writing and drawing tasks to assist them as they searched for meaning. The writing offered additional opportunities for the children to use word and letter sound knowledge. The drawing allowed freedom to express ideas and thoughts freely. The writing and drawings were then read, shared, and discussed as a group. Oral discussions of the reading material took place daily. The classroom teacher felt reading instruction was of equal or greater importance than the free choice opportunities. She took seriously her charge to teach the needed skills and strategies. She reported using the free choice time to help her evaluate how well the children were using the skills and strategies she presented during instruction.

The classroom teacher reported the expectation that all children in her classroom would be readers by year's end. She acknowledged that some would be more fluent than others, but stated she tried not to pre-judge who these children might be. When she noticed children struggling, she gained reading assistance from the Title I teacher and school Reading Specialist. She also reported trying to spend as much time as possible assisting these children. At times, more able readers were also assigned to assist.

At the time of the data collection, the classroom teacher was completing her master's degree at a local university. She reported she felt the need to continue to gain knowledge in order to be of the greatest assistance to the children. At times she felt the pressure of providing the best for her classroom while meeting the university deadlines. Generally, she felt she had achieved a balance.

The classroom teacher felt the children progressed along a path of strategy acquisition and gradually became readers. She did not usually see dramatic transformations, but commented on the tremendous changes in the children in one school year. The most dramatic change she noted occurred with Daniel and was discussed earlier.

Parental support of the children and school program varied greatly in her classroom according to the classroom teacher. She appreciated the support received and attempted to compensate for lack of home support. She offered a “buddy” either from her classroom or from older children in the school to assist the children who did not receive help at home. The classroom teacher felt the children often needed more assistance than could be offered. She contacted parents as needed and frankly discussed their child’s school needs.

While she reported trying to follow the children’s lead, The classroom teacher stated that she found it difficult when even in a group of five children, there will be five personalities progressing at approximately (although not identically) the same pace.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

The wealth of data yielded five themes. The various definitions of reading among the children, teachers, and parents emerged as important as the children in this study made the transition to reader. The social construction of learning to read was clearly demonstrated. The intensely personal nature of reading was noted often during observations. The divergent paths these children took as they moved toward independent reading emerged as an issue of importance. Guidance from more capable peers played a large role in the transformation of these children.

Differing Definitions of Reading

Those involved in the study defined reading and what constitutes reading differently. Parents offered a variety of responses ranging from the reading of a word or two (Appendix C, lines 13-16), to the ability to read text unassisted. (Appendix C, lines 702-703) This wide range of definitions could explain the variety of responses to their child's school experiences with reading. Parents who felt their child could read when the child had developed a small sight word vocabulary would have much different expectations of a school reading program than would those whose definition included the ability to decode previously unseen text. Most parents spoke of sounding out words (Appendix C, lines 711-712, 1048), of spelling words (Appendix C, lines 317-319, 575-576), and word recognition (Appendix C, lines 455-456, 872-975). Generally, the parents seemed to hold a vocabulary-driven definition of reading.

The classroom teacher's definition of reading differed from those of some parents. She felt a reader needed to have a variety of strategies (Appendix B, lines 95-109, 117-125, 211-215, 265-274) and should be able to choose from among those strategies as appropriate. (Appendix B, lines 363, 648, 795) Her teaching experience had given her a sense of how many young children become readers. She was aware of strategies the children needed to learn and her experience and background prepared her to teach these strategies in meaningful context. The focus of her definition was strategies.

The Title I teacher had not served as a classroom teacher and while her definition of reader did not differ greatly from that of the classroom teacher, she did not share the same point of reference. Her standard for grade level reading was often lower than that of the classroom teacher. Her pullout program created a different setting and children who were successful in the small, isolated groups were not always able to make a smooth transition to classroom reading.

The differences among those involved in the reading progress of these children also reflected different perspectives about children. Parents saw progress in reading as inextricably connected to their progress in other social, as well as cognitive domains. The parents interviewed shared insights about their children from birth to school. They were able to trace progress, however small or seemingly insignificant. Their active, daily involvement in their child's life caused some parents to want to defend or explain their child's behavior (Appendix C, lines 484-486) and to account for their own behaviors. (Appendix C, lines 211-213, 408, 413) The parents saw reading as embedded in the broad and deep contexts of their lives. The parents

who felt their children were good readers, were eager to relate how the child had progressed and the role they had played. (Appendix C, lines 131-136) Parents of the poorer or non-readers seem to find it necessary to declare they had done all they could but that the child had not responded as expected. (Appendix C, lines 928-932) Natural feelings of love and pride were displayed in abundance. Most parents were very forgiving of any unsuccessful attempts their children made. (Appendix C, lines 956-957, 1043-1044)

The classroom teacher's opinions were also valuable since they impacted instruction. The classroom teacher held the same reading expectations and definitions for all children. By applying these standards and definitions to everyone, she was able to gain some perspective on where children fit in relation to their peers. While helpful in some ways, this could also obscure and devalue some uniqueness among children. Her opinions of what constitutes reading were formed by incorporating her personal beliefs, her academic training, textbook publishers, and by the county and state Standards of Learning. The classroom teacher was, of necessity, led by what was expected of her by school personnel and parents. Mrs. C, the classroom teacher, was also required to respond to the needs of all the children in her classroom, thus limiting the amount of time she could spend with one child. These factors each had an impact on her ability to observe and objectively evaluate each child's reading progress. (Appendix B, lines 150-158, 886-894) These circumstances caused Mrs. C to have an altogether different perspective than the parents.

Observations showed differing opinions of what constitutes reading among the target children. Sharon saw reading as performing with a book. (Appendix B, lines 819-826) For Jim, reading was viewed as a meaning making. (Appendix B, lines 835-839) Sometimes children saw reading as a pleasant task (Appendix B, line 176), at other times they recognized the need to work at reading (Appendix B, line 927), and occasionally they gave up in frustration. (Appendix B, lines 106-107)

In order to offer the most effective reading program, it seems a dialog among children, parents, and teachers could lead to a merging of these perspectives. Parents whose definition of reading isolated words could be very surprised to learn their child was experiencing difficulty with reading at school. Children may be better equipped to take on the reading task if teachers and parents help them develop a clear understanding of what reading is.

The range of responses calls for meetings among teachers and parents very early in the school year to clarify the school's position regarding grade level reading. The teacher could include in the meeting approaches used in school, which parents could reinforce. Parents could share the successful elements of "lap reading" and language development that the children learned at home. Parents and teachers could share information and insights. By working as a team with the children and a more common understanding of the reading process, the child would be spared conflicting approaches.

The researcher found that while teacher and parental input was useful, the children held answers to what happened as they moved toward fluent reading. The children in the study demonstrated the importance of objective observation. Through observations, the researcher found that the target children displayed some similarities during their journey toward successful reading. Regardless of when in their lives (at home or at school) these events occurred, the

children seemed to share some steps. They all seemed to begin the journey with the enjoyment of listening to stories, especially those with strong patterns. The “lap experience” (Holdaway, 1979) set the tone for reading. Children were free to enjoy the story, relate to and talk about the text and illustrations, and to do so in a comfortable setting with an accepting adult. These “lap experiences” often occurred at home when the children were very young. (Appendix C, 131-136, 317, 476, 591, 831, 936-939, 1002)

Rhyme and rhythm seemed to hold a special pleasure for these beginning readers. The ease with which the children controlled the words in the text freed them to attend to other features of the text and illustrations. (Appendix B, lines 62-69) Strategy use followed, with few exceptions, a path that has been well studied and documented. (Clay, 1991, p. 288-316) Initially the children relied on picture cues, familiar text and language patterns, and a small number of known words for anchors. This was demonstrated in the classroom observations where children often chose to read books the teacher had read during read-aloud. (Appendix B, lines 40, 47, 63, 179, 785) As they moved toward the transition to reader, letter sound relationships developed and the children began to notice features of words. (Appendix B, lines 131, 240, 244) They learned to crosscheck meaning and letters, and to re-read to clarify misunderstandings. (Appendix B, line 500)

Differences were noted in the time the children took to move along the path to fluent reading. Some children made steady progress (Appendix D, p. 116-118) while others moved forward and regressed. (Appendix D, p. 108-115) Still others moved forward, then paused in their learning only to pick up again.

The researcher’s observations of the similarities and differences the children in the study experienced, spoke to the need for an observant teacher. (Clay, 1982, 1991, 1993) Teachers must not teach only to the similarities among the children in their classes, but must also be aware of individual needs.

Social Construction of Learning

These children demonstrated enjoyment in listening to other children who were able readers. (Appendix B, line 38) During these observations, a child would listen intently, often discussing the story with the reader. At this stage, the children were clearly able to understand more complex text than they could read. The researcher noted with particular interest the ability of the children to know and seek out good readers. The children were willing and able to acknowledge the arrival of new readers into this group. A child might be observed listening to others read when the reader had not yet displayed evidence that they felt themselves to be a competent reader. (Appendix B, lines 660, 729) Perhaps this vote of confidence from other children aided in some children’s recognition of themselves as readers.

All segments of the videotapes showed children reading both in pairs and alone. Often small groups of children would choral read from a big book or from multiple copies of a book. (Appendix B, lines 259, 528) For some children, the presence of the video camera was another opportunity to share reading with a broader audience.

The researcher felt these readings all served valuable purposes. The familiar re-reads enabled the children to find different features of the text with each reading. By reading on their level, the children practiced strategy use and became more proficient in their use. Listening to more capable readers offered opportunities to enjoy the content and vocabulary of more involved text. The children seemed to select activities geared to improving reading. These observations led the researcher to conclude that the time spent in unstructured reading activities enhanced reading progress for these children. The notion that teachers must always be actively involved in each learning situation was challenged by these observations.

Personal Nature of Reading

The intensely personal nature of the process of learning to read was clearly displayed by the children observed. Their initial discomfort and frustrations were evident. Most of the children observed were not eager to share their struggles. The researcher felt two factors were involved. First, the children felt inadequate at these times and were made uncomfortable by the presence of other, more capable readers. The judgment of those more capable was not always welcome. Accusations were sometimes heard regarding who was not contributing to a group effort to read. (Appendix B, lines 304, 412) Social factors, such as friendship, played a large role in the process. Group acceptance was important. A second factor could be that the children did not wish to be disturbed in their efforts to internalize this current step in the reading process. The need to try out different strategies required personal effort. Time and privacy were needed. The children displayed different responses to the need to internalize and personalize the reading process. Even the most verbal and outgoing students, such as Sharon, were sometimes observed puzzling through text alone. (Appendix B, lines 789-801)

The personal nature of the reading process highlights the teacher's role as facilitator. The study illustrated the need for teachers to facilitate by arranging the classroom with spaces and time for individual and group reading, by providing a wide range of quality reading materials, and by attending to individual needs.

The Path

As discussed earlier, the children tended to follow a documented sequence of reading strategy acquisition. These children did not, however, move along a prescribed path together. While some of the children seemed to make fairly smooth, steady progress, some of the children studied had their own unique paths. The case study children (See Appendix D) and Sharon offer examples of three paths.

The researcher found that some children, such as case study child Brian, paused and even regressed at times as they moved along the path toward independent reading. These children returned to familiar text when they encountered difficulty. Unable to take on the challenges of the new text and with no clear notion of what strategies were appropriate, they reverted to text where little or no strategy use was needed. Once they were able to clear up their confusions, they once again took up the more challenging text.

Others moved at great speed. These children continued to incorporate new strategies and learning as it was presented or discovered. While reading challenging text, they were able to draw from a variety of strategic options. They were able to use known words to help with unknown, they could use context, they were phonetically proficient, and could check on a source of information against another rapidly. They knew when it was appropriate to re-read to regain meaning. These children did not hesitate to seek assistance when needed. They were often called upon to assist peers and, therefore, gained from this experience. Daniel is an example of a child who took this path. (See Appendix D, p.99)

While all children in a classroom need teacher guidance and facilitation, teacher intervention was complicated by the variety of paths the children take. It would seem useful for teachers to watch carefully for signs a child has paused in the process, and to take steps to facilitate forward progress. The facilitation would sometimes be successful and at other times, the child would simply need more time to process and internalize new information. Children exhibiting slow progress reading behaviors also call for careful observation and facilitation. Acceleration is key for these readers and teachers need to explore ways for it to occur. The children who seemed to move quickly also bear observation to ensure that all strategies are in place and that the child can select from among the strategies as appropriate.

Guidance From More Capable Peers

Daniel and his good friend Jim are an excellent example of children learning from peers. Jim, an excellent reader, offered his friend Daniel a safe, comfortable environment. His behavior was not judgmental even when Jim needed help with simple words, or when he read simple texts. (Appendix B, lines 436-461) Jim's ability to read complex texts provided Daniel opportunities to hear interesting stories and informational text far above his reading level. Since they read together almost every day of the videotaping, Daniel's opportunities were many. (Appendix B, lines 438-439)

In addition to friendship issues, children in the class were often seen listening to more capable readers. While Daniel has spent time reading and listening to Jim read, an observation in February shows Tony listening to Daniel. (Appendix B, lines 658-660) Tony recognized Daniel as a reader.

Although not a proficient reader herself, Sharon attempted to help Fred, a non-reader. (Appendix B, lines 188-205) She clearly recognized Fred's status when the teacher suggested they both read and Sharon replied, "Fred can't." (Appendix B, line 203) As her reading improved, Alice and Elizabeth were observed listening to Sharon read. (Appendix B, lines 404, 1024)

Return To Literature

As the study ended and the themes had emerged, the researcher returned to the literature to further explore the themes. The five themes included differing definitions of reading among the subjects studied, the social construction of learning to read, the personal nature of reading, the

paths the children took as they learned to read and learning from more capable peers. The children's awareness of their reading ability, while an initial interest of the researchers, played only a minor role in this study. The researcher found areas where these data fit established theories and others where the children in the study departed from the theories.

While there is general agreement regarding reading as a meaning driven activity, how reading is accomplished, and therefore, how it should be taught, continues to be debated.

The researcher found definitions of the reading *process* varied widely. Sara Meadows (1993, p.7) stated, "Analysis of exactly what readers do when they read has produced many interesting insights but not yet agreement on how reading is done." In her book Literacy for the 21st Century (1997, p.250), Gail Tompkins says, "Reading is a process in which readers create meaning or develop an interpretation." A Dictionary of Reading (1981, p.264) describes the reading process as "an operation or change that takes place in the act of reading. The reading process has given rise to the construction of many models of reading." This lack of common understanding and agreement has led to various beliefs about how children should be taught to read.

The impact of differing points of view has led to various teaching emphasis. Ruth Strang (1961) describes it in this way, "If we think of reading as a visual task, we will be concerned with the correction of visual defects and the provision of legible reading materials." She continues to describe how our beliefs about the reading task have impacted teaching methods and emphasis.

In this study the absence of common definitions of reading and the reading process caused differing emphasis on various aspects of the reading process. Children in the study experienced approaches different from those of their classroom teacher and other adults.

The children in this study were able to identify other children in the class who were better readers than themselves, and would listen to the more able readers. As various children in the class began to read, these children would then be included in the group seen as readers. These findings fit well with Vygotsky's notions of learning from more able peers. Children in the study often listened to and read with those who were just above their own achievement level. They seemed able to self-select others who were operating just beyond their current level, but still within their zone of proximal development. The social construction of knowledge and understandings was evident. Vygotsky's notion of learning leading development was demonstrated by these children. As the children read with and discussed aspects of stories and books, they learned from their more capable peers. Since the new learning was on the edge of the child's previous learning, the child was soon able to internalize the new learning and act on it independently. Clay (1991) describes it as allowing ". . . the partially familiar to become familiar and the new to become partially familiar in an ever-changing sequence." The notion of children learning from and with each other has been in practice in schools in the form of collaborative groups (Peterson, 1990; Winograd, 1989), buddy reading (Tompkins, 1997), and in literature circles. (Jewell & Pratt, 1999) Frank Smith (1978) speaks of the "literacy club" indicating the social nature of learning to read and of children's desire to be members of the "club". The children in this study brought to light the degree to which learning with peers is

useful. The researcher was not, however, able to find additional insight into the observations of the children's ability to detect more able readers. Particularly intriguing was the children's ability to recognize when a child had learned to read and to then include that child as someone to listen to.

As the researcher reviewed the literature, the voice of Louise Rosenblatt joined that of Geoffrey Roberts (1989) in the idea that the reader and text must interact in a personal way. Rosenblatt (1978) described the readers' engagement with text as the composition of the readers' "poem" or construction of a text. Both Rosenblatt and Roberts capture the need for children to develop an understanding of the special joy that is to be had when engaged with text.

In a case study titled Our Daughter Learns to Read and Write (1984, p.98), Baghban describes her daughter's experience, "her need to communicate through reading and writing demonstrated the value she placed on these processes, and her frustration instead stimulated cognitive clarification. We waited and she worked out her schemata."

As the children demonstrated the highly social nature of learning to read, the need for engaging text, the need to practice and internalize what had been previously learned, and the need for the attending adults to share a common core of beliefs about reading, the role of the teacher emerged as key. The role of the teacher as careful observer and facilitator seemed clear. (Vygotsky, 1978; Clay, 1982)

As the researcher analyzed the data, the work and writings of Clay often came to mind. When a child was able to recite several items of knowledge at the teacher's request, and yet could not solve the word, the researcher recalled a passage in Becoming Literate (1991, p. 333) where Clay says, "A few items and a powerful strategy might make it very easy to learn a great deal more." This child seemed to be missing that "powerful strategy".

The teacher's role as one that sometimes requires direct instruction and at other times requires facilitation is a definition the classroom teacher in the study held. She is joined by Calkins (1983), Graves (1983), and others in her opinion that the teacher must continue to be a learner.

The children in the study did not always follow a linear path as they became readers. Children become readers in different ways and at different rates. Researchers also support this notion. (Clay, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978; Smith, 1978; Allington, 1995) The researcher was not surprised to find the children in the study read with varying degrees of proficiency. The most noteworthy event was when the children were observed regressing to less complex reading behavior than previously demonstrated. The children would then return to more complex reading behaviors, often repeating this pattern.

Implications

This study has raised an issue the researcher feels needs further study and investigation. An issue that emerged from this study is the way in which the children identified and listened to more able readers. All children included in the study were observed listening to more able

readers. This was not suggested nor did the teacher initially assign it. (An assignment later in the school year resulted in teacher assigned partners who were sometimes productive and sometimes not.) The children seemed to be drawn naturally to listen to those who read with fluency. Perhaps the able readers were interesting because the reading material more closely matched the interest level of the children. Another possibility is that the children were able to recognize the better readers and were observing what they did when they read, so the strategies could be emulated and the children could improve their own reading.

Aside from the issues of listening to and recognizing proficient readers, another interesting aspect of this issue was that children moved from being a listener to being one who was listened to. The researcher observed this event occurring with several children in the study. As they became better readers, the children read alone more often. Gradually, other less able readers came to listen to them. This event seems to be an acknowledgment by the children themselves and by their peers that they are indeed readers. This seems to be another rite of passage for young readers and therefore, an issue worthy of a close look.

As educators and society continue to look for ways to teach all citizens to read (a basic skill in a democracy), researchers must continue to explore the process and to look for ways to assist everyone. The task is daunting due to the many differences in individuals, environments, and learning styles. It is the researcher's hope that the issues discussed above will lend valuable insights as we continue to explore the reading and learning process.

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APPENDIX A: TESTING

Baseline Testing

An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement by Marie Clay consists of six sub-tests. The sub-tests are described below and a copy of the test is included in this appendix along with the results for the eighteen children under study.

1. *Letter Identification* - The child is asked to read letters from a sheet containing both upper and lower case letters in random order. Additionally, the letters a and g are presented twice using two different print types. The child is given credit if he can name the letter, give the sound the letter makes, or provide a word beginning with the letter.
2. *Word Test* - The child is asked to read a list of high frequency words. All attempts are recorded.
3. *Concepts About Print* - Using a book (either Sand or Stones) especially prepared for this sub-test, the child's knowledge of how books work is tested.
4. *Dictation Test* - The tester reads a sentence or two slowly and asks the child to write the sounds he hears.
5. *Writing Vocabulary* - The child is given ten minutes to write all the words he knows. The tester can offer prompts such as, "Can you write 'the'?" or if the child writes a word with an easy association (animals, number or color words), the tester might ask, "Can you write any other...(animal names, color or number words)?"
6. *Reading Level* - The child is asked to read books of increasing difficulty until his instructional level is found.

Baseline Testing - Sept/Oct

	Letter Stanine Test		Word Stanine Test		Concepts Stanine About Print	
A 1	53/54	7	3/20	1	15/24	4
B 1	50/54	3	1/20	1	12/24	2
A 2	53/54	7	12/20	6	20/24	8
A 3	50/54	3	1/20	1	17/24	6
R 1	53/54	7	19/20	9	22/24	9
A 4	53/54	7	5/20	2	19/24	7
A 5	54/54	9	19/20	9	19/24	7
A 6	50/54	3	0/20	1	16/24	5
A 7	53/54	7	5/20	2	12/24	2
O O	Included in Learning Disabilities program.					
B 2	40/54	1	0/20	1	14/24	4
A 8	48/54	2	8/20	4	16/24	5
R 2	54/54	9	20/20	9	19/24	7
R 3	54/54	9	20/20	9	21/24	9
A 9	52/54	5	17/20	8	20/24	8
A 10	54/54	9	4/20	2	16/24	5
A 11	52/54	5	0/20	1	15/24	5
A 12	53/54	7	1/20	1	13/24	3

R = children who entered first grade as readers

A = children who are progressing as expected in the first grade program but were not reading upon entry

B = children who are not progressing as expected

Baseline Testing - Sept/Oct

	Dictation Stanine Test		Writing Stanine Test		Reading Stanine Level	
A 1	12/37	1	18	4	B	1
B 1	10/37	1	4	1	B	1
A 2	31/37	6	29	6	7	5
A 3	16/37	2	9	2	1	2
R 1	36/37	9	23	5	16	8
A 4	28/37	5	17	4	3	3
A 5	30/37	5	28	6	5	4
A 6	14/37	2	5	1	3	3
A 7	31/37	6	14	3	2	2
0 0	Included in Learning Disabilities program.					
B 2	2/37	1	5	1	1	1
A 8	29/37	5	26	6	12	7
R 2	37/37	9	29	6	20	9
R 3	34/37	7	18	4	24	9
A 9	25/37	4	10	2	9	6
A 10	31/37	6	22	5	4	4
A 11	17/37	2	7	1	2	2
A 12	17/37	2	13	3	3	3

Final Testing - May/June

	Letter Stanine Test		Word Stanine Test		Concepts Stanine About Print
A 1	53/54	7	15/20	7	20/24 8
B 1	52/54	5	13/20	6	17/24 6
A 2	54/54	9	17/20	8	23/24 9
A 3	Moved mid-year				
R 1	54/54	9	20/20	9	21/24 9
A 4	52/54	5	20/20	9	19/24 7
A 5	54/54	9	19/20	9	19/24 7
A 6	54/54	9	20/20	9	21/24 9
A 7	54/54	9	20/20	9	18/24 6
O O	Included in Learning Disabilities program.				
B 2	50/54	3	12/20	6	17/24 6
A 8	53/54	7	19/20	9	23/24 9
R 2	Moved mid-year				
R 3	54/54	9	20/20	9	23/24 9
A 9	54/54	9	20/20	9	22/24 9
A 10	54/54	9	19/20	9	20/24 8
A 11	53/54	7	8/20	3	18/24 6
A 12	53/54	7	15/20	7	19/24 7

R = children who entered first grade as readers

A = children who are progressing as expected in the first grade program but were not reading upon entry

B = children who are not progressing as expected

Final Testing - May/June

	Dictation Stanine Test		Writing Stanine Test		Reading Stanine Level	
A 1	23/37	1	42	4	6	5
B 1	21/37	1	35	1	5	4
A 2	37/37	6	42	6	18	8
A 3	Moved mid-year					
R 1	37/37	9	25	6	24+	9
A 4	36/37	9	26	6	24	9
A 5	37/37	9	58	9	24+	9
A 6	36/37	9	30	6	18	8
A 7	34/37	7	32	7	12	7
0 0	Included in Learning Disabilities program.					
B 2	28/37	5	42	9	6	5
A 8	37/37	9	52	9	24+	9
R 2	Moved mid-year					
R 3	37/37	9	40	8	24+	9
A 9	32/37	6	35	7	24+	9
A 10	36/37	9	44	9	18	8
A 11	21/37	3	29	6	5	4
A 12	32/37	6	43	9	12	7

APPENDIX B: OBSERVATION TRANSCRIPTS

1 **11/20**
2
3 (Brian and Teacher)
4
5 B Sitting in corner
6 Holding book
7 Looking around
8
9 T “Brian let me hear you read.”
10
11 B Points to title on cover
12
13 T “Pablo’s Job.”
14
15 B “Pablo’s Job”
16 “Pablo’s Job” (on title page)
17
18 Voice too quiet to hear
19
20 “What’s this word?”
21
22 T “elevator”
23
24 B “elevator”
25 Looks up
26 Eyes shift around area
27
28 “What does this say?”
29
30 T “busy building”
31
32 B unable to continue with text
33
34 T “Do you want to practice, Brian?”
35
36 B nods head yes
37
38 (Jim and Daniel reading to each other)
39
40 J reading Where’s Your Shoe?
41 Phrased, fluent reading
42 Good voice inflection
43
44 (Turns to Daniel)
45 “Your turn.”
46

47 D Reads Who's Hiding?
48 Familiar text
49 "a (long sound) spider"
50 "a (long sound)"
51
52 Points to words when text becomes less familiar.
53
54 (Brian with different book)
55
56 B Voice too quiet to hear on tape
57 Reading I Wish I had Duck Feet
58 Pointing to words
59
60 **11/21**
61
62 B Familiar reread
63 Reading The Giraffe Made Her Laugh
64 Point to words with thumb
65
66 Point of difficulty – voice too quiet to hear
67 Turned two pages
68
69 Louder on familiar refrain (And the giraffe made her laugh)
70
71 **11/27**
72
73 J "Look. I'm reading about tornados."
74 Reads silently
75
76 D Looking around
77 Looks at Bill's book then listens to Bill read.
78
79 "The bus takes me to school. The car takes me to the market.
80 The train takes me to the city. The plane takes me to Grandma.
81 But feet take me to the ice-cream store."
82
83 Read with ease.
84
85 **11/28**
86
87 T "You need to read. Let me hear you."
88
89 B Looking at A Visit to the Zoo (Pop-up book)
90 Flipping pop-up characters
91 Reading voice too quiet to hear
92

93 “What’s e-a-t-s?”
94
95 T “e-a-t-s What do you think it says?”
96
97 (no reply)
98
99 “What’s the gorilla doing? What’s in his mouth?”
100
101 (B playing with pop-up.)
102
103 B “Carrots?”
104
105 T “What do you do with that?”
106
107 B “eat”
108
109 T “Right. Eats.”
110
111 B “...eats fruit and vegetables.”
112
113 T “vegetables. Good job!”
114
115 B once again stuck
116
117 T (Covering up t) “Do you know what this word is?”
118
119 B “hat”
120
121 T “Put a t in front of it.”
122
123 B “t-hat”
124
125 T “th-at that good job.”
126
127 B reading too quiet to hear. Gets stuck again.
128
129 B “...sleep on...and a ..”
130
131 tries to sound out word; unsuccessful
132
133 turns two pages
134
135 stuck on new page
136 turns to Jack “This is a pop-up book.”
137
138 T “Can you show me?”

139
140 B turns book for T to see the picture; smiles.
141
142 **11/30**
143
144 T “Brian, can you read some for me please? Why don’t you try? I’ll help you.”
145
146 T sits on floor beside B
147
148 B moves book back and forth; voice too quiet to hear.
149
150 T “Long, long ago. Let’s read together. The weather was always warm.”
151
152 Can hear T but not B “something happened to make the earth turn cold.”
153
154 B looking at book trying to read along.
155
156 T distracted by other students.
157
158 T “Good job. Read more.” (leaves)
159
160 B closes book and puts on shelf.
161
162 **12/1**
163 (Sharon)
164
165 S “I...Nobody here. Nobody here either.”
166
167 Points to unknown word showing it to Jack.
168
169 T “You can help her.”
170
171 Jack doesn’t help; turns back to own book
172
173 S Turns some pages; comes to familiar part.
174 “I smell peanuts. I smell popcorn. I smell donuts. Celebrate. The End”
175
176 Closes book and smiles.
177
178
179 B Rereading The Giraffe Made Her Laugh
180 Flipping through pages
181 Pointing to words with thumb
182 “But the snake...(mumbling)”
183 Going fast; reciting?
184 Looks up and smiles at end.

185
186 (Fred and Sharon)
187
188 F Holding book; quiet
189
190 S “Can I help you?” Points to words
191 “One day there...(can’t understand)...a good.”
192
193 T to F “Can you read for me?”
194
195 S “I’m helping him. He’s saying it after me.”
196
197 F looks at T; at book; back to T
198
199 S “One day..”
200
201 T “Why don’t you read it together?”
202
203 S “Fred can’t. (reads)One day there was a ...(can’t hear) eat...”
204
205 No evidence F is reading or attempting to read.
206
207 S “I can hide.....a morning winter rain like the.....”
208
209 (to T) “What does T-i-m spell?”
210
211 T “What do you think it spells? Does it have an upper case or lower case T?”
212
213 S “A big T.”
214
215 T “A big T means it probably somebody’e name.”
216
217 S “Tim.”
218
219 T “Tim. Good job!”
220
221 S “Tim gets...”
222
223 T distracted by other children. Cannot hear tape.
224
225 T to F “Are you reading with her? (F nods) Read too. Let me hear you.”
226
227 S “Morning”
228 F “Morning”
229
230 S “Clifford”

231
232 F “Clifford”
233
234 S “Said”
235
236 F “Said”
237
238 Too noisy to hear but pattern continues.
239
240 S “h-e-r. (Returns to book) Does this say paint? See I sounded it out.”
241
242 T “You could also look at the picture. You know they’re painting.”
243
244 S “wet (trying to sound out word) She...she... (turns page) I like this page. I’ve read it
245 before. Clifford said (points with finger) We...”
246
247 (Camera moves away)
248
249 **12/4**
250
251 B reading familiar text Is It Alive?
252
253 Quiet reading; shows pictures.
254
255 B “Is the rock alive? No. But the boy is alive.”
256
257 Reading loud enough to hear on tape for the first time.
258
259 (Brian, Sharon, Jack, and Elizabeth reading together)
260
261 ALL “One night it snowed. The wind blew. The sky...”
262
263 S “Ms C what does that word say?”
264
265 T “I don’t know. Let’s try to figure it out together. Cover up the last three letters. Ok.
266 What’s it say?”
267
268 S, B “to”
269
270 T “Now cover up the first two letters. What does it say? Look at it.”
271
272 S,B “day”
273
274 T “day Put it together.”
275
276 S, B “today we went”

277
278 E "out"
279
280 S shakes head no
281
282 All follow S lead and turn page
283
284 All "A sunny day..."
285
286 S "Let's skip that page"
287
288 All "We will..."
289
290 E looks at B's book
291
292 E "He's past us. He's way past us. He doesn't have another page."
293
294 J "I'll get you another book."
295
296 T "Are you done?"
297
298 S "No. Brian doesn't have like ours."
299
300 J returns with new book for Brian
301
302 All "We will..... A snowy night..."
303
304 S "You're not reading. I'm the only one reading."
305
306 B "I'm reading."
307
308 All "...night. We will..."
309
310 B "make"
311
312 All "make...(stuck, can't go on)"
313
314 B "that"
315
316 E "I'm passing on that one. I'm not reading that hard book."
317
318 E leaves group and J scoots away
319 S moves closer to B
320 S "a snowy night"
321
322 T "What does that say?"

323
324 S "A snowman needs a ..."
325
326 T "Look at the picture."
327
328 S "hat."
329
330 B scoots away
331
332 S "I'm the only one reading."
333
334 T "Finish the book"
335
336 S keeps trying but is not making sense
337
338 T "and he needs a mouth. It's one of our question words. What.."
339
340 S "What else"
341
342 T "Good job!"
343
344 T leaves
345
346 S "He needs a...to wear a jacket. A snowman needs a winter scarf. He needs a hat. A
347 snowman needs a big feather...big feather. A snowman needs a big..."
348
349 T returns
350
351 T "fat"
352
353 S "fat"
354
355 T "What does he need?"
356
357 S "Pipe"
358
359 T "Pipe. Good Job."
360
361 S "He needs a shovel. We will make the snowman a..."
362
363 T "Tell me what you know about the word."
364
365 S "friend. I read the whole book "
366 T "Good job!"
367
368 **12/6**

369
370 S reading Over In the Meadow in a bored voice; familiar reread
371
372 S “the old mother owl and her little..”
373
374 Holds up book to show picture and keep reciting the story.
375
376 S “and they jumped all day...”
377
378 Holds up book to show picture and keep reciting the story.
379
380 S “Over by the meadow...”
381
382 Holds up book to show picture and keep reciting the story.
383
384 S “Said the old mother llama(?)...”
385
386 Holds up book to show picture and keep reciting the story.
387
388 **12/11**
389
390 B rereading Is It Alive? In a quiet voice.
391
392 Book hides face.
393
394 Reads another familiar book (title?)
395
396 B “I’m done.”
397
398 Leaves area.
399
400 (Sharon and Elizabeth)
401
402 Background noise; hard to hear tape
403
404 S reads and E follows when possible.
405
406 Both show pictures to camera after each page.
407
408 S uses finger to monitor; E often repeating after S
409
410 Jack stands by listening
411
412 Jack to T “E’s not reading right. She’s making up the story.”
413
414 E closes book and leaves; S finishes book

415
416 S "Ms C, I'm done."
417
418 S then listens to Terri read
419
420 S to Terri "Can I read the book? Will you help me?"
421
422 (Brian)
423
424 B reading Cookie's Week too quiet to hear voice
425
426 T "There Look at your picture. There was..."
427
428 **12/12**
429
430 B "...as quick as a cricket. As slow as a snail. (using finger now that it's more difficult) as
431 cold as a.... strong as a whale (too quiet to hear) (Skips page) I'm as happy as(quiet)
432 (Loud voice) I'm as mean as a shark. I'm as tired as a fox. I'm as weak as a kitten. I'm as
433 strong as an ox. I'm as loud as a lion. I'm as quiet as a clam. (Quiet voice) I'm as brave
434 as a tiger. I'm as will as a"
435
436 (Daniel and Jim taking turns reading)
437
438 J reading while D listens; informational text about animals
439 J's reading is expressive and fluent; D looking at pictures, enjoying book.
440
441 D reads Who's Counting; familiar and easy
442
443 D "One squirrel, two birds, three (?), four geese, five eggs, six goldfish, seven rabbits, eight
444 tadpoles, nine flowers, and ten (?).
445
446 J reading from an animal encyclopedia of animals
447
448 D "I'm first again." Reads book Cats and Dogs while J listens
449
450 D "Dog made pies on Wednesday afternoon....."
451
452 J "No, cat had a tummy ache"
453
454 D finishes book
455
456 J "My turn" Reads about black widow spiders from animal encyclopedia.
457
458 D reads book he has written about cobras
459

460 D “Cobras by D. Baby king cobras are called king cobras. They are reptiles. They eat
461 other snakes. They live in China and Asia. They are black.

462
463 (Sharon)

464
465 S sits in chair reading Three Little Monkeys

466
467 Holds up book to show picture and keeps reciting the story.

468
469 **12/15**

470
471 Kelly listens to George read

472
473 Kelly reading, then stuck on word

474
475 George supplies word

476
477 Kelly finishes story, then scoots behind bookshelf to be out of camera range

478
479 **12/18**

480
481 (Jim and Daniel)

482
483 D “You gotta read the same. I read first. It was bedtime.....so five little monkeys put on
484 their pajamas, brushed their teeth, say goodnight.”

485
486 J “said”

487
488 D “said good night to their mom”

489
490 J “mama”

491
492 D “Then five little monkeys jumped on the bed. Then...is that right?”

493
494 J “Yes”

495
496 D “So four little monkeys jumped”

497
498 J “jumping”

499
500 D “So there...three little monkeys jumping on the bed”

501
502 D finished story.

503
504 J “OK. Together” read story fluently and with ease while D listened.

505

506 D "I want to read Five Little Monkeys again."
507
508 J "OK. After you read Five Little Monkeys again, I'll read this."
509
510 D "OK. Five Little Monkeys. It was time"
511
512 J "It was bedtime"
513
514 D corrected "Four little monkeys jumping"
515
516 J "jumped"
517
518 D corrected and read on
519
520 D ""three little monkeys jumping
521
522 J "jumped"
523
524 T asked everyone to put books away; allowed D to finish story first.
525
526 **12/19**
527
528 Terri, Patty, and Jack are choral reading Five Little Monkeys
529
530 (Elizabeth and Brian)
531
532 T "Can you read from your magazine for me?"
533
534 B "I can't read this one."
535
536 T "Yes you can. Open it up and try. I'm going to help you Brian"
537
538 B "Your big ..."
539
540 T "Look at it Brian. Look at the word. Do you know what the first four letters
541 say?"
542
543 B "back"
544
545 T "Now look at the last four letters"
546
547 B "yard"
548
549 T "yard backyard"
550
551 B "Your Big Backyard" reading too softly to hear.

552 B "It is c..."
553
554 T "called"
555
556 B (reading softly) "yellow ..."
557
558 T "tang (?)" (name of fish)
559
560 B "tang. He lives in the water.."
561
562 T "Does that say water? Look at the word."
563
564 B "warm"
565
566 T "Good job. Warm blue sea. Good job. I thought you said you couldn't read it."
567
568 B looks up and smiles.
569
570 B "He lives in the warm blue sea. He...(finger on word)."
571
572 T "Breathes, that's a hard word." T distracted by other students.
573
574 B "What's w-h-e-r-e?"
575
576 T "That's a question word."
577
578 B "where"
579
580 T "Where. Good job."
581
582 B continues to read softly.
583
584 B "Plants?"
585
586 T "plants"
587
588 B "Plants grow on ..."
589
590 T "coral"
591
592 B "reefs?"
593
594 T "uh-huh"
595
596 B "if the t.."
597

598 T “tang”
599
600 B “nu- b”
601
602 T “You try it. Nib – nibble”
603
604 (Tape fades in and out)
605
606 **1/3**
607
608 (Brian reading book he wrote.)
609
610 B “Sharks by Brian. To Mom and Dad. Sharks eat people. Sharks are bigger than (?). They
611 are big. Sharks eat (?). They like water.”
612
613 T “Good job.”
614
615 **1 / 4**
616
617 T “Can you read that to me?”
618
619 Brian with book covering face; quiet
620
621 T “Do you need help?”
622
623 B nods head yes
624
625 T “collection. That’s a hard word.”
626
627 B reads too quietly to hear and then shows picture
628
629 T “Good job. Can you read louder for me? Do you want to got to the readers chair?”
630
631 B nods yes
632
633 B continues to read too quietly to hear with book in front of face.
634
635 **1/5**
636
637 B (Loud voice) “Hop On Pop. Up cup” (holding book upside down so camera can
638 see.
639
640 T calls B to go with Title I teacher.
641
642 Daniel reads book about cobras he has written for the camera, finishes
643

644 Sharon rereads Go Dog Go with ease.
645
646 Daniel reads Hop On Pop and is stuck on a word
647
648 T “What do you think it says?”
649
650 D “I don’t know”
651
652 T “After. You are doing very well in reading.”
653
654 Terri is reading with/listening to Jill.
655
656 **2/1**
657
658 Daniel rereads the cobra book he has written
659
660 Tony listens to Daniel read
661
662 **2/7**
663
664 Daniel reading while Jim listens
665
666 D “it is almost impossible to see. I can’t read that part. (turns page) A baby shark is called a
667 pup. When a mother shark is ready to have babies she...”
668
669 J “stays”
670
671 D (can’t hear all) “ safe from... From the day it is born, ...the year”
672
673 J “the young”
674
675 (camera moves to Sharon)
676
677 S “The Foot Book by Dr. Suess.” Reads four pages correctly, then camera moves
678 away.
679
680 **2/8**
681
682 D (reading Sharks very quietly; loud background noise) “There are about two...”
683 Shows book to teacher; has finger under the unknown word
684
685 T “Two hundred fifty and three hundred”
686
687 Camera moves back and forth between D reading quietly and B and another boy choral reading
688 Silly Sally loudly
689

690 D points to word and asks T; “watcher?”
691
692 T “Watcher. I didn’t even have to tell you.”
693
694 **2/14**
695
696 Jack, Bill, Bob, Fred and Sharon are choral reading from an old basal reader
697
698 Kelly listening to Jill read
699
700 Brian, Terri are choral reading; joined by Sharon; reading/singing The Bear Went Over The
701 Mountain
702 When necessary to read, not sing, Brian and Terri read but Sharon couldn’t keep up
703
704 **2/15**
705
706 Brian looking at book; flipping pages forward and back; finally read book about airplanes; T told
707 word gravity
708
709 **2/19**
710
711 Kay listening to Brian read Hamilton Duck
712
713 B reads (title ?) quietly; stops at unknown word; closes book; replaced on shelf
714
715 **2/21**
716
717 Brian reading
718
719 B “They have to keep...to stay in the sea but the water helps to.....When you blow your
720 air is much lighter than..... it helps you to float.....because it pushes you up
721 on.....look at the sky. Do you see..... a rainbow.
722
723 Kelly listens to B read
724
725 **2/23**
726
727 Don listens to Ed read
728
729 Daniel listens to Jim read a shark book
730
731 Terri and Sharon reading (title ?) seems familiar and easy
732
733 Both “I must be brave. I’m so..... Ouch!.....”
734
735 Sharon continues to “read” while showing picture to camera

736
737 S to T “What’s this word?”
738 T “angry”
739
740 **2/26**
741
742 Daniel helping Joe read
743
744 **2/28**
745
746 Brian with book in front of face; too quiet to hear
747
748 Points to word
749
750 T “learned”
751
752 B “u-s-e”
753
754 T “use”
755
756 Camera moves away
757
758 Terri reading alone
759
760 Brian now reading ABC book
761
762 T “That’s too easy.”
763
764 B “A ant arrow apple (points to picture)”
765
766 T “abacus”
767
768 B “book, boat, boy, butterfly C carrot, cupcake, cat, camera, crocodile”
769
770 Camera moves
771
772 Joe listening to Terri; trying to read along
773
774 Joe “You go too fast.”
775
776 **3/1**
777
778 Daniel sitting at table reading alone; Jim sitting nearby also reading alone
779
780 **3/4**
781

782 Brian reading and pointing to words “...that way to the beach said mother. I don’t like
783 the beach said DW and I don’t like to get wet”
784
785 B drowned out by two boys choral reading Silly Sally
786
787 **3/5**
788
789 Sharon reading “The little black cub was...”
790
791 T “off”
792
793 S “off...He did not wait for his mom. Wait. Wait” points to page
794
795 T “you try it.”
796
797 S “lat”
798
799 T ‘lot”
800
801 S “lot of fun”
802
803 Camera moved
804
805 Brian reading simple text One One Is the Sun; mouth hidden in coat so can’t hear
806
807 **3/8**
808
809 Brian reading Henny Penny; book over face; moved away
810
811 Sharon reading Silly Sally alone
812
813 **3/12**
814
815 Daniel reading Hill of Fire alone
816
817 **3/13**
818
819 Sharon “They...” distracted by camera “If I had two duck feet I’d...” lost track of story
820
821 New book; Alice listening to Sharon
822
823 S to Alice “You do the motions, ok. (read/sings Itsy Bitsy Spider) Look at the sky the sun is
824 not out. What will you do? Will you pick your big umbrella up? The rain can fall down
825 on your big umbrella. Look up the mountain, look at the sky. Here is the sun... Do you
826 see what it...”
827

828 Alice “It’s a rainbow.”
829
830 **3/14**
831 Brian reading with Fred; book over face; can’t hear
832
833 B read Silly Sally in loud voice while Fred listened
834
835 Jim reading while Brian listens; talking about pictures
836
837 J “Look. This is what it does.”
838
839 B “With little sparks of electricity.” Turns page
840
841 ***Snow and flooding caused several missed school days and short days***
842
843 **3/18**
844
845 D reading Go Dog Go quietly to himself; too low to hear
846
847 D to another child. “Can I borrow this book? (sharks) It seems like a good book.”
848
849 D reads quietly; reads a bit, shows picture to friends
850
851 D “Hey, look at this!”
852
853 Morning announcements are being made while D reads quietly.
854
855 D gets Hop On Pop; seems to read with ease but is too quiet to hear.
856
857 D announces he’s done and leaves camera view.
858
859 **3/19**
860
861 Brian is sitting at a table reading As Quick as a Cricket in a loud voice
862
863 Easy, familiar book
864
865 Patty is listening to B read
866
867 (everyone has been assigned (by the teacher) reading partners who are close in
868 development)
869
870 T “B, you and Jack need to read together.”
871
872 B moves away from camera view
873

874 **3/21**
875
876 B reading to Jack; fluent reading of familiar text
877
878 Jack reads next
879
880 J “One day...what does this say?”
881
882 B “mister”
883 J “Mr.....(?) so he went to bed without any supper that night. The wind blew and
884 blew. (to B) I’ll be back.”
885
886 J to T “What’s this?”
887
888 T “Ask your partner. Maybe he can help you.”
889
890 B is unable to help.
891
892 J “Ms C, what does this say?”
893
894 No answer so J turns page.
895
896 J “And, and, and, and, and, and, and, and, and...(grins at B)”
897
898 B “when”
899
900 J “When he came to the place where the wild things are.....(J continues to
901 read)”
902
903 When J finishes, B gets book, flips pages, reads but is too quiet to hear
904
905 **3/25**
906
907 D sitting at table with others; all reading own (different) book
908
909 D read two books, using finger on second
910
911 D asked T for a Weekly Reader, looked at it, then walked away.
912
913 **4/2**
914
915 D reading in voice too low to hear
916
917 Help from T with word *marble*
918
919 **4/3**

920
921 D not reading during reading time; playing with glove; talking
922
923 T sits beside D; D picks up book (title ?) and reads softly
924
925 **4/4**
926
927 D reading work by word with finger pointing (title?)
928
929 Announcements begin; camera turned off
930
931 **4/9**
932
933 D reading chapter book The Beast silently; doesn't look up when Brad comes to listen
934
935 D to child (?) sitting on floor "I read this whole chapter."
936
937 Child "I can read chapters."
938
939 D "I read this whole chapter and I'm going to read 27 of them."
940 Laughs and walks out of view.
941
942 D and Jim sitting at table; D wants to partner read
943
944 J "I want to read this first." continues to read alone
945
946 Don arrives at table with Goosebumps book; after short conversation, D and Don trade
947 books.
948
949 D reading Goosebumps silently; begins turning pages without reading
950
951 Brian reading Care Bears loud enough to hear most
952
953 B "Sally lay in bed and looked at the...."
954
955 Sharon now reading Care Bears; holding book in front of face; then flipping pages; not reading;
956 closes book; begins to write
957
958 Daniel and Jim sitting side by side reading different books silently
959
960 **4/10**
961
962 After playing truck and other games with friends, Daniel gets book (title ?) and reads silently and
963 alone; stops before finishing when distracted by friends
964
965 **4/13**

966
967 Joe listening to Ed read
968
969 Daniel reading to Bob; Bob listening
970
971 D “Quack said the duck there’s a bee on me..... did a jig and sat on a pig (both boys laugh;
972 Bill joins them) “
973
974 T “D, what do you think about reading? Are you good?”
975 D nods yes
976
977 T “I think you’re good too.”
978
979 Brian reading alone quietly
980
981 **4/16**
982
983 Daniel in view but not reading; writes for a short time and continues to walk around
984
985 Brief glimpse of Sharon reading at table.
986
987 T “Brian is that how you handle a book?” B is pulling roughly on part of pop up
988 book
989
990 B shakes head no; when T leaves B returns to rough play
991
992 **4/19**
993
994 Brian reading Chicka Chicka Boom Boom quickly in a loud voice
995
996 Jack to T “Brian’s my partner and he’s not reading.”
997
998 T to B “If he’s your partner you need to get over there and read with him.”
999
1000 Jack “He’s not reading.”
1001
1002 B leaves table.
1003
1004 Daniel is at reading table; looking around not really listening to child across table read
1005
1006 D “I don’t need to hear that book. I read it.”
1007
1008 D walks away; later returns with another book
1009
1010 D “How many books have you read? I read...(can’t hear number).” Walks out of
1011 view

1012
1013 **4/22**
1014
1015 D looking at/reading trading cards with Jim
1016
1017 D sitting in chair reading too quietly to hear; stops when T announces it's time to clean
1018 up
1019
1020 **4/30**
1021
1022 (Sharon and Alice)
1023
1024 S reading while A listens; reading Silly Sally, a very familiar text
1025
1026 A tries to read along with limited success; T comes by
1027
1028 S to T "I'm helping her with some words."
1029
1030 S leaves and A reads (recites ?) What Game Shall We Play?; easy familiar text

APPENDIX C: PARENT INTERVIEWS

1 TAPE ONE/INTERVIEW NO. 1

2

3 She really, like I said, I don't really know by what you mean by actually reading, but she could
4 recognize words in Preschool. When she was in Preschool. She knew everybody's name. By
5 recognizing the first letter she could read the cards and tell you whose name was whose.

6

7 So, all the children's names in the class or several of them?

8

9 She could read them all within a few weeks.

10

11 Wow.

12

13 Probably, I would say within two to three weeks of school she knew. They had flashcards with
14 all of their names. That is probably the first time I realized she could read. The teacher said "no
15 one else can do that". I said "oh, ok". I have read to her since she could sit up. She always
16 picked up The words from the books. She could remember what each page said.

17

18 That is great. So she has always shown an interest?

19

20 Yes. Probably since she was 3 or 4 years old she could do that. She could read back books that
21 we had read a lot.

22

23 So you feel that you have encouraged this interest in her reading.

24

25 I would think, yes.

26

27 Because of the things you did at home?

28

29 Yes.

30

31 Do you think she knows that she is a reader?

32

33 Yes. Oh, yes. Because she reads things to me. She even reads things she should not read. She
34 has the power.

35

36 Do you recall a certain time when you thought, oh she has been doing all of these things, like
37 reading words or repeating things that have been memorized? Do you recall a time when you
38 felt, oh she is actually reading on her own without prompts or help?

39

40 Yes, probably when she was in Kindergarten.

41

42 What caused you to feel that way?

43

44 I did not think she knew what it said. I am not sure what it was that she brought home, but I
45 knew I had never read it to her before.

46
47 Did you notice a difference in her behavior with books after you felt that she had that experience
48 of, oh I can do this on my own?
49
50 No. She still wants to be read to. She wants me to read to her but she is willing to read to her
51 sister.
52
53 Oh, interesting.
54
55 She still wants to be almost babied by me. If I am there, I have to read to both of them, but if I
56 am not there she has to read to her sister. Although her sister would rather have me read to her,
57 you know.
58
59 It is that attention she wants from you.
60
61 Right.
62
63 Great.
64
65 Is there anything you found particularly interesting or unusual about her reading experience?
66
67 **No answer**
68
69 Were you about the same age as her?
70
71 Yes.
72
73 Because, it would seem if she is the only one in Preschool to read all of the names, that maybe
74 she learns sooner than other children.
75
76 Oh, yes. She learns quicker. She really does. I noticed your cursive on the wall. She has gotten
77 get the U L I E down but cannot get the J. The other day, I had written her name in cursive. She
78 asked, "how do you do that?" I told her to trace over what I did. She did it one time and did
79 another one. She had it just so. She is not a stupid kid . She is a smart girl. She picks up things
80 quickly.
81
82 Does she often initiate things like that? She is the one who wants to learn.
83
84 Yes. She always does. She wants to know what every road signs says when we are in the car. If
85 she does not know what it means, she asks. She is not happy not knowing.
86
87 That is great. What if she is reading something and comes to something she does not know.
88
89 It depends on how big the word is. She will say, "What does this word mean?". Sometimes she
90 gets discouraged if I just say, sound it out. She does not want to do that. She wants to be told, if
91 she asks. I will tell her to sound it out. I will cover half of the word. Like if it is a word like

92 understand, I will cover the stand part and ask her what it says and she will say "under". Then I
93 will cover the under and ask her again and she will say "stand". Then she will go "oh, yeah". If
94 it something like that, but if it is something that she has no idea how the ski at the end of it or
95 something. She will ask what does that mean.

96
97 Do you tell her?
98

99 Yes . It depends on the word, how to deal with either just flat telling her or . . .

100
101 She is anxious to know. I just have one last question. In what way did she first communicate to
102 you? Did she ever say, "Hey look mom what I can do!", or was this gradual?

103
104 Gradual. I don't think she ever really . . .She has always been able to recognize the words. I
105 have always tried to get her sound them out. So, I think the first time she read me a book, it
106 wasn't like she said something I just said you read it to me and then it was like "wow". It was
107 exciting for her. It was that little bit of power. You know.

108
109 Yes, which is good.

110
111 Yes.

112
113 Ok. Anything else?

114
115 No.

116
117 TAPE ONE/INTERVIEW NO. 2
118

119 Can you tell me when Jim first showed an interest in reading?
120

121 Well, I don't know if you would show it an interest or just a normal developmental thing. As a
122 toddler he would sit and look at books and do the babbling, but that pattern of the babbling
123 sounded like he was reading sentences. His voice would drop at the end of a sentence or go up if
124 it was a question. He has been interested in books since, a long time ago. Interestingly, reading,
125 I would say, probably the summer before he started Kindergarten. At that point, he had letter
126 recognition but no word recognition that I can remember. He started really reading, I would say
127 probably the first three months of Kindergarten.

128
129 What things did you do at home that you felt encouraged this interest in him?
130

131 Well, I was reading to him from the day he was born. I think that certainly has fostered a love of
132 books. We would, you know, do letter games. We would ask, "Do you see something that starts
133 with A?" and he would point out all of the things on the page and sing the alphabet song. We
134 would write the alphabet. He got interested in writing books long before reading. He would
135 dictate to me and I would write it and he would draw the pictures to go with it. We have lots and
136 lots of books.

137

138 Oh, that's exciting.
139
140 Yes. He still likes to do that to a certain extent.
141
142 You say that he learned to read in the first three months of Kindergarten.
143
144 Yes.
145
146 What changed, that made you realize he was actually reading?
147
148 I remember my . . . No, I had bought -- we were home for the summer before Kindergarten. We
149 had bought some of those "Bob" books, I am not sure if you are familiar . .
150
151 Yes.
152
153 Um. . . very early on in Kindergarten, he just seemed some strong in letter recognition and by
154 that time he did have some word recognition like "the" and simple words like "cat" so I pulled
155 out these "Bob" books and he just started reading. I was as shocked as anybody. The way they
156 are set out, we would go over the sounds that were introduced in each booklet. He just did it. It
157 was amazing, I thought.
158
159 Has he ever expressed to you or was there a time that he communicated to you that he could now
160 read as opposed to the past when he could not?
161
162 I don't recall him verbalizing it. He was very exciting about it, but I don't recall a time that he
163 said "Now I can read. I used to not be able to; now I can". He was definitely excited about
164 being able to read.
165
166 So, this excitement was a change from before. Before it was enjoyment, now it was excitement?
167
168 Yeah, right. I think even more so now that he is a very strong reader for his age, he sees the
169 independence that comes with it. We cannot spell words any more if we are trying to keep
170 something a secret. We will be in a store and he can read the labels. He reads anything.
171
172 Anything else you want to share that was interesting or unusual about his reading?
173
174 Just the fact that he seemed to, from those "Bob" books, he progressed so quickly in that year of
175 Kindergarten, he was one of two kids that could read. That was exciting for him. He was asked
176 on many occasions by the Kindergarten teacher to read to the class. I think that made him feel
177 good and gave him a lot of self-esteem. One thing I have noticed, I don't know if it has to do
178 with reading or not, he used to be so concerned about spelling words correctly and would get so
179 frustrated if it wasn't correct. He would ask me, "Is this the right way to spell this?" and I was
180 almost afraid to say "You need to put an e here" or whatever. I think he is much more concerned
181 about getting the ideas out with misspellings all over the place, but he is much more relaxed
182 about expressing his ideas and writing.
183

184 That is wonderful. He is such an excellent reader. I agree with you that once they have that
185 independence that they don't need anybody, I can read what I want without asking all of the time.
186

187 Yes. It is really feeling feeding his own curiosity. He leans much more toward non-fiction, if he
188 is asked to pick a book in a bookstore. Nine times out of ten it is non-fiction which I find
189 interesting. He does still like to hear stories. He would rather read non-fiction on his own and
190 have stories read to him.

191
192 That is interesting.

193
194 Yes, I think so. I am kind of sad though. Now that he can read on his own, his interest in being
195 read to is not as strong as it was, but I am going to keep reading to him until he is in college.

196
197 Well, good for you. Thank you very much.

198
199 Thank you for the work you have done with him this year.
200

200 TAPE TWO/INTERVIEW NO. 3

201

202 Ok. George. I consider him to be an early reader, even though maybe he wasn't early, decoding
203 all of the words. Although they talk about T.V. being a bad thing, but when he was very, very
204 young I think from watching T.V. we would be driving down the road and he would say,
205 "Mommy, McDonald's" or "Pizza Hut". I don't know it was just recognizing symbols, like the
206 marquee although I guess that is pre-reading. I am trying to think. I always provided a lot of
207 stimulation to him. I read to him when he was an infant. I pointed out the pictures and he started
208 speaking very early, I think. I wish I could remember exactly when. He was actually putting
209 together sentences. I took advantage of that. I tried to always immerse him in either reading or
210 flashcards. We had Sesame Street flashcards.

211 Probably, I would say when he was no older than 2 I started doing this with him. We tried to
212 find things he was interested in, I am embarrassed to say, wrestling. It was not my doing, but that
213 opened up reading for him more than anything because there are wrestling magazines. I thought,
214 ok well this could be a negative thing because wrestling is rough and tumble but the fact that he
215 liked the magazines, he wanted them. He recognized names of the wrestlers on the boxes of the
216 toy wrestlers. This was when he was no older than two he was turning them over and point out
217 the wrestlers. Some of the pictures are very similar and no more than an inch high, you know,
218 the pictures on the back. He was saying, oh look mom, this is so and so. It seemed like he started
219 recognizing even the shapes of words way before any decoding ever took place. He enjoyed the
220 magazines quite a bit and would look through those. After a while he could recognize not only
221 names but other words. He would ask me to read something to him and would go back and have
222 a good memory with that. He went through a period after Kindergarten where reading sort of
223 became a chore. It was like he did not want to do it so much for pleasure and I was a little
224 worried and then he seemed to get to a certain point where he could do some decoding and the
225 Goosebumps books came along and I could see this incredible urge again to read. He has so
226 many of those books. He reads the whole half hour commute to school every morning. He will
227 read several chapters. I don't know how much actual reading is going on, but he can tell me what
228 is going on. So, he may be missing words but he is almost better if I don't help him. If I start
229 helping him, he becomes a little helpless. I guess maybe he is learning a whole language.

230

231 Yes.

232

233 Ok. So, sometimes he is reluctant. I learned everything phonetically and he is a little bit
234 reluctant to sit and sound out words. I image he does that when I am not with him.

235

236 What caused you to believe . . . Was there a certain time that you thought, ok now I know he can
237 read. How old was he when you felt he himself is the reader?

238

239 Gosh. I am trying to think. It was probably somewhere between 4 and 5. He went to Preschool.

240

241 So, before he went to Kindergarten he could read?

242

243 Yes. He could read minimally.

244

245 Do you think he knows he is a good reader?

246
247 I think so. I think he is praised quite a bit at school and we have always praised him.
248
249 Has he ever said anything to you about being a reader? About his perception of himself? About
250 being a reader?
251
252 Since he has gotten the Goosebumps books he will say, "Mom, I am on chapter 7 already!". So,
253 he doesn't come right out and say it, but I can tell by the way that he has read that much he is
254 proud of himself.
255
256 That is great.
257
258 Have you noticed when he was 4 or 5 and just beginning to read, was there any behavioral
259 changes from before or after?
260
261 He would sit longer. Even though he is a very active child, you have probably noticed that, he
262 would sit for a good period of time, about 15 minutes and tend to a book. I felt his attention to
263 task was a little better.
264
265 That is good. That helps a lot.
266
267 Even his conversational skills. He was almost going into more depth.
268
269 You mentioned flashcards. Were there words or pictures? What were those like?
270
271 They had the picture on the front and words on the back. They were sight words, I guess.
272 Things like danger, hot/cold.
273
274 Is there anything else that was interesting or unusual about George's reading experiences?
275
276 Only that, I think his biggest strength is his memory. It concerns me because I think, gee, is he
277 just memorizing words or getting phonetic skills at all. I went through a program and we are
278 really pro-whole language and I worry if he will be able to do that as the words get tougher.
279
280 Just wonder what strategies he has?
281
282 Yes. I can see the way he guesses. He will guess pretty close, so I think he is looking at the
283 shape of words and picking up certain consonants in the words and taking a wild guess.
284
285 Is that sufficient for him? Is he usually right?
286
287 About half of the time.
288
289 Does he use the meaning at all?
290

291 Yes. I think he uses contacts and clues when he can. I think he is a little lazy some times and
292 takes a shot in the dark. I will say ok sound it out. He is very reluctant to do that.
293
294 Because it is the slowest. It interrupts the moment and he wants to move along with his
295 Goosebumps books.
296
297 He will go back. He will say something incorrect and I will try not to stop him and he will go on
298 and then say wait a minute that does not makes sense and he will recognize sometimes and
299 correct himself.
300
301 That is really what you are looking for.
302
303 Yes.
304
305 So, it sounds like he is a pretty independent reader.
306
307 Yes. He is becoming more with the Goosebumps. I feel like an advertisement for Goosebumps
308 but I can really see the change in him since he has gotten those books he will read comic books
309 and magazines and not want me to interfere.
310
311 Well, thank you very much.
312
313 TAPE TWO/INTERVIEW NO. 4
314
315 Ok, I just want you to tell me about John's reading experiences.
316
317 Ok. Just started because we always read stories, bedtime stories. Still do, as often as we can. He
318 always wanted to spell everything when he was a little kid 2 1/2. It was how do you spell thisand
319 how do you spell that Spelling is great but it hasn't really worked for the reading comprehension.
320
321 So he has not really translated the interest in words to reading words.
322
323 He wants to read a lot better than he does but it has been so many sounds that every letter or
324 combination of letters can make that throws him. So we are still trying. Even taking HE and
325 adding the S in front of it to make SHE. It is slowly but surely the light bulb is going on but it is
326 taking some time.
327
328 So, other than spell when he was very young and read bedtime stories were there other things?
329
330 What kind of other things?
331
332 Other things he did to show his interests or behavior about reading?
333
334 He would pick up everything to write. He would write and type. He can get into the computer
335 and he has find the letter games and that kinds of stuff. He would sit and type and print out . . .
336

337 Stories?
338
339 Letters. Rows and rows. Complete screens and pages of letters. He would have a story with it
340 but not legible to me.
341
342 It was in his head?
343
344 He could read the story back.
345
346 Well that is important. Did some of the letters respond to the words he was using?
347
348 Not in the beginning. No. Numbers would even be in there. Now, yes he can.
349
350 So, he will enjoys writing the stories in the computer.
351
352 On the computer, yeah, and the homework. He does not mind that reading. Just, when he gets to
353 bigger words and going up. He was really excited when he could read the easy ones, more from
354 memory than anything else. He does really well until he gets frustrated.
355 The first time he is frustrated and cannot get the word, even a word he ready a page earlier,
356 easily. He gets stuck on it and gets so frustrated that you immediately have to work him back
357 down to where he can continue reading. He gets so frustrated with himself.
358
359 So, do you think he feels he is not a good reader?
360
361 At times he does and that has been very verbally communicated.
362
363 Oh, what does he say?
364
365 Just the fact that I wish I could.
366
367 Kind of sad isn't it.
368
369 Yes. We say you can read honey you just have to slow down and you have to look at each word.
370 You cannot go whizzing on because a word fits there. You have to take one word at a time
371 versus from memory or making it up as you go along by what you know or think is going to
372 happen and he will interject words that are not there. We will stop and make him go back and it
373 is usually not a word he can easily relate to by sight. He probably would do a lot better if we
374 worked with flashcards, even with HE and SHE adding the S will through him.
375
376 I can show you a couple of things when we are finished that you can do with him.
377
378 Ok.
379
380 How old was he when you felt he could read?
381

382 Actual reading, probably Kindergarten. I mean, he knew words and he could tell you the words,
383 but to completely read and easy book probably the late part of Kindergarten. In California, the
384 demand or level of reading is not anywhere near . . . He was almost at the top of his class in
385 California and then we come here and we are way behind and struggling to catch up.

386
387 So, you think it is more different here.

388
389 Yes. It is much, different. Even the way the teacher would operate, so this has been quite an
390 adjustment.

391
392 He was in first grade there.

393
394 Yes. They were working on letters and certain sounds these kids are reading. They were reading
395 but there was not an emphasis on that individual reading . You could do the Book-It list and it
396 was ok if mom read the book or whatever, it wasn't that the child needed to read the book. He
397 does have a huge library of books, because I am a firm believer of books. He can take his choice
398 of any type of book he wants to read down to even a child's encyclopedia type book and
399 informational books that we can read.

400
401 Does he choose to do that?

402
403 More times than not he chooses a book and he wants more books but we need to go to bed. I
404 cannot sit up and read until 11:00 o'clock.

405
406 It sounds like he really has the desire.

407
408 He does, it is just getting him . . . I will be the first to say that I am not the regimental mother.
409 Sure it is bedtime between a specific hour, but to get him to stop doing whatever he is doing and
410 getting him to read I would be the first to do that. Although, when we moved he was out of
411 school for three and a half weeks. We bought the reading books and mathematics books at K-
412 Mart and Target and worked on that but the whole time we read stories every night. It is much
413 easier to read to him and get through the story. Maybe we should have started earlier.

414
415 It sounds to me as if he enjoys . . .

416
417 The basics are there and he does enjoy . . .

418
419 Maybe the books are more involved than he can actually read independently . . .

420
421 Exactly.

422
423 That is his frustration.

424
425 Right. The Dr. Seuss' and things like that he can read that whole first set of Dr. Seuss that are
426 younger. Then when they get to the next level which we are into he has a little more trouble. Like
427 I said, there are times he can read a word and it will come up on the same page and he will not

428 get it next time. It won't click. I know part of that is sounding out. He likes to spell. He wants
429 us to spell everything.
430
431 He still enjoys that?
432
433 He will come up to us and ask what certain letters spell. If he is working on the computer he will
434 ask us what is SHE and were are like, there is something missing here. That does not spell
435 anything. He will say yes there is I saw it. I know he has lost a letter somewhere or reversal. I
436 would ask was it SHE? He will say no it was SEH. It really upset him because he could not get
437 past that point and like I said when he gets to that point the entire thought process is gone. He
438 used to get really frustrated and he would want to cry. I would have to calm him back down or
439 he would want to stop and not read any more. You could tell because his legs or arms would be
440 going and twitching. It takes a while to get him calmed down and back on that thought process.
441 I try to break up the words to get him to sound them out.
442
443 So he is a trooper, he keeps trying.
444
445 He keeps trying. I keep trying with him.
446
447 Well that is good.
448
449 Is there anything else unusual or interesting about his reading? The spelling I find fascinating.
450
451 You can go down the road and he can tell you where you are at, which exit to take.
452
453 So he can read environmental.
454
455 Environmental and advertisements, stores. He knows the vegetable not just by sight but by the
456 words. He does really well with that. Just putting all of those simple sentences and individual
457 words he does much better with. I don't know if it is because he spells everything. C A R R O T
458 spells carrot. I mean, he wants to continue so we keep going. California was a lot of spelling
459 tests which I have noticed he does not have here or the spelling. Every week they had a spelling
460 test and a list of words they had to learn, or sight recognition is what they were looking for.
461
462 Yes.
463
464 Putting all of those together has been difficult for him, but he is young.
465
466 Oh, is he. That is right he is young.
467
468 He started school young. He is 4. We will keep working. He is smart enough. He wants to do it
469 and I asked if he wanted special reading classes or a tutor and he said no he can do it on his own.
470 So we will continue to get books and working on it.
471
472 Ok, great. Well, thank you.
473

474 TAPE TWO/INTERVIEW NO. 5

475

476 I tried to read to him at home as much as I could. Recently, I asked that every time he goes to
477 the library he picks out a book he can read. One day he would pick out a book he could read and
478 the next day he would pick a really hard one. So, now she gives him a book she has in the class
479 he can read at home. So, to my knowledge, I think he is doing good.

480 What do you think?

481

482 I think he is doing fine. So, you consider him a reader?

483

484 Yes. Well, we had to kind of force him a little, every kid does that. He would rather play, but
485 we had to force him a little. He can read it and I will ask him what was the story about to see if
486 he understands it. Some books are more difficult but I will explain it to him.

487

488 When he was young?

489

490 When he was young, we bought Hooked on Phonics for him, but he had no patience. So, we
491 stopped that. I am looking at the new things they have to teach them to read. I might get into that.

492

493 I know he speaks one other language.

494

495 I would not say he can speak it. My wife is from Thailand. When our oldest son was living with
496 us he would speak in Thai. Ben picks up on it. We go on vacation. We came back recently,
497 every two years we try to see his grandmother, my wife's parents, because they are not that old
498 yet but you never know. My wife and oldest son speak all the way until he was 3 to 6 years old
499 so when they speak to him he understands it. Recently, I said it is better for him to speak English
500 only. It is good to speak more than one language but I think he should get English down and
501 then when he is older he can learn another language.

502

503 So, he does not read in Thai, it is just an oral language?

504

505 No he does not.

506

507 I am Vietnamese so when I speak to my parents he knows a little bit of that too.

508

509 It is very nice for him to have this heritage.

510

511 Right now, we try to speak 100% English at home.

512

513 So, when he was very young did he enjoy looking at books?

514

515 Yes. When I read the paper he wants to read the cartoons. That is his paper. He will say where is
516 my cartoon at. He likes to watch T.V. Shows for kids that teach them to read. He looks at that.
517 Sometimes he says it but more he gets at himself but we say it is ok. He knows he can do it but
518 something holding him back so he gets mad at himself.

519 That is coming, I guess that is normal at his age.

520
521 Do you think Ben thinks of himself as a good reader?
522
523 I think so. He will say daddy watch. I will sit down with him and he will read it and say see I
524 told you I can read it.
525
526 When did he learn to read?
527
528 When, oh boy. I would say when he was in Kindergarten but picked up more and more in first
529 grade.
530
531 Was there a time when you felt, oh, he can read now?
532
533 Yes.
534
535 Do you remember when that time was when you felt he was learning about reading to now he
536 can read?
537
538 I would say a couple of months ago, he really started opening up and reading.
539
540 What happened exactly that would make you say he can read?
541
542 He would bring a book home and I would say Ben go and read it and he would read it and. . .
543 When I say read I don't mean every single word in a book. I don't think an average kid would
544 learn to read a whole book by himself. I think about a couple of months ago he would realize it
545 and he would say what is this. I would say sound it out Ben. He would sound it out. A N D is
546 and. He started putting words together.
547
548 You think when he learned to do that?
549
550 Yes. When he started putting the sounds together, the long words are broken into small portions
551 and sound it out.
552
553 That has helped him a lot?
554
555 Yes.
556
557 Great. Was there ever a time when Ben communicated to you he could read or was this a
558 gradual process?
559
560 A gradual process.
561
562 Did he realize a couple of months ago that he had more control over the book and he could do it
563 himself?
564

565 Yes. I would say about a month ago, his teacher sent more and more books home for him.
566 Every Monday is library day and he would pick a book and say this is so hard. He would look at
567 the pictures and I would say sometimes a picture does not tell you what is inside the book. It
568 might be hard for you to read it. That is when I asked Mrs. C to send a book she felt he could
569 read by himself. I want to teach him to read it. If he does not understand it I will teach him.
570 Not just me reading all of the time.
571
572 It is important for him to have things he can read to you too. I agree. Is there anything you
573 found unusual or interesting as Ben became a reader?
574
575 He is a better speller. I think he sees it somewhere else and can spell it out. That helps him to
576 sound it out and read it.
577
578 What about his spelling?
579
580 That is interesting, I saw his book last week and 95% of the words were correct spelling. I am
581 not sure if the teacher helped or if he did it by himself . I was amazed.
582
583 It is nice to get those pleasant surprises. Is there anything else you can add about his reading?
584
585 Not on my end. I would like to ask what you think of his progress.
586
587 I think he is doing fine.
588
589

589 TAPE THREE/INTERVIEW NO. 6

590

591 When he was six weeks old he was crying and to soothe him we read story rhymes to him. Then,
592 I guess we just went over the alphabet with him first and let him learn it.

593

594 How old was he then?

595

596 Two. My youngest son is 3 now but knew his alphabet when he was two. We would sing songs.
597 We would make up songs that made up the sounds of the alphabet.

598

599 You made them up?

600

601 Yes.

602

603 Neat.

604

605 You don't want me to sing. I would say A has two sounds and then we would go over the sound
606 and then J . . . We would sing this in the rocking chair. Then we would just read to him.

607

608 When did he start pick up on it.

609

610 Probably Kindergarten.

611

612 Do you think he really read to read for himself in Kindergarten?

613

614 Yes. We read to him all along though.

615

616 What do you think the difference was between when he didn't read and when he did? With his
617 behavior?

618

619 I am not sure. We also got a kit. It was not the Hooked on Phonics kit but it was like that and he
620 did that for a while. He wants you to know he loves Dr. Seuss books. I don't know I cannot
621 remember.

622

623 Do you remember when he learned to read exactly. Did he come home with the news or how did
624 you know?

625

626 Because we would read to him and then he would start reading.

627

628 So he would take over the reading for you?

629

630 Yes.

631

632 That was in Kindergarten?

633

634 Yes. He is above level now, I think.

635
636 Yes. Oh, yes.
637
638 It was probably in Kindergarten.
639
640 He can read to himself, which I noticed this year. He could not do that last year.
641
642 So that has been the big step this year, silent reading?
643
644 Yes. I don't read to him as religiously as I used to. I used to take care of kids in my home, do
645 daycare. People were astonished because even the kids I had knew their ABCs. I had a book
646 that had A B real big. It is not too young to learn. It is recognition. If they know what a ball is
647 they know what a symbol is. We would do that. They knew their alphabet.
648
649 Did you help with that Joe?
650
651 He was too little.
652
653 Do you help with your brother?
654
655 Yes.
656
657 How old is he?
658
659 Three.
660
661 Anything else about reading?
662
663 No, but he is doing pretty good.
664
665 I think he is doing a terrific job.
666
667 What I was going to say was I don't read as much as I used to because the days are longer and they
668 want to be outside playing so I let them to do that and I say no books which is bad but I am tired.
669
670 You should let him read to you.
671
672 He does every once in a while. We got the Goosebumps books.
673
674 They seem to be popular these days.
675
676 Yes. He reads silently so I don't know how well he is reading.
677
678 Talk about them and see. Ok, thank you very much.
679

679 TAPE THREE/INTERVIEW NO 7

680

681 He was your average normal healthy baby boy but very curious so as he got a little older and we
682 went anywhere in the car he started picking up on things. Of course, he is the youngest of five so
683 he heard and saw a lot that a first child would not see. When he got to be 3 or 4 I worried about
684 him because he liked to play and did not seem as interested in books. He looked at books and I
685 read and he did puzzles but he liked a lot of physical play, a lot of sports. So, I wondered if he
686 would pick it up. He did he started picking up colors and numbers and letters and signs. He would
687 recognize things. Of course, when you taking him to McDonalds and Taco Bell and those things.
688 On television he started recognizing things I could never get him to watch the Sesame Street type
689 shows and that bothered me. All of the sudden, I don't know what triggered it but all of the sudden
690 when he was 4 or 5, he fell in love with books. The other kids and eye and his dad who is not
691 around much because he works long hours would read to him. Then he would sit and read to
692 himself. Instead of making things up as some as the other kids did, he studied the letters and
693 sounded things out. Sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't and pretty soon, much to
694 everyone's amazement, he was reading. Still cannot tie his shoes but he can read.

695

696 We will take it.

697

698 I am not complaining.

699

700 Was this a gradual thing or a time when you noticed hey he can read himself.

701

702 I guess it was in Kindergarten. After he started school and he brought things home. Like if he
703 brought me a letter home from the teacher, he wanted to read it to me. He is very independent.
704 He never wanted anyone to do anything for him. In some ways we have waited on him because
705 he is the baby of the family. He has no patience. He had to wait to learn to read.

706

707 What changes did you notice from when he could not read himself to becoming a reader?

708

709 I don't know if being in school helped it, I don't know but his confidence soared. He had no fear.
710 Some of my children would hesitate, especially to read aloud to someone else, if they did not
711 know they would pause and wait. As he studied a word and started to sound it out, he would say
712 don't tell me. He was just fearless just like with everything else he does. If it is wrong he just
713 self corrects or you correct him and he plows right on through.

714

715 What do you think he uses besides sounding it out when comes to a word he does not know?

716

717 I have seen him look at pictures. Like if it says the monkey has something and he cannot figure
718 out what the something is he will look at the picture and you can see his brain . . . I don't know if
719 he thinks he is cheating or not.

720

721 That is called cross checking. That is a wonderful strategy. He looks at the letters and then the
722 picture. Is that what he does?

723

724 Yes.

725
726 Does he ever use the meaning to get it do you think?
727
728 Like what?
729
730 If he is reading and he reads, using the monkey example, the monkey has a boy and there is no
731 picture and he knows that is not something a monkey usually has would he go back because it
732 does not make sense to him?
733
734 I would say yes. Also, something I have seen him do is take a part of word he knows and fill that
735 out and then come up with something. He is pretty stubborn.
736
737 Good for him.
738
739 It helps in things like that.
740
741 Did you notice a change in his behavior before he could read for himself and after?
742
743 Absolutely. It calmed him down. He still continues to be active but it is nice that he can sit on
744 the couch and pick something up and do it. I was worried because we would not allow them to
745 have Nintindo games and they banded together because we said if they could save thinking they
746 couldn't and they presented us with this stack of money. So, he got into this Nintindo system we
747 have had for a couple of years. I was really concerned about this preschooler who was really
748 good at that but not other things like going to the library.
749
750 You have no idea what got him finally to connect with the books?
751
752 I don't know. Well, not his next older brother but all of his other brothers and sisters are readers
753 and his dad is a reader and I was a reader before I had kids. There is a lot of reading that goes on
754 in our home whether it is newspapers, magazines. His older sisters read. He has a lot of role
755 models. He loves math and numbers. He does a lot of math, multiplying and stuff. He drew a
756 picture of the United States based on the song they play over the loud speaker. He found an atlas
757 and different colored crayons and drew it and colored it and labeled it and showed us how he
758 could point to each state while he sang it. That was something he just picked up. He does have
759 good memorization skills . He remembers everything.
760
761 Anything else unusual or interesting about his reading?
762
763 Not really. He was a little slow, kind of like the kids who don't speak and then speak in full
764 sentences. That is kind of how his reading went . He went from a few words or Giant,
765 Blockbuster and McDonalds to reading.
766
767 You know of a certain time when that happened? When that transition happened was there an
768 event that you noticed or did he keep it to himself?
769

770 His birthday is in July and then he started school and I guess it wasn't really overnight but it
771 seemed that way. He really liked the book order things. That was a big deal. I should keep
772 better track. I keep thinking I'll write a journal but I never have time.

773
774 Thank you.

775
776 TAPE THREE/INTERVIEW NO 8

777
778 They have a different attitude in Fairfax County than they do here. I was amazed when I walked
779 into the classroom the first time when I met everyone. They were sitting down together reading
780 something. They did not do that at her school before she left. They were just talking about the
781 special spelling. Just teaching phonetics.

782 So, when she got here she was way behind with everybody else. Also, they had someone who
783 came in and worked with them from George Mason University. Other than that, we thought she
784 was right on track with everything. Down here, it is a little difference.

785
786 I think if anything that was a major factor because they were not stressing that type of
787 environment in the school system she was in before. I think she needed to get up to speed.

788
789 I don't know, if you make her, she is a perfectionist and she will give up quickly other than
790 sounding it out. If you sit with her she does do a little better. We also got a thing for the
791 computer which identifies beginning, middle and end sounds. She has started to work on that.

792
793 Other than that I don't know, what do you assess?

794
795 I see her in the whole group when I go into the classroom and then she sees Mrs. P (Title I
796 teacher) for some extra help and we divide the class in half and we work as a group and she is
797 always very read to work on it. She is anxious to be a part of the group and do what we are
798 doing. I see progress from the beginning of the year.

799
800 Definitely.

801
802 She will guess. She will take guess.

803
804 That is the easiest way. We all look for the easy way.

805
806 It will be building and she will say house. I will say I don't see an S in that word. We are trying.

807
808 We will say house does not start with a B. I also notice that when she writes it down she is
809 trying to sound it out. A blowfish has poison and she does not write all of the letters. She needs
810 to slow down.

811
812 It is phonetically correct though.

813
814 She needs to work on the structure.

815

816 This is the teacher.
817
818 What she is doing is a stage and then they move toward and in the class they are taught yes I am
819 glad you heard these sounds and this is the correct way to spell it.
820
821 They don't do spelling until next year, right.
822
823 They work on sounds like this is all, now if you know all how can you write ball, tall or small.
824 Using what you know. It sounds like she is reading for meaning. If she says building instead of
825 house she is at least getting the meaning of the story, which is important. She has partly gotten
826 that from the picture or the rest of the sentence. You may say if that word were building what
827 would you expect to see at the beginning of the word. What other word do you know that starts
828 with H and means the same thing. We call that cross checking. I have the word in my head do
829 the letters match. That is kind of the next step. What about as a preschooler?
830
831 She did not do much. I read to her. I don't read that well but she was in structured preschool
832 because I was working so she was in structured preschool since the time she was two. They
833 never really said anything. I don't know their curriculum. They did not stress reading. I was
834 worried about that and I stressed that to her teacher at the first conference and was told they don't
835 stress reading.
836
837 In first grade?
838
839 Yes. They stress math. There is nothing on her reports about her being behind in reading.
840
841 Do you think, as her parents, she is a reader?
842
843 She wants to be. I myself was not a reader until I was older. I had an LD problem. They say that
844 that can be hereditary..
845
846 I don't see that tendency in her at this point.
847
848 I think it is the attention span. She is definitely smart enough to do it. I was reading very young.
849 I was reading before I was in Kindergarten. By the time I was in the third or fourth grade I was
850 reading on a ninth and tenth grade level. course, I have a problem with the sun so when
851 everybody else went out to play I went to the library. I notice that she gets frustrated very easily.
852 If she is not thinking about what she is doing, she gets frustrated. She needs to not be so distracted.
853 She is too perfect some times. I know what that is like. I know about reading between the lines.
854
855 Because you don't need it.
856
857 It is just a matter of forgetting. She feels she is not accomplishing something she will get
858 frustrated. She is getting better with it. I used to have to sit with her and then I would get
859 frustrated.
860
861 Do you feel like she thinks she is a reader?

862
863 I don't know.
864
865 I think she does. She will sit down with books. A lot of the stuff when you read it a couple of
866 times she goes by memory. If she can turn the page she can actually run her finger over the
867 sentence and say it, but she is not reading and it is from memory. You can close the book and
868 open a page and she does not know what comes before or after it is difficult.
869
870 What do you think?
871
872 Again, it is a stage and she is well on her way. Some of those words she can read and the words
873 that you think she may not know, if you know the word brother is on that page, before she ever
874 reads it say brother is on this page can you find the word brother and find it with her so you
875 know she is reading it. Then she can go on because you have taken away the real hard part.
876
877 Yeah, but I read those words. I have her try it and then I read it.
878
879 Ask her if there is a part of the word she knows.
880
881 Yeah. We cover it up.
882
883 We call it chunks. Find the biggest chunk you can say. It is just like riding a bike, the more you
884 do the better you get. What she is going through are very very normal stages. I see this and have
885 parents tell that after a while, they don't want you anymore. It's like I can do this by myself, get
886 away. When that independence kicks in seems to be when. There will be words they don't know
887 but they are more confident they can work on it.
888
889 She has not gotten to that point yet, she still wants me to do it.
890
891 That is good. That is what causes the process to keep happening is because when she comes to
892 something she does not know she knows you are there with an answer. The kids that give up are
893 the kids who get to that point and there is no one there willing to work with them.
894
895 When math problems, I can sit her down and she can do them. If they are wrong I tell her to
896 erase them and she will do them again. When it comes to reading I would not read them because
897 I felt I was doing her homework for her.
898
899 No, not at all. You are making it possible for her to have some success. Have her read
900 everything you can. If you are driving down the road, ask her what does that say.
901
902
903 She does that on her own. Actually she has been doing that for quite some time. She is much
904 better speller than reader. If you ask her to sound out door and spell it.
905
906 So you can use that. Say well you know door what do you have to do to get floor.
907

908 Or if you say that is a blend, she can put it together. English is such a hard language. So I say in
909 that case the E is silent and the A is long.

910
911 In that case, we say that is a tricky one. That makes it hard for him.

912
913 I think if you teach them the rules early and they have them in their belt when they get up to
914 where they have to do a lot of grammar it is easier.

915
916 Yes it is.

917
918 I cannot spell at all.

919
920 I am a terrible speller. I love the computer. It will tell me when I wrong.

921
922 ***THERE IS SOMETHING HERE ABOUT AN EXTRA READING CLASS. THEY ARE
923 TALKING ABOUT A
924 FORM THEY NEED TO GET FROM THE OFFICE.***

925
926

926 TAPE FOUR/INTERVIEW NO 9

927

928 I bought most things at Toys-R-Us, reading Pre-K to K and math books. Once that was done,
929 actually he couldn't do math until he learned to use his fingers. The reading, we have gone
930 through a lot of books. We used to anyway. We bought a lot of easy to read books at Price Club.
931 Big easy to read books for kids. We have read most of the books. He likes repetitious books.
932 Like the dog did this, the dog did that.

933

934 Did you read to him or does he read to you?

935

936 We used to read together. Read during the night and we would make up stories in the car and he
937 would tell me what was going to happen or might happen. He would tell me what the character
938 was going to do. He would have to try to think of a way to get the character out. That was one
939 thing we used to do. We have not done that this year.

940

941 Do you see him as a reader?

942

943 You have to push him to read. You have to tell him and sit down with him. He likes picture
944 books. He will pick them up any time and make up a story. He actually, before he could read
945 one time he told me could read because he picked up the Mickey Mouse book and I thought he
946 was reading but he was making up stories by the picture. He fooled me a couple of times.

947

948 Do you think he feels he has a problem with reading or do you think he feels he can do it?

949

950 He feels he cannot read. He cannot do a lot of the things. My philosophy is that don't tell me
951 you cannot do it. You can do it. He has it set in his mind he cannot read. If I pick up a book and
952 read with him he can read. The first thing he says it Mom I cannot do this.

953

954 What does he do if he comes to something he does not know when he is reading with you?

955

956 He tries to sound it out and if he can't I will tell him and he will say it a couple of times and then
957 we move on.

958

959 That is great.

960

961 As far as reading on his own he will not do it until he is told.

962

963 Why do you think that is?

964

965

966 He feels he cannot do it. He has no trouble figuring out hard games that he likes to do.
967 Something that is very difficult he will figure out a way to do it. I think reading should be one of
968 them but he feels he cannot do it. I think he can you just have to push him.

969

970 How about his first grade and Kindergarten?

971

972 I feel he learned a lot. The teacher was very strict. They had a structured class. I think that is
973 what he needs, a very structured class. They were tested every week.
974
975 This was in Kindergarten?
976
977 Yes. Once a month they were tested on all of the words they learned. He did great. When I ask
978 him to read or spell something he says he cannot do it but I felt he was doing pretty good.
979 Behavior wise I don't think he did well but as far as learning wise I think he was progressing well
980 enough to have done well in the first grade which has not been the case.
981
982 Was that the case when he was in first grade in Maryland also?
983
984 They did not touch on a lot of what they have touched here. They could do it in sections. They
985 read off of some type of PPI books. There were different levels and he was in the second level.
986 There were some kids below and some above. He was learning. He could spell words which was,
987 to me, one of the foundations of reading. I always think if you cannot spell it, it would be hard to
988 read it. I think Kindergarten did tremendous help for him. Head start was not all that great. First
989 grade he was there a few months so I did not think I saw any advancement but I actually think he
990 has regressed since we started here. When children move they seem to lag behind. I think he has
991 regressed because he has been with the same kids and same school for two years. Most kids
992 don't like to move, I don't like to move either. I thought maybe that was what was going on.
993
994 I think you definitely have the right idea with summer school and trying to help him catch up.
995
996 TAPE FOUR/INTERVIEW NO 10
997
998 This is her first year.
999
1000 In Kindergarten she did not do much reading?
1001
1002 I don't think so. Maybe I read to her. We started out with Dr. Seuss books like Hop on Pop and
1003 those. I think she has really improved a lot this year with Mrs. C.
1004
1005 I do too.
1006
1007 I can see a big difference.
1008
1009 So you really think she learned to read in first grade.
1010
1011 Yes.
1012
1013 How about as a preschooler, was she interested in books?
1014
1015 She did not go to preschool.
1016
1017 How about at home?

1018
1019 She liked me to read to her.
1020
1021 So she liked hearing stories. She did not pick them up playing?
1022
1023 Probably yes. Seeing her older sister read they would get books and look at them. This
1024 surprised me because I did not like to read. I don't remember what I was like when I was little.
1025 All of my kids like to get the books and look at them. I like to see that they sit and listen to me
1026 read then I think they will listen when they get to school.
1027
1028 Any other things you noticed in the beginning of the year that have changed?
1029
1030 She did not have much confidence in her reading and I try to tell her she is doing well but I think
1031 she feels she is very good. She was pretty proud of herself with that spelling test. Having an
1032 older sister saying oh you cannot do this makes her think she can't.
1033
1034 Do you think she thinks she is a reader?
1035
1036 I don't know. I think maybe now she would say yes but before she wouldn't. I would just tell her
1037 to try. I think now she might say she is. I am not too sure. Like I said she does not have too
1038 much confidence. The older one has it all.
1039
1040
1041 What does she do when she comes to a word she doesn't know?
1042
1043 She will try it. Before, she would just sit and wait. Now she will try. I am really proud to hear
1044 her say a word that I thought she would get stuck on.
1045
1046 You were telling her the perfect thing when you told her to try it.
1047
1048 Great. I told her to at least sound it out.
1049
1050 Is there anything else she uses besides that?
1051
1052 You mean when she gets stuck? I will cover up part of the word and have showed her that ING
1053 is the ing sound and I have seen her stop and cover part of it and say the beginning. That seemed
1054 to help.
1055
1056 Yes. What kinds of books does she like?
1057
1058 Easy ones. When I tell her to get a book to read I tell her to get something harder.
1059
1060 So, she chooses something she will know.
1061
1062 Right. We have a bunch of books and she will go find one . I don't think she has a favorite. I
1063 like the Little Critter books.

1064
1065 Anything else that comes to mind? I have seen her confidence grow this year from the beginning
1066 to now. Even on the video tapes.
1067
1068 I cannot think of anything.
1069
1070 Does her older sister read with her?
1071
1072 Sometimes. If they play school. They play school a lot.
1073
1074 Did they play like that before school?
1075
1076 Yes. My son is starting school next year.
1077
1078 Good, then she can help him.
1079
1080 I have seen that. I have seen her try to help him.

APPENDIX D: CASE STUDIES

Brian

Case Study - One

Home background: Brian and his two younger brothers live with both parents in a middle class neighborhood. Brian's father works to support the family while his mother stays home to care for the children.

Mrs. S., Brian's mother, reports unremarkable preschool years for Brian with language and motor skills developing as expected. She feels he is sometimes mischievous at home in order to distract her attention from the two younger children.

Mrs. S. has always read to Brian, usually at bedtime. While he seems to enjoy the stories, he displayed no real interest in learning to read himself and would rather play or watch TV. Mrs. S. tries to complete the nightly routine, including reading, before Mr. S. returns from work. This allows time for a family dinner (an important part of their religious beliefs) and time for Mr. S. to play with the children before bed. The play consists of unstructured activities such as games of tag or wrestling.

School background: Brian attends his neighborhood public elementary school. Early in kindergarten, Brian had some difficulty with social adjustment. His kindergarten teacher feels he was able to overcome these difficulties fairly quickly. Brian was able to grasp concepts when presented. His teacher felt he left kindergarten with sound knowledge of the alphabet, concepts about how print is organized, and a variety of literacy experiences. She predicted Brian would learn to read without difficulty.

Upon entry into first grade, Brian was given the Observation Survey (Clay 1993) in order to determine strengths and weaknesses. Based on his test results and teacher observations, it was determined that Brian was at the pre-reading stage. This qualified Brian for extra reading instruction from the school's Title I teacher.

Theoretical background: Piaget's theory states that knowledge is developed gradually as the child interacts with his environment. He says environment, maturation, socialization, and equilibration are the forces that shape learning. At age six, Brian is in the pre-operational stage as described by Piaget. In the pre-operational stage, the role of perception plays a large part in the child's logic and thinking. A child Brian's age could be expected to be egocentric and refer to things from the perception of how they *feel* they should be.

Observations: Brian was observed from November 15 through April 30 for one-half hour per day during free reading time. Brian was free to choose reading material and he could choose from several seating locations.

An initial observation found Brian sitting on the floor by a bookshelf. His face has a serious expression as he asks the teacher to tell him the title of a book. He asked the teacher for each unknown word. He looked for picture cues and could read a limited number of sight words.. These low level reading strategies required the teacher to supply approximately every third word.

Brian and the teacher both realized the book was too difficult. Brian responded by hiding his face behind the book and using a voice too quiet to hear. The teacher asked Brian if he would like to “practice” the book before reading it to her and he nodded yes.

Once the teacher left the area, Brian returned to his book, turned pages and buried his face in the book. He paused to listen to another child read. He finally closed the book and returned it to the shelf. A second book chosen by Brian produced the same behavior. He read in the same quiet voice and, once again, hid behind the book.

This observation indicated that Brian is now an emerging reader. Although he would now like to learn to read, he realizes he doesn’t have the needed skills to read the stories he is interested in. By listening to others, he can hear stories on his interest level, and yet the experience also reinforces what he cannot do unassisted.

By the end of November, Brian is using sound to symbol correspondence in his attempts to decode. On November 28, he is obtaining great pleasure from a pop-up book about animals but when asked if he wants to read it to the teacher, he shakes his head no. At her insistence he begins to read but looks to her to confirm attempts. The teacher encourages the use of picture cues and experience. He is also encouraged to use “chunks”. He successfully uses this method on the first attempt. When he could not successfully decode a second word, Brian turned the page and looked up to see who was listening or watching. He then turned to another student to show the pop-up features of the book.

Although he has learned some new and useful strategies, Brian is not able to choose from among them when help is needed. He is still very concerned about the opinion of others. He is interested in sharing books but turns inward when reading unfamiliar text.

The following day his teacher notices Brian sitting on the floor flipping the pages of his book. She asks him to read to her and offers to help. She is distracted by other children before he begins to read so Brian continues to flip the pages. He finally opened the book but was unable to decode. The teacher began to choral read with him. Only the teacher’s voice is audible and yet when asked if he wanted to read another page, Brian indicates he does. Finally, Brian takes over the reading task with some teacher assistance. The teacher offers verbal praise, then leaves. Brian closes the unfinished book and leaves.

At this point, Brian seems to have entered the beginning reader stage. He has expanded his sight word vocabulary, is able to read simple text unassisted, and has added sound/symbol correspondence to his repertoire of reading strategies. He is observed using structure, meaning and visual cues to decode. While he is proud of his accomplishments and wants to share successes, Brian is easily discouraged and reverts quickly to avoidance behaviors when unsure.

When reading familiar text, Brian reads in a loud, clear voice. He often imitates the teacher’s read aloud techniques, showing the picture to the audience after each page. While these behaviors were beginning to emerge, the majority of Brian’s free time is spent reading alone.

In his book Classrooms That Work (1998), Richard Allington states, “Having students read something in which they can recognize almost all of the words was critical to their reading

development. Experts argue about what constitutes instructional level, but most agree that a child must be able to successfully and independently read 95 percent of the words in a story to have good comprehension.... When you think about this, it makes sense that children need lots of easy reading... in order to become avid readers.” Brian took naturally to this concept, reading familiar text often. He chose favorites and read them over and over. Initially Brian’s familiar books had only a few words or phrases which were repeated often, yet he gained great satisfaction from reading them. He was relaxed and comfortable, he smiled, and his voice was loud and strong. These readings allowed the teacher to offer genuine praise. Brian was able to accept this praise but did not take pleasure in the teacher’s praise for trying without success.

In December Brian was observed reading with a group of other children for the first time. Brian allowed Sharon to assume all leadership tasks. She asked the teacher for help decoding a word and was able to use word analysis successfully. Brian sat quietly during the exchange, listening carefully but offering no help to Sharon. When the group was unable to proceed due to lack of word knowledge, Brian looked at the book silently. At Sharon’s suggestion, the group skipped the difficult page and simply moved on. Brian checked with other group members to be sure he was on the correct page. When he realized his book was missing a page, he allowed Sharon to solve the problem for him. Although he was a very passive member of the group, when Sharon declared she was the only one reading, Brian quickly replied, “I’m reading”. After struggling through another page, group members began leaving one by one. Finally Brian and Sharon were the only two left. As the struggle to read this difficult text continued, Brian slowly inched away from Sharon and left.

These group behaviors suggest he is not yet confident enough to suggest strategies to the group. While he wants to be a part of the group, he is not willing to risk being incorrect in a group situation. It was several weeks before Brian was again observed reading with a group.

Subsequent observations in December found Brian reading quietly, alone or listening intently to better readers. He was observed listening with rapt attention to the assistant principal as he read The Grinch Who Stole Christmas to the class. Additionally, he was observed listening to Jim, an excellent reader.

Brian did not verbalize his attempts to decode at this time making it difficult to know the strategies he was using but he would occasionally use a picture cue to guess a word. While there was no observable evidence, his quiet attempts seemed to be more successful.

Upon returning to school after a ten day winter break, Brian is observed once again reading quietly with his head down. His voice is very quiet and he is obviously unsure. He was, however, attempting to read a more difficult chapter book. Brian made audible attempts to decode for the first time. He responded correctly to the teacher’s prompts and self-corrected on one occasion. On another occasion he very happily read a book he had written during an animal research project. He had maintained his proficiency throughout the break from school.

Several days later, Brian was observed reading alone and a very quiet voice. He did not solicit the teacher’s help, but accepted it when she offered. The teacher suggested he move to the Reader’s Chair (a special chair used only for reading). He responded to the teacher’s suggestion

to use word analysis to decode. He was successful but continued to encounter unknown words. He gave up before finishing the book. He was observed sitting with groups of children. He sat and listened but did not join the reading.

At this point, Brian seems to have reverted to earlier reading behaviors. He would follow teacher suggestions about strategy use, but was not taking on the task for himself. He became discouraged when not successful, and yet was proud when he could achieve success.

On February 5, Brian was exited from the Title 1 program after testing by the teacher. He returned to the classroom with a certificate, pencil, sticker, and a bit smile. The Title 1 teacher praised Brian to the classroom teacher. She was overheard by children nearby. Brian proudly showed his certificate, pencil and sticker to others in the class.

In mid-February Brian was observed reading with a group. While Terri was clearly the leader, Brian was an active participant in the group. His voice was clear and audible. He did not rely on others to keep the place or for words. It was also at this time that Brian continued to work through a chapter book after the teacher left. She had offered prompts and he had responded correctly.

Brian seems to be moving forward again but is still relying on teacher prompts to know which strategies to use. John Holt (1971) states, "All of us must cross the line between ignorance and insight many times before we truly understand. Not only must we cross the line many times, But in the words of the old spiritual, nobody else can cross it for us, we must cross it for ourselves. Being shoved or dragged across does no good." Brian seems to cross the line several times in the next few weeks.

In late February, Brian began to read with other children more often. He began to demonstrate the ability to choose from among reading strategies. He used word analysis, and sometimes skipped a word and then reread. He read for meaning and would stop if meaning was lost, often simply closing the book and replacing it on the shelf.

In mid-March Brian is observed listening to Tyler (an excellent reader) read a book. When Tyler finished and returned the book to the shelf, Brian sighed and picked up Silly Sally to read. This is a familiar text Brian had read often. Fred (a struggling reader) joined Brian. Brian read while Fred listened. Brian then moved away and listened to Jim read. The two boys discussed the animals in the story. Brian's behavior suggests he is not yet able to read on his interest level,

During the next several days Brian read only familiar text. He read often, loudly and clearly. He was easily distracted. Only after receiving an assignment from the teacher to read 100 pages of text (he was free to choose titles), did he return to seriously trying to read. He began using expression while reading. He often read with others who read less well. On one occasion, he commented he liked reading for the camera.

The April observations found Brian more relaxed but still reading familiar text. He became more social during free reading time. He listened to good readers and other children listened to him. He enjoyed the attention from those who listened to him.

These months seem to be spent in slow but steady progress. Brian often seemed to regress, only to move forward again. There was no observable evidence that he felt he was a reader.

Testing in early June indicated Brian read on grade level and yet he did not seem to possess the confidence of one with insight into the reading process. He still clung to the familiar and was hesitant to attempt unknown text. While he enjoyed reading to some children, he did not read in the presence of more capable readers.

On June 14, the last day of school, the researcher asked Brian to read a story of his choosing. He selected a chapter book called Tornadoes. Brian was engrossed in the book. He did not ask for help but was able to rely on and chose from among reading strategies to decode unknown words. He was able to “problem solve on the run” (Clay 1991) with no loss of meaning. He demonstrated appropriate use of word analysis, re-reading, and self-correction. He neither paused nor looked up when another student came to listen. Brian was not distracted even with the arrival of the P.E. teacher who came into the room to distribute sports cards.

Daniel

Case Study - Two

Home Background Daniel is the youngest child in his family. He has two sisters who are eight and twelve years older than him. His mother reports he has been pampered and babied by his parents and siblings. Daniel's birthday falls close to the cut off for school acceptance which allowed him to enter kindergarten at 5 years 0 months. This caused Daniel's parents to consider keeping him home for another year. They finally decided to allow Daniel to attend school but to consider retention if necessary.

Daniel's home contains books, newspapers, and magazines. He has a library of children's books which he stores in his bedroom. Daniel also sees his parents and siblings interact with print regularly.

School Background Daniel was given the *Observation Survey* in first grade. This survey was administered to all children in his class to determine strengths and weaknesses in reading. Test results placed Daniel in the middle of his class. He knew the alphabet with the exception of the confusion of p and q. He demonstrated knowledge of some basic sight words, his concepts about print were in place, and he was able to hear sounds in words. Daniel could write his first and last name, as well as some two and three letter words. He could follow along with the researcher while reading repetitive text. He was able to continue the story unassisted. These demonstrated competencies placed Daniel in the category of beginning reader.

Observations Daniel's first grade class started each day with thirty minutes of reading. During this time, Daniel was allowed to move freely about the class and select a place to read. He was also encouraged to choose reading material from a variety of trade books, texts, and children's magazines. The classroom teacher, Mrs. C, was available during this time to facilitate reading and to keep students on task. Daniel was observed in this setting from November 15 through April 30.

An initial observation finds Daniel listening to his friend, Jim, read. Daniel then takes his turn reading. Although he reads a simple, repetitive text, Jim listens with interest. When he had finished and the teacher offered praise, Daniel simply nodded and quickly looked down at the book. He then returned to listen to Jim read. This observation reveals little observable change in reading from initial testing in September to this November observation.

The end of November finds Daniel continuing to read simple, repetitive text. During this observation, however, upon completion of the text, he looks up at the teacher, awaiting her response and praise.

In December, Daniel spends a great deal of time reading with his friend and exceptional reader, Jim. When not reading with Jim (a trusted friend) Daniel usually reads alone. During one observation on December 15, Daniel and Jim share a chair and prepare to take turns reading to each other. Daniel announces his intention to read first. He reads a familiar, repetitive text. An unknown word (eating) was supplied by Jim. When Jim reads the title of his book as Charlie

Brown's Encyclopedia, Daniel inquires if Jim intends to read the entire book. Even though Jim says no, Daniel leaves and returns with another book. He then announces he will be first again. He reads another simple text with Jim correcting as needed. Daniel listens while Jim reads one page from the encyclopedia. He then decides to read a book he has written. The only reading strategy observed during this session was to rely on another to supply unknown words.

This same pattern was observed on December 18. Daniel read what he could with pleasure and relied on his friend to supply words and make any needed corrections. The two boys convinced the teacher to let them complete the story after she had announced the end of reading time.

The researcher believes Jim served a vital role in Daniel's reading progress. Since Jim was a peer and a friend, Daniel could feel comfortable to try even when he knew he would probably make errors. Jim did not become frustrated, ask him to try different strategies, or judge his reading. He simply supplied the information or word that was needed when it was needed. Jim was an excellent listener when Daniel read. He also served as a source of stories for Daniel's listening pleasure. These stories were on his interest level but beyond his reading level.

While Jim was providing facilitation for Daniel, Mrs. C was encouraging the use of higher level strategies. During an observation in early January, she sat with Daniel while he read. During the session Daniel is able to successfully use letter knowledge and known chunks. The teacher offers praise and tells Daniel how well he is reading now. She tells him she thinks he is a good reader. When the teacher leaves, Daniel rereads to himself the book he has written..

February finds Daniel reading a book with much more complex text than previous observations. He accepts Jim's help with a word, but declines his offer to take over the reading task. The next day finds Daniel sitting alone reading the same book.

A final observation in February sees Daniel reading to another child. The two boys enjoy the story, stopping to smile at each other after a funny part. The teacher stops by after the story to offer praise and to tell Daniel what a good reader he has become. Daniel then begins to read the story again.

March observations find Daniel either reading quietly by himself, or thumbing through books but not reading. He sometimes joins other children who are reading but doesn't stay long. He was observed reading a variety of reading materials to himself while sitting alone.

On two occasions in April, Daniel is observed reading while another child listened. He also continues to read alone quietly. His confidence in himself as a reader could be heard on April 19 when he hears another child reading. Daniel covered his ears and said, "I don't need to hear that book. I read it."

Follow-up testing conducted on May 5, 1996, showed Daniel could read well above grade level and employed a variety of reading strategies. He read for meaning and could self-correct many of his errors. He was able to use sound to symbol correspondence and chunks to decode. Uncorrected errors were very close approximations of the correct word.

Interview with Classroom Teacher

Ms C., Daniel's classroom teacher states that before Daniel became a reader, he demonstrated a few reading strategies. He could read some sight words, use memory to follow repetitive text, use some sound/symbol correspondence, try to look for known chunks, and often would simply ask her. She reports he liked to read with others but was a follower. He often read with his friend Jim who read above grade level. Ms C. felt many of his reading strategies were weak.

After returning from a week-end at about mid-year, Ms C. reports a marked change in Daniel's reading behavior. She suggested he read a book he had written. He expressed a preference to reading a book he had brought from home. Although Ms C. felt certain he had at least heard the book before, she was impressed with his ability to read it. The book was too long and involved to have been memorized. Ms C. reports different reading and social behaviors after this event.

Daniel's ability to work on words and to successfully decode them resulted in a change from "What is this word?" to "Is this word.....?". He relied on himself rather than the teacher and was more willing to try. His tries became more and more successful. Ms C. also noticed he became the leader in paired reading situations. She felt he had gained confidence that he could read.

Ms C. spoke with Daniel's parents. They reported he was reading more at home and that they could see growth in reading. They did not, however, notice the dramatic change Ms C. described.

In an informal discussion with Daniel's mother, the researcher was told his parents are pleasantly surprised by Daniel's reading experience. As the youngest child, Daniel's mother feels he has been pampered and sheltered. He is also younger than many first graders since he barely met the cut off date for entry into school. Friends had suggested he may need to spend two years in first grade and Daniel's parents would not have been surprised had the teacher suggested it. Daniel's mother was understandably pleased with his progress. She told the researcher that she was amazed at how quickly he learned to read and that once he learned, he read a great deal at home. When asked what she felt enabled Daniel to learn so quickly, she reported he was always read to and that he observed his older siblings reading and doing homework. She credited these factors and good instruction in school.