A Description of the Read Aloud Practices of Elementary School Teachers

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A DESCRIPTION  
OF THE READ ALOUD PRACTICES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS  

THESIS  

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Abstract

This study was designed to examine the read aloud practices of elementary school teachers. It also looked at those practices in regards to the differences exhibited between the different grade levels, and the teachers' different philosophies of reading instruction.

Thirty-one teachers responded to a questionnaire designed to elicit their read aloud behaviors. The responses were recorded, tallied, and categorized according to the frequency and the similarities of the responses. These responses were then descriptively analyzed according to the three questions posed by the researcher.

The findings revealed that many teachers are using the read aloud activity as a part of every school day. Their purposes for reading aloud were many but most read aloud for students' enjoyment and to model mature reading behaviors. Most also desired to provide a rich literature background for their students. The activities that accompanied the reading were also numerous and varied, but all of the teachers conducted activities in conjunction with the read aloud. All of the teachers reported that their students enjoyed the activity, and were often motivated to read
the stories read on their own.

The data revealed that the current trend of educating and training teachers in the use of literature in the classroom is becoming practice in the classroom. Most of the teachers responding reported that they are using literature based language arts curricula.

Implications for future research included other possible designs for similar research. Parents' attitudes toward and practices of reading aloud was also addressed.
Table of Contents

List of Tables ................................................................. iii

Chapter I
Statement of the Problem ................................................. 1
  Purpose ................................................................. 1
  Questions to be Answered ........................................... 1
  Need for the Study .................................................... 2
  Definition of Terms .................................................... 5
  Limitations .............................................................. 7
  Summary ................................................................. 7

Chapter II
Review of the Literature .................................................. 8
  Reading Aloud and the Affective and Cognitive Domains ...... 8
  Reading Aloud and Early Literacy .................................. 9
  Reading Aloud and Language and Reading Development ...... 11
  Reading Aloud and Adult/Child Interactions ....................... 12
  Read Aloud Practices and Habits of Classroom Teachers .... 19
  Summary ................................................................. 23

Chapter III
Design ............................................................................ 26
  Purpose ................................................................. 26
  Questions ............................................................... 26
  Methodology .......................................................... 27
  Analysis ................................................................. 28
  Summary ................................................................. 28
Table of Contents (Con't)

Chapter IV
Analysis of Data .................................................................................................. 30
Analysis of the Responses
  to the Questionnaire .................................................................................. 30
  Question 1 .......................................................................................... 31
  Question 2 ........................................................................................... 44
  Question 3 .......................................................................................... 59
Summary .................................................................................................. 67

Chapter V
Conclusions and Implications ........................................................................ 72
  Purpose .................................................................................................... 72
  Conclusions ............................................................................................ 72
  Implications for the Classroom ................................................................ 77
  Implications for Research ......................................................................... 79
Summary .................................................................................................. 80

References .................................................................................................. 81

Appendices .................................................................................................. 85
  A. Read Aloud Practices Questionnaire .............................................. 85
  B. Times of Day for Reading Aloud .................................................... 88
  C. Pre- and Post Reading Activities ..................................................... 89
  D. Comparison of Grade Level and Amount of Time Spent Re-reading .................................................................................. 90
  E. Comparison of Grade Levels and Amount of Time Students Seek Out Material Read for Their Own Reading .................................................................................. 91
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Types of Material and Percentages of Responses</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Purposes for Reading Aloud</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Comparison of Grade Levels and Purposes for Reading Aloud</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Comparison of Grade Levels and Activities</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Types of Material Read at Each Grade Level</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Comparison of Philosophies and Purposes for Reading Aloud</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Comparison of Philosophies and Read Aloud Activities</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

Statement of the Problem

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the read-aloud practices of regular classroom teachers in the elementary grades. This study focuses on how much time is allocated to the read-aloud activity, and what instructional activities accompany it in relation to the teachers’ stated philosophies of reading instruction and to grade level taught.

Questions

The questions addressed in this study were:

1. What are the read-aloud practices of regular classroom teachers in the elementary grades?

2. Are there any trends evident between the different grade levels and: 1) stated purposes for reading aloud, 2) activities
associated with reading aloud, 3) amount of time spent reading aloud, 4) types of materials selected for reading aloud?

3. Are there any trends evident between teachers' stated philosophies of reading instruction and: 1) stated purposes for reading aloud, 2) activities associated with reading aloud, 3) amount of time spent reading aloud?

**Need for the Study**

Children of all ages enjoy having people read to them. For this, if for no other reason, children should be read to in the classroom. Luckily for teachers the read-aloud event has been shown to be an effective means of helping children to become mature and independent readers as well. Much research has examined the practice of reading aloud to children and most have found that reading aloud to children can be efficient in helping students achieve success in school (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; Clark, 1976; Durkin, 1966; Lomax, 1976; Morrow, 1983; Phillips & McNaughton, 1990; Teale, 1984; Wells, 1986). Reading aloud to children can motivate them to learn to read. Children of all ages enjoy hearing
literature (Mason & Blanton, 1971; Mendoza, 1985), and children who have spent many enjoyable hours listening to stories usually look forward to learning to read (Harris & Sipay, 1980; Trelease, 1985). Reading aloud to children also expands their range of knowledge and exposes them to literature they might not otherwise read on their own (Huck, Helper & Hickman, 1987; Wells, 1986). Findings of research (Cohen, 1966; Morrow, 1988) have also indicated that reading aloud to children can improve their reading achievement. Clay (1972) discussed the importance of reading aloud to children's developing concepts of print and to their understanding of written language. Other research (Cohen, 1966; Elley, 1989; Snow & Goldfield, 1983) has indicated that reading aloud can increase children's vocabularies, and introduce them to patterns of language (Chomsky, 1972; Huck et al., 1987). Active and interactive involvement of adults and children in the reading experience insures that children derive the full benefits from the experience by providing them with role models of mature reading behaviors (Altwerger, Diehl-Faxon & Dockstader-Anderson, 1985; Butler, 1980; Martinez, 1983;
Peterman, 1988; Roser & Martinez, 1985; Schickendanz, 1981; Trelease, 1985). "The most beneficial read-aloud events appear to involve social interaction between an adult and a child, in which both participants actively construct meaning based on text." (Morrow & Smith, 1990, p. 215). These adult behaviors can include predicting, discussing illustrations, relating stories to personal experiences, discussing vocabulary, and making inferences. Anderson et al. (1985), in their book Becoming a Nation of Readers, stated that "There is no substitute for a teacher who reads children good stories. It whets the appetite of children for reading, and provides a model of skillful oral reading. It is a practice that should continue throughout the grades" (p. 51). Since reading aloud has been shown to be beneficial to children's success as readers, and since children enjoy the activity, it can be concluded that reading aloud should become a part of every school day for children of all ages. Although many teachers may be aware of the benefits that can be derived from story times, research has shown that while reading aloud in the classroom has increased over the past fifteen years (LaPointe, 1986; Trelease, 1985;
Walmsley and Walp, 1989) many teachers do not read to their students on a regular basis, especially after the primary grades. Fewer still use the read-aloud experience to its fullest advantage (Walmsley & Walp, 1989). The benefits of reading aloud and the benefits of active interaction between an adult and a child during a read aloud activity have been substantiated by research (Altwerger et al., 1985; Elley, W. B., 1989; Morrow, L. M., 1988; Roser, N. & Martinez, M., 1985; Teale, W. H., 1984).

This study was designed to see if the knowledge of these benefits is apparent in the classroom, and whether the use of the read-aloud activity is related to a teacher’s philosophy of reading instruction, background in children’s literature and its use in the classroom, and grade level taught.

**Definition of Terms**

**trend** - a response rate of 75% or more indicates a trend

**anticipatory set** - providing the students with a purpose for the reading or activity

**cloze activity** - an activity in which every fifth word in a prose passage is
left blank and the students must fill in the blanks with the correct word.

**book knowledge** - an understanding of the physical attributes of a book, for example the cover, author, illustrator, dedication and title page.

**book talk** - an oral retelling of a selection of a story designed to encourage students to read or listen to the story.

**reader response activity** - any verbal or non verbal activity (incl. art, drama, music, writing) designed to elicit a personal response from the student (incl. feelings, preferences, attitudes, interpretations) about the reading.

**content area** - those areas of study that include factual content such as social studies, science, and math.

**character or story webs** - an activity in which outlines are drawn as pictures.

**Whole Language** - a student centered, literature based reading program emphasizing skill work in the context of literature.
Limitations of the Study

1. This study is only concerned with the read-aloud practices of regular classroom teachers. It does not consider the read-aloud practices of special education teachers or teachers of the gifted or talented.

2. The participants in this study were selected on the basis of their willingness to respond to the questionnaire.

3. The voluntary nature of the survey limited this study to the number of responses received.

Summary

Research has shown that enjoyment can be derived from the read aloud event. It has also shown the efficacy of the read aloud event as an instructional tool used in the classroom. This study investigated the read-aloud practices of a selected group of elementary school teachers, and in particular, the ways in which a teacher's philosophy of reading instruction, and grade level taught may affect the way the read-aloud is used in the classroom. This was accomplished through the use of a questionnaire. Implications for classroom teachers are drawn.
Chapter II

Review of the Literature

This study described the read-aloud practices of a select group of elementary school teachers and examined these practices in relation to the findings of research conducted into the benefits of reading aloud in general and more specifically in relation to the findings of research conducted into the relationships between reading aloud and literacy, language and reading development, and adult and child interactions. This study also considered how the read-aloud practices of this sample of teachers compare to findings of similar research.

Reading Aloud and the Affective and Cognitive Domains

Children enjoy being read to. (Huck, Helper, & Hickman, 1987; Mason & Blanton, 1971; Mendoza, 1985; Frelease, 1985;) and experience has shown that for many children story reading begins in the home. The benefits of reading aloud to children have generally been divided into the affective and cognitive domains (Schickendanz, 1978). Studies over the past twenty-five years have shown that adults reading aloud to children correlated highly with children's reading ability in the cognitive domains (Radicki, 1987). The affective benefits derived from reading aloud to children, such as emotional security, increase in confidence, and the

Reading Aloud and Early Literacy

Many educators feel that one of the most important activities for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children (Anderson et al., 1985; Butler, 1980; Clark, 1978; Clay, 1972; Chomsky, 1972; Cohen, 1968; Durkin, 1966; Huck et al., 1987; Lomax, 1976; Morrow, 1983; Phillips & McNaughton, 1990; Schickendanz, 1981; Teale, 1984; Trelease, 1985; Wells, 1986). Children who are read to from an early age tend to be better readers, are more motivated to read, and enjoy reading more than those children who have not been read to (Clark, 1978; Durkin, 1966; Harris & Sipay, 1980; Huck et al., 1987; Lomax, 1976; Morrow, 1983; Teale, 1978, 1984; Wells,
Studies by Clark (1978), Durkin (1966), Lomax (1976), Morrow (1983), Teale (1978, 1984) and Wells (1986), although conducted with children in different countries, of different age groups, and of different socioeconomic backgrounds, all found that a supportive home environment, one in which reading and writing are naturally occurring activities, gives a child an advantage in learning to read. The majority of children in each of these studies, who were successful readers, were read to frequently. Wells (1986) studied the way that different experiences in the lives of 32 pre-school children affected their later educational achievement through age ten. He found that of all the activities thought to be most helpful in preparation for the acquisition of literacy (looking at picture books, listening to stories, drawing and coloring) only listening to stories was significantly associated with later test scores. He also found that only the frequency of listening to stories significantly predicted the teachers' assessments of the students' oral language ability.

Clay (1976) discussed the importance of reading aloud to the formation of a child's concept of print. While this benefit is cited by many researchers (Lomax, 1976; Schickendanz, 1978; Teale, 1984), others (Altwerger, Diehl-Faxon & Dockstader-Anderson, 1985; Martinez, 1983; Morrow, 1988; Roser & Martinez, 1985; Yaden, 1985; Yaden, Smolkin & Conlon, 1989) found that in analyzing adult/child interactions during story reading the adults placed more focus on, and the children asked more questions about meaning, story structure, illustrations and
relevancy of the story to the child than on the print.

**Reading Aloud and Language and Reading Development**

Children who are read to develop more sophisticated language structures. (Chomsky, 1972, Cohen, 1968; Huck et al., 1987, Wells, 1986) "Listening to stories introduces children to patterns of language and extends vocabulary and meaning" (Huck et al., 1987, p.13). Chomsky in her 1972 study of children between the ages of six and ten, found that more important than her description of the stages of syntactic development was her finding that "those pre-readers in higher linguistic stages were read to by more people and hear more books per week and at a higher complexity level than those children at lower linguistic stages" (p. 27).

Cohen's 1968 study of socially disadvantaged second graders, who had little experience with reading in the home, showed that those students exposed to literature in the classroom scored significantly better on measures of vocabulary and comprehension than did those students who were not exposed. Other correlational links have been established between frequent teacher reading aloud to children in the elementary grades and improved performance on related achievement tests. Porter (1969) cited in Radicki (1987) found that middle school students read to scored significantly higher on comprehension and total reading measures than those students who were not read to. On the vocabulary measure the differences were less significant. Weidner
(1976) as cited in Radicki (1987), found that the relationship between reading aloud and improved listening and reading comprehension of the fourth graders studied was significant. The group read to the most (10 minutes per day, five days per week) showed the most gain. Elley (1989) found that reading aloud to seven and eight year old students constituted a significant source of new vocabulary acquisition. Those students read to without teacher explanation of vocabulary showed gains of 15 percent, those students who received explanations during the reading showed gains of 40 percent.

Listening to stories read aloud helps young children to develop a sense of story and to construct a story schema. (Huck et al., 1987; Teale, 1984; Wells, 1986). In knowing the structure of a story, children are better able to predict or anticipate action of the story and to determine its meaning (Huck et al., 1987). Understanding, and then internalizing the structural features of a story improves children's ability to comprehend and remember a story (Mandler & Johnson, 1977; Wells, 1986). Children, when they begin to read on their own, will then find the language and the structure of the written word familiar (Huck et al., 1987; Teale, 1984; Wells, 1986).

**Reading Aloud and Adult/Child Interactions**

"Teaching children to read is not putting them into a garden of print and leaving them there unmolested" (Goodman & Goodman (1979) as cited in Teale, 1982, p.564). "In our zeal to accord the child a central
place in the learning process we must not obscure the fact that the environment which the child experiences is organized in highly specific ways" (Teale, 1982, p. 564). Many researchers see the adult's role as one of engaging children in meaningful interactions with print in an environment which contains many such opportunities, and then providing guidance and feedback in ways that make sense to children (Schickendanz, 1981; Stahlschmidt & Johnson, 1984; Teale, 1982; Vukelich, 1976). This interaction between adults and children is necessary if children are to learn about written language (Morrow & Smith, 1990; Schickendanz, 1981). Therefore, educators, should not just look at whether a child has been read to, and how much, but should also look at the nature of the activity as well (Teale, 1984).

Researchers have identified a number of adult interactive behaviors that can affect the quality of the read-aloud experience. These include questioning, setting purpose, scaffolding, dialogue, offering praise and feedback, giving or extending information, clarifying information, directing discussion, sharing personal experiences and reactions, and relating concepts to life experiences (Altwerger et al., 1985; Morrow, 1988; Peterman, 1988; Roser & Martinez, 1985; Schickendanz, 1978; Snow & Goldfield, 1983; Vukelich, 1976; Wells, 1986; Yaden, 1988).

Listening to stories and discussing them with adults can lead children to reflect on their own experiences and discover the power of the written word (Wells, 1986). Through stories children can extend the range of
their experiences far beyond their immediate surroundings and can develop a much broader picture of their world (Butler, 1980; Huck et al., 1987; Peterman, 1988; Stahlschmidt & Schulte-Johnson, 1984; Trelease, 1985; Wells, 1986).

In her 1988 study of the story reading procedures of five kindergarten teachers, Peterman's results revealed that children's understanding can be enhanced by story reading procedures which examine the children's own experiences and those of the story characters. She also found that the children's understanding could best be measured by a recall task, and that children's recall can be influenced by the types of questions and discussions that teachers raise before, during and after the story reading.

Hearing good books read aloud by an enthusiastic teacher is an important factor in helping children become readers. (Huck et al., 1987) The adult as a reading role model is extremely important to the child's development into a mature reader (Altwerger et al., 1985; Butler, 1980; Martinez, 1983; Roser & Martinez, 1985; Snow & Goldfield, 1983; Stahlschmidt & Schulte-Johnson, 1984; Trelease, 1985).

Roser and Martinez (1985) in their observations of storytime at home with pre-schoolers and in a school setting with four and five year olds found that the children were able to construct meaning at a variety of levels and in general tended to respond to literature more like the adult in the situation than they did like the other children. The roles that the adults adopted were: 1) co-responder--The adult initiated topics for discussion for the purpose of describing illustrations,
re-telling parts of the stories and sharing personal experiences that related to the story and then invited the children to share their responses; 2) informer/monitor—The adult explained the different aspects of the stories, assessed comprehension, and provided background information; 3) director—The adult introduced the stories, announced their conclusion, or assumed a leadership role in discussions. It was in the role of co-responder that teachers and parents appeared to model for the children the process of the mature reader interacting with the text. They concluded that if very young children can learn to respond in divergent ways to literature given adult role models, even more can be expected from older children.

Teale (1982) also discussed the importance of the social interaction between adults and children involved in a storytime. When engaged in literary activities which include reading, writing, and oral language, a child, in interacting with a more experienced literate adult, can participate in the activity and at the same time gradually internalize the process, thereby developing his or her own competencies in reading, writing and oral language.

Altwerger, et al. (1985) also looked at the social interactions between adults and children during storytime. They found that the primary goal of the read aloud event was one of comprehension. The adults during the reading constructed a meaningful, relevant text for the children rather than giving a precise reading of the text. The adults studied tended to adapt, extend, clarify, and disregard print as
necessary in order to make the text meaningful for the children. They also found that the adults began to relinquish their roles as text constructors as the children matured and the adults perceived that the children were able to bear this responsibility alone.

Snow and Goldfield (1983) found in their study of a mother-child pair over a period of eleven months that the mother used specific lexical items and constructions when talking about a picture or text. During subsequent readings the items were used again in the same places. During the re-readings the child appeared to have learned these items and constructions and was able to use them himself in recurring situations.

In her study of a father-daughter pair, Martinez (1983) found that the parent's model of thinking and responding to a story was related to the child's story related language in subsequent readings of stories. During the repeated readings the child made remarks identical to those made by the father in previous readings and in the same places. Martinez found that while the four and a half year old child's own initial concerns were with the literal aspects of the story, during subsequent readings, with guidance from her father, she was able to draw conclusions, make predictions, and make inferences about the characters and their motivations. She was also able to relate the characters' experiences to her own.

In Martinez's (1983) study, Dolores was able to increase her understanding of a story during repeat readings of that story. The
importance of re-reading to a child's comprehension has also been pointed out by Morrow (1988), Schickendanz (1978), Vukelich (1976), and Yaden (1988). Yaden (1988) found that the majority of questions that a six year old asked were related to the illustrations during the initial reading of a story. It wasn't until the third reading that questions about word meanings, and story events were asked. This indicated to him that a more accurate understanding of the story is only accomplished after a period of time and readings.

Morrow (1988) in her study of one-on-one read aloud sessions conducted with four year olds from low socioeconomic backgrounds found that the complexity of questions and comments made by the children in the two experimental groups that were read to increased significantly over the control group that was not read to. In addition, she found that the experimental group that received repeated readings had more interpretive responses and these responses focused more on print and story structure than did those of the other experimental group. She found, too, that the re-reading was most effective for the children of lowest ability.

Morrow and Smith (1990) examined the effects of group size in their study of storytime interactions. They found that one-on-one groups and small groups of two or three performed significantly better on comprehension measures than the whole group (15) did. They also found that the small groups performed better than the one-on-one groups. They felt this was due to the fact that the children in the small groups
interacted more than the other two groups. The children in the small group sessions not only asked their own questions, and made their own comments but also elaborated on the responses of their peers. In addition the adult in this situation was treated more as a peer than as a teacher. The children in the one-on-one groups tended to retain the roles of teacher and student. These one-on-one sessions involved mostly teacher questioning and student responding, with the teacher in a support role, offering encouragement and positive reinforcement. In both the one-on-one and small group settings the teacher was able to accommodate as many questions or as many comments as the children produced. In the whole group setting, few children were given the opportunity to participate. The teacher's role in the large group was more one of manager and disciplinarian. They also found that the children farthest from the reader were unable to see the print or illustrations. The children farthest from the reader were also the ones who lost interest in the story and stopped paying attention.

Martinez and Teale (1988) in their examination of classroom libraries concluded that the number of times that a book had been read in the classroom influenced its use by the children. The books in the classroom were described in three ways: those that were unfamiliar (never read aloud), those that were familiar (read aloud once), and those that were very familiar (read aloud repeatedly). Their findings showed that the mean number of times that a familiar book was selected by the children for their own reading was double that of the unfamiliar book,
and the mean number of times a very familiar book was selected was
double that of a familiar book. Based on these results these researchers
not only advocated repeated readings of stories, but also subsequently
making these stories available to children in a classroom library.

**Read Aloud Practices of Classroom Teachers**

Recent research (Stahlschmidt & Johnson, 1984; Walmsley & Walp,
1989) indicated that more teachers are now reading aloud to children
than they have in the past (LaPointe, 1986; Trelease, 1985). This
research also indicated that the primary purpose of reading aloud is to
nurture a love of reading and literature (Walmsley & Walp, 1989).

In his discussion of the results of the 1983-84 National Assessment of
Educational Progress report LaPointe (1986) pointed to the statistic that
of the fourth grade teachers reporting 50% read aloud to their students.
These teachers also reported that they read aloud four or more times per
week.

Trelease (1985) cited a study by Tom (1973) that found that more
than 60% of third and fourth grade teachers did not read aloud regularly
to their students, and by the sixth grade 74% did not read aloud regularly.
Trelease felt that this was due to the mistaken assumption made by
parents and teachers that reading to older children will result in their
losing the initiative to read on their own. He felt that parents and
teachers should read to children of all ages.
In contrast to these findings, Walmsley and Walp (1989) found that 95% of 61 kindergarten through sixth grade classroom teachers in Albany, N.Y. responding to their survey reported that they read aloud to their students, and 79% reported that they read aloud on a daily basis. These teachers read an average of 14.25 minutes per day. Nearly 50% read after lunch or recess. Additional findings indicated that most K-6 classroom teachers in their study felt that literature was an important supplement to the core reading program. They found that the "romantic" approach to literature [defined by the authors as "a child centered view of literature, where the purpose of reading was pleasure and enjoyment only and no reading skills instruction should accompany the reading" (p.2)] predominated among the teachers surveyed. The nearly unanimous stated purpose for reading aloud was one of nurturing a love of reading. Other purposes included: exposing children to books and authors, broadening reading horizons, and modeling good reading. A few teachers used read alouds to develop particular skills such as listening comprehension, developing vocabulary and improving various comprehension skills such as sequencing, but for the most part if discussions were held after a reading they were mostly as a result of students' questions rather than as a result of a pre-determined plan on the part of the teachers. Most teachers only introduced the author and illustrator, or reviewed what had been read at the last session at the beginning of a story session. The student's comprehension of the material was for the most part not assessed nor were follow up
activities regularly assigned. Most teachers read to the whole class with informality being stressed.

Most teachers read full length books that were selected on the recommendation of fellow teachers, librarian or the teachers' own children. Few cited specific reasons for selecting books (such as illustrations, language used, or books children wouldn't select on their own). High quality seemed to be the only criterion for the selection of literature. Only a few teachers considered the connections to topics being taught or discussed in the classroom as a criterion for selecting material.

In a survey of 113 kindergarten through sixth grade classroom teachers in a midwestern community conducted by Stahlschmidt and Johnson (1984) 109 or 96.5% reported that they read aloud to their students. Of these, approximately 93% indicated that they read daily or two or three times per week. Most teachers (97.2) reported that they used their own knowledge when selecting books to read. Using books recommended by a librarian was second (73.4). The reasons reported for selecting the books read aloud were: high interest 94.5%, theme 58.7%, curriculum related 46.8%, author illustrator 46.8% and illustrations 35%.

Sword (1982) in her review of literature on read-aloud programs cited a study by Tom (1969) in which it was found that 94% of the books read aloud by teachers in the intermediate grades was fiction. Of this 50% was realistic fiction, 22% was biography, 13% was fantasy,
8% was folk literature, 3% was humor and 1% was science fiction. Twenty percent of all prose read to the intermediate grades was classified as classics. The kindergarten study cited (Sword, 1979) indicated that kindergarten teachers also read more fiction (71%). Of this 71%, 69% was fantasy, 19% realistic and 13% folk literature. Nonfiction was read 14% of the time and “mood” books 6%. In the intermediate study 85% of the teachers used personal knowledge as a basis for selecting books. The kindergarten study indicated that 100% of the teachers used personal knowledge in selecting books.

Mason and Blanton (1971) surveyed the reading interests of 180 pre-school children. They found that most (171) of the children enjoyed hearing stories read aloud. A large percentage also expressed a preference for the type of story to which they enjoyed listening. The types of stories that the children expressed most interest in were, fairy tales, animal stories, story books, and stories about machines. They also found that the children liked to read the same story that they most liked to hear. Mason and Blanton concluded that perhaps children should routinely hear stories that will later be a part of their reading instruction.

Mendoza (1985) reported on a survey that was administered to 520 children ranging in age from 5 to 13. The results showed that 94% of K-3 grade students and 74% of the 4-6 grade students enjoy listening to literature. When asked what they liked to know before a book is read to them 51% of the primary and 17% of the intermediate students wanted
to learn the author's name, sixty percent of the K-3 students and 32% of the 4-6 students wanted to hear a summary of the story, 48% of the K-3 and 22% of the 4-6 students wanted to know what questions were going to be asked, and 48% of the primary students and 25% of the intermediate students wanted a character description. "Nothing" was chosen by only 7% of the K-3 grade students and by 23% of the 4-6 grade students. A large percentage of both groups (76% of K-3 and 69% of 4-6) enjoyed talking about a book after hearing it. The final question asked: "What is the best thing about reading to you?" to which one student replied, "If your eyes aren't busy, your imagination is free to roam" (p. 527).

Summary

The results of the studies examined in this chapter show that reading aloud in the classroom can have a definite impact on children's attitudes towards and achievement in reading (Anderson et al., 1985; Chomsky, 1972; Clark, 1978; Cohen, 1968; Durkin, 1966; Elley, 1989; Lomax, 1976; Martinez, 1983; Mason & Blanton, 1971; Morrow, 1983, 1988; Morrow & Smith, 1990; Phillips & McNaughton, 1990; Schickendanz, 1981; Snow & Goldfield, 1983; Wells, 1986; Yaden, 1988). Reading aloud can motivate children to learn to read (Clark, 1976; Durkin, 1966). It can help to develop their language structures (Chomsky, 1972). Reading aloud to children can also improve children's comprehension of stories (Martinez, 1983; Morrow, 1985, 1988, Schickendanz, 1978; Teale, 1984) by increasing their vocabulary (Cohen,
Research also indicated that the role of the adult as a role model and guide to children's comprehension during the read-aloud activity cannot be ignored (Peterman, 1988; Roser & Martinez, 1985; Snow & Goldfield, 1983; Teale, 1984). "Adult interaction with children is necessary if children are to learn about written language" (Schickendanz, 1978, p. 23). The active and interactive involvement of adults, in the studies cited in this chapter, provided children with models of adult reading behaviors such as predicting, relating stories to life experiences, and making inferences. The adults in these studies were also able to clarify and expand the children's knowledge, explain vocabulary, and model fluent oral reading, and offer praise (Altwerger et al., 1985; Elley, 1989; Martinez, 1983; Morrow, 1988; Roser & Martinez, 1985; Teale, 1984).

Research by Martinez and Teale (1988), Morrow (1988), Yaden (1988), Yaden et al. (1990) showed that not only is it important to read aloud to children, but it is important to re-read the same stories to them, and then to make the stories available to children for their own reading. Children often seek out for their own reading stories that have been read to them (Mason & Blanton, 1971; Martinez & Teale, 1988).

Research into the classroom practices of reading aloud has indicated that more teachers are reading aloud to their students today.
than they did fifteen years ago (LaPointe, 1986; Stahlschmidt & Johnson, 1984; Trelease, 1985; Walmsley & Walp, 1989). Research (Walmsley & Walp, 1989) has also indicated that the primary purpose for reading aloud in the classroom is one of fostering a love of reading and literature. The teachers they interviewed failed to combine activities designed to increase comprehension or reading achievement with their story times.

Children of all ages enjoy listening to stories. This was presented in the research findings of Mason & Blanton (1971) and Mendoza (1985). Their research findings also indicated that children often sought out the same stories that they had heard to read on their own.

In conclusion, these studies have shown that reading aloud to children can be an easy, efficient, enjoyable learning experience for children of all ages, and as such it should be a part of every school day.
Chapter III

Design

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the read-aloud practices of regular classroom teachers in the elementary grades. This study focused on how much time is allocated to the read-aloud activity, and what instructional activities accompany it in relation to the teachers' stated philosophies of reading instruction and to grade level taught.

Questions

1. What are the read-aloud practices of elementary school teachers?
2. Are there any trends evident between the different grade levels taught and: 1) stated purposes for reading aloud, 2) activities associated with reading aloud, 3) amount of time spent reading aloud, 4) types of materials selected for reading aloud?
3. Are there any trends evident between teachers' stated philosophies of reading instruction and: 1) stated purposes for reading aloud, 2) activities associated with reading aloud, 3) amount of time spent reading aloud?

**Methodology**

**Subjects**

The subjects of this study were 31 regular classroom teachers in a number of different school districts in western New York. Six were kindergarten teachers, eight were first grade teachers, five were second grade teachers, six were third grade teachers, four were fourth grade teachers, and two were fifth grade teachers.

**Materials**

The material used in this study was the questionnaire entitled "Read Aloud Practices" (Appendix A) designed by the researcher. The questionnaire included questions on individual backgrounds as well as questions designed to elicit classroom read-aloud practices.
**Procedure**

The questionnaire was given to participants in a reading masters thesis seminar to distribute in their respective schools to colleagues whom they felt would be willing to participate in this study. The only instruction given them regarding the distribution was to only distribute it to regular classroom teachers. The questionnaire was also distributed by the researcher to colleagues.

**Analysis**

The responses of the returned questionnaires were tallied and recorded according to the frequency and similarity of responses. A descriptive analysis was then made of all responses.

**Summary**

A questionnaire designed to elicit the read-aloud practices found in elementary school classrooms was distributed to sixty regular classroom teachers in various elementary schools. The responses were then tallied and recorded according to the frequency and similarity of the responses.
The purposes for reading aloud, the activities associated with the read-aloud event and materials that were read aloud were noted and examined in relation to the teachers' philosophies of reading instruction and grade level taught. The habits and practices of these teachers were then categorized and descriptively analyzed.
Chapter IV

Analysis of the Data

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the read aloud practices of regular classroom teachers in the elementary grades. This study focused on how much time is allocated to the read-aloud activity, and what instructional activities accompany it in relation to the teachers' stated philosophies of reading instruction and to grade level taught.

Analysis of the Responses to the Questionnaire

This study examined the read aloud practices of thirty-one elementary school teachers. Six kindergarten, 8 first grade, 5 second grade, 6 third grade, 4 fourth grade and 2 fifth grade teachers responded to a questionnaire designed by the researcher. The responses were recorded, tallied and categorized according to the frequency of the responses. It is important to note that in some cases the totals do not equal 100% as some
teachers responded with more than one answer, and in others teachers may not have responded at all. In addition, kindergarten teachers may have responded in two different ways for their morning classes and their afternoon classes. In all cases totals have been rounded to the nearest whole percent.

The analysis of the responses will be presented in three sections. One section will be devoted to each of the three research questions addressed in this study.

**Question 1**

1. What are the read aloud habits of elementary school teachers?

In this section a number of the questions from the questionnaire will be stated and data pertaining to the question analyzed.

**Do you read aloud to your students?**

The responses to this question were categorized into two categories: minutes per day (mpd) and days per week.

One hundred percent of the teachers responding to this study read aloud to their students at least three times per week. The majority of the
teachers (71%) read aloud for 15-30 mpd. Four teachers (13%) read for 0-15 mpd and two kindergarten teachers (6%) read for 30-45 mpd. Three teachers, a third, a fourth and a fifth grade, (9%) read three to four times per week for 10-20 minutes at a time. A total of 78% of the teachers read for more than 15 minutes per day.

To what size group do you usually read?

Responses were placed in four categories: one to one, small (3-7), large group, and other.

One hundred percent of the teachers read to a large group either solely or in addition to other size groups. Sixty-eight percent of the teachers read only to a large or classroom size group. Two kindergarten, two first grade and three third grade teachers (23%) read to large groups and occasionally to small (3-7 children) size groups. A kindergarten and a first grade teacher read to groups of all sizes, and one second grade teacher read to a classroom size group, and to a multiclass sized group.

What time of day do you usually read aloud?

The responses to this question were categorized into nine categories
and ranked according to the frequency of the responses. They are presented in Appendix B.

The times of day that the read aloud activity occurred varied. The majority (46%) read after lunch. Forty percent read mid-morning. Other times included mid-afternoon (20%), before lunch (16%), end of the day (13%), various times (14%), first thing in the morning (10%), after specials (6%) and during reading instruction (3%).

In the primary grades the read aloud activity was evenly split between the morning and afternoons (39% read in the morning and 42% read in the afternoon.) In the intermediate grades, most (32%) of the teachers read in the afternoon.

Where and how do you usually read to your students?

The responding teachers described nine aspects of the physical read aloud situation. Ninety percent of the teachers read to students while they were surrounded by students seated on the rug or floor. Twelve percent of the teachers read while students are seated at their desks. Three of these four teachers were at the intermediate level, one taught at
the primary level. Forty-five percent of the teachers reported that they always share illustrations with the children if the book contains them. Twenty-three percent reported using props as they read. Twelve percent of the teachers wrote that they occasionally read with the lights off. Six percent stated that they play classical music in the background, and 6% allow children to eat while they read. Three primary teachers (9%) involved the students in the reading, by allowing them to "help" read words, by having them turn the pages, or by allowing them to sing, chant, or act out parts of the story. A third grade teacher kept an easel or chart paper nearby in order to clarify a concept or a vocabulary word. For the most part nearly all the teachers tried to provide a comfortable setting in order to maximize the listeners' enjoyment.

What types of materials do you usually read?

The following responses were categorized according to the percentages of teachers that read each type of book, and how often they read that type of material. See Table 1.

The teachers responding all reported using a wide variety of
materials when reading aloud to their students. The most popular type of 
material was picture story books. Ninety-seven percent of the teachers 
reported reading this type of material always or sometimes. Sixteen 
percent of the teachers always read poetry. Seventy-four percent 
sometimes read poetry to their classes, while 9% responded that they 
seldom did. This was the only category in which there were no "never" 
responses. Forty-eight percent of the teachers reported reading wordless 
books some of the time, while 52% reported that they seldom or never read 
this type of book. Realistic fiction was the most popular (12% always, 
and 58% sometimes) type of fiction read. Animal fiction was sometimes 
read by 61% and seldom read by 9% and never read by 23%. Historical 
fiction was sometimes read by 52% of the teachers and seldom or never 
read by 42%. Fantasy fiction was sometimes read by 55% of the teachers, 
seldom read by 6% and never read by 36%. Nonfiction was sometimes read 
by 71% of the teachers, while 23% responded that they seldom or never 
read this type of book. Autobiographies or biographies were sometimes 
read by 58% of the teachers. Thirty-six percent responded that they 
seldom or never read this type of book.
Table 1

Types of Material and Percentages of Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wordless</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture Story</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic Fiction</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Fiction</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy Fiction</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Fiction</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-fiction</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto/biography</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=31
How and why do you select materials?

The teachers responding use a variety of resources for selecting the books they use. Thirty-six percent based their selections on children's selection or on children's proven interest. Twenty-three percent used the advice of librarians or colleagues. Nineteen percent read books selected on the basis of teacher interest. Twelve percent found books by browsing in libraries or in book stores. Nine percent used literature lists or their own knowledge. Three percent reported selecting material based on the age appropriateness of the material.

The teachers listed five basic reasons for selecting the material that they do. Fifty-eight percent of the teachers reported selecting material based on curriculum content. Thirty-nine percent reported using seasonal, author, or theme based material. Twenty-nine percent chose literature for enjoyment, and to expose children to a variety of quality literature. Six percent chose stories that co-ordinate with their basal readers.

Forty-seven percent of the primary teachers chose on the basis of
curriculum content, and 36% chose based on seasonal/theme. In the intermediate grades, teachers selected material primarily on curriculum content (42%) and seasonal/theme (42%).

**Why do you read aloud?**

Purposes for reading aloud were divided into sixteen categories and are present in rank order in Table 2.

The teachers had many and varied purposes for reading aloud in their classrooms, and most stated more than one purpose. The most prevalent purpose was in order to model reading for the students (48%). The next most prevalent purpose was for enjoyment (45%). Providing a rich literature background, especially of materials the students were unable to read on their own, was listed by 42%. Nineteen percent read aloud to enrich their basal programs. Other purposes for reading aloud included: teaching or reinforcing skills (12%), providing exposure to new ideas or information (9%), improving listening comprehension (9%), enabling students to hear language (9%), encouraging students to read on their own (9%), encouraging appreciation of literature (6%), and developing concepts
(6%). Purposes that were listed by 3% each were: to read to children that had not been read to at home, to familiarize students with book language, to reinforce auditory learners, and to help students understand content area materials.
Table 2
Purposes for Reading Aloud

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modeling</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide literature background</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrich basal program</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching/reinforcing skills</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to new ideas/information</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve listening skills</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulate students’ own reading</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To hear language</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To develop concepts</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation of literature</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children not read to in home</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop vocabulary</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach book language</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinforce auditory learners</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help understanding of content materials</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What kinds of pre-or post-reading activities do you engage in?

The responses were divided into 22 categories and are presented in rank order in Appendix C.

The teachers responding to this study listed many and varied activities that they engaged in before, during, and after the read aloud session. One hundred percent of the teachers reported that they did a pre-or post-reading activity. Ninety-four percent did both pre-reading and post-reading activities. Six percent (1 second grade and 1 fifth grade) only did post-reading activities. One teacher misunderstood the question and this answer has not been considered here.

The most prevalent pre-reading activity was making predictions about the story (47%). This was followed by discussion of author/illustrator (23%), discussion or checking of students' prior knowledge (20%), and setting purposes for the reading (20%). Six percent reported that they reviewed the previous day's material, and six percent mentioned discussing or instructing children in book knowledge. Three
percent of the teachers mentioned doing each of the following: doing a book talk, discussing setting, discussing genre, and encouraging students to use imagery as they listened.

The most prevalent post-reading activity, mentioned by 55% of the teachers, was a writing and/or drawing activity. This activity included reader response type writing and drawing, creative writing or drawing, and projects. Writing activities for the most part appeared in the second grade and continued through the fifth grade. Drawing activities were mostly confined to kindergarten through third grade. The second most mentioned activity was questioning or discussion (53%). Twenty-six percent engaged in activities that related the reading to content areas. Twenty percent compared the new reading to previously read material. Sixteen percent did vocabulary instruction or a related skill activity, and ten percent did role playing or re-telling. The following activities were mentioned by 3% each: doing a cloze activity, re-reading, comparing of story to students' writing, and verifying predictions.

Thirteen percent stated that although they did do some activities
before, during, and after the read aloud, their main purpose for reading was for enjoyment.

**Do you ever re-read the same story?**

(See Appendix D.)

Sixteen percent of the primary grade teachers always re-read a story to their students. Seventy-four percent sometimes re-read a story. Ten percent of teachers at the primary level seldom re-read a story, and 5% never did. At the intermediate level 0% always re-read a story, while 25% sometimes did. Fifty-eight percent seldom re-read a story and 17% never re-read a story.

**Do students seek out books that you have read to them for their own reading?**

(See Appendix E.)

One hundred percent of the teachers reported that their students always or sometimes sought out the same book that had been read to them for their own reading. Sixty-three percent of the primary teachers reported that their students always seek out the same materials, and 37%
reported that they sometimes do. At the intermediate level 25% of the students always seek out the same materials, while 75% sometimes do.

**Do your students enjoy hearing stories read aloud?**

Ninety percent of the teachers reported that their students “love it!” Twelve percent reported that their students usually liked it, and one teacher wrote that s/he felt this was due more to the type of material being read than to dislike of the activity itself.

**Question 2**

2. Are there any trends evident between the different grade levels taught and: 1) stated purposes for reading aloud, 2) activities associated with reading aloud, 3) amount of time spent reading aloud, 4) types of material selected for reading aloud.

For the purposes of this study, a response rate of 75% or more indicates a trend.

**Comparison of grade level taught and purposes for reading aloud.**

The purposes stated by the respondents were placed in 15 categories
and charted according to the number of teachers at each grade level that state a given purpose. See Table 3.

Table 3
Comparison of Grade Levels and Purposes for Reading Aloud

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modeling</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to Literature</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enrich basal program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expose to new ideas or information</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage students' own reading</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve listening comprehension</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach or reinforce skills</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop concepts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To hear language</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature appreciation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarize with book language</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To reinforce auditory learners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not read to in home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The thirty-one teachers responding to the questionnaire had many and varied purposes for reading aloud. Many of the teachers had multiple purposes for reading aloud. The most frequently stated purposes that appeared across nearly all grade levels were modeling, which appeared in the responses of teachers in the first through fifth grades, enjoyment which appeared in grades K-3, and providing a rich literature background which appeared in grades 1-4.

The kindergarten teachers stated five basic purposes for reading aloud to their students. Fifty percent read for enjoyment. Thirty-three percent read to develop concepts, or to encourage appreciation of literature. Sixteen percent listed hearing oral language, enriching basal program, and reading to children not read to at home.

The first grade teachers also listed five reasons for reading aloud. Enjoyment and modeling were listed by 62% of the teachers. Exposing students to literature was mentioned by 50%. Twenty-five percent mentioned enriching their basal programs, and 12% listed teaching or reinforcing skills, and 12% listed exposing students to new ideas or information.
In the second grade there were eight purposes stated for reading aloud. Exposing students to literature was listed by 40%. Forty percent also stated improving listening comprehension, and enriching their basal programs. Twenty percent listed enjoyment, modeling, teaching or reinforcing skills, developing concepts, hearing oral language, familiarizing students with book language, and exposing students to new ideas or information.

The third grade teachers listed five purposes for reading aloud. Eighty-three percent read to their students for enjoyment. Sixty-six percent listed modeling, and exposing students to literature. Sixteen percent listed encouraging students in their own reading, enriching the basal program, and exposing students to new ideas or information.

One hundred percent of the teachers at the fourth grade level read aloud in order to provide a model for their students. Seventy-five percent read aloud in order to expose their students to a wide range of literature. Twenty-five percent listed encouraging students in their own reading, improving listening comprehension, teaching or reinforcing skills,
exposing students to new ideas, and reinforcing auditory learners.

The fifth grade teachers had three reasons for reading aloud to their students. One teacher responded that s/he read aloud to provide an opportunity for students to hear oral language, and to provide a background in literature. The other teacher read aloud to encourage students to read on their own.

The only trends evident are that third grade teachers read aloud to provide enjoyment for their students, and fourth grade teachers read aloud to model reading for their students. No other trends were evident when comparing grade levels and purposes for reading.

Comparison of grade levels and activities.

The pre- and post-reading activities were categorized and the numbers of teachers at each grade level engaging in that activity were listed. See Table 4.
Table 4
Comparison of Grade Levels and Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>5th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prediction</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author/illustrator</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish set</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior knowledge</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss setting</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book knowledge</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story genre</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Review</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book talk</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use imagery</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing/art</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relate to theme/content</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing/contrasting</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character/story webs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill activity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role play/re-tell</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloze activity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-read</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relate to own writing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The thirty-one teachers responding all listed a number of activities that they conduct in conjunction with the read aloud activity. By grade level the responses were as follows:

In kindergarten, 83% of the teachers had children make predictions about the story. Forty-eight percent discussed students’ prior knowledge. Sixteen percent discussed the author and/or illustrator. In the post-reading categories, 83% held discussions. Fifty percent did a writing and/or art activity. Forty-eight percent constructed story or character webs. Thirty-two percent did role playing or re-telling, and 16% did a skill activity, related the reading to a theme or content area, and re-read the story.

In first grade, 37% of the teachers engaged in predicting, discussing the author/illustrator, and discussing prior knowledge as pre-reading activities. Other pre-reading activities included: establishing set (24%), discussing setting (12%), and checking for book knowledge (12%). In the post-reading categories, 62% of the teachers held discussions. Fifty percent did a related writing and/or art activity.
Twenty-four percent related the reading to a theme or content area, and 24% compared the new story to previously read material. The following activities were done by 12% each: a related skill activity, a project, and a verification of predictions.

Of the five second grade teachers responding, 40% listed making predictions as a pre-reading activity. Other activities listed were discussion of author/illustrator (20%), establishing a set (20%), and describing the type of genre (20%). Post-reading activities included doing a writing and/or art activity (60%), holding a discussion (40%), doing a skill activity (40%), relating reading to theme or content (40%), comparing or contrasting stories (40%), and doing a vocabulary activity (40%). Twenty percent did a cloze activity.

In the third grade, pre-reading activities consisted of establishing a purpose for the reading (32%), reviewing the previous day's reading (32%), predicting (16%), discussing author/illustrator (16%), doing a book talk (16%), and encouraging the children in using imagery (16%). Doing a writing and/or drawing activity (50%), constructing story or character webs
(50%), and discussing vocabulary (50%) were the post-reading activities engaged in by most third grade teachers. Other activities included: holding discussions (33%), role playing (16%), doing a skill activity (16%), relating material to content areas or theme (16%), comparing to other stories (16%), projects (16%), and relating story to own writing (16%).

Asking students to make predictions was the most prevalent pre-reading activity at the fourth grade level (75%). Activities that were mentioned by 25% each were discussing author/illustrator, establishing set, and checking for book knowledge. There were six post-reading activities listed by the teachers. Seventy-five percent mentioned doing a related writing and/or art activity. Fifty percent listed holding discussions, relating material to theme or content. Twenty-five percent listed doing story or character webs, and comparing and contrasting works of literature.

At the fifth grade level the only activity mentioned that occurred in conjunction with the read aloud was a writing exercise (50%). The other teacher's response did not relate to reading aloud.
The most common pre-reading activities that appeared across four grade levels were making predictions, which appeared in grades K-4, and discussing the author or illustrator, which also appeared in grades K-4. A post-reading activity that was common to all grade levels was doing a writing and/or art activity. Two activities that appeared in grade K-4 were holding discussions and relating reading to theme or content. Trends that were evident were that kindergarten teachers tend to use predicting and discussion as read aloud activities, and fourth grade teachers use predicting and writing as conjunctive activities.

**Comparison of grade levels and time spent reading aloud.**

The amount of time spent reading aloud was divided into three categories: 0-15 minutes per day (mpd), 15-30 mpd, and 30-45 mpd.

Sixty-six percent of the teachers in kindergarten read aloud for a total of 15-30 minutes per day (mpd). Thirty-three percent of the kindergarten teachers read for 30-40 mpd. In first grade, 88% read for 15-30 mpd and 12% read for 0-15 mpd. In the second grade, 100% read for 15-10 mpd. Fifty percent of the third grade teachers read for 15-30 mpd.
while 33% read for 0-15 mpd. One third grade teacher (16%) read three times a week for 15-30 minutes. Seventy-five percent of the fourth grade teachers read for 15-30 mpd. One teacher (25%) at this level read three times a week for 15-30 minutes. In fifth grade, one teacher (50%) read daily for 0-15 minutes and one read three times a week for 15-30 minutes. These results indicate that primary teachers read to their students for at least 15 minutes on a daily basis. At the intermediate level, 75% or less read to their students on a daily basis, and they tend to read to them for shorter periods of time.

Comparison of grade level and materials used.

Responses were categorized according to the types of material and the amount of time each is used at the various grade levels. See Table 5.
Table 5

Types of Material Read At Each Grade Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>ST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wordless</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story books</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic Fiction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Fiction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fantasy Fiction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Animal Fiction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-fiction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A= Always
ST= Sometimes
SD= Seldom
N= Never
Teachers in all the grade levels used a wide variety of literature to read aloud. Poetry was one of the most widely read type of material with 83% of the kindergarten, 88% of the first grade, 100% of the second grade, 83% of the third grade, 100% of the fourth grade and 100% of the fifth grade teachers always or sometimes using it in their classrooms. None of the teachers reported that they "never" read poetry. Story picture books were also popular across the grade levels. Only one teacher (5th grade) reported that s/he never read this type of book. All other teachers reported always or sometimes using this type of book.

In kindergarten, wordless books, picture story books, and poetry were always or sometimes used by 83% of the teachers. Non-fiction was always or sometimes read by 67%. The other categories of fiction and biography were split, with 50% always or sometimes using them, and 50% seldom or never using them.

Story picture books, animal fiction, non-fiction, and poetry were always or sometimes used by 75% or more of the first grade teachers. Seventy-five percent of the teachers seldom or never used historical
fiction. Wordless books, realistic fiction, fantasy fiction and biographies were split equally (50-62%) between those who used them and those who did not.

In second grade, more than 80% of the teachers always or sometimes read story picture books, realistic fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. The other categories were split (40-60%) between those teachers who always or sometimes read them and those who seldom or never did.

In third grade, no teacher reported “never” reading any of the different types of books, and only one reported using story books “always.” The rest of the responses were divided between “sometimes” and “seldom.” The types that were seldom read were wordless (66%), historical fiction (32%), non-fiction (32%), biography (17%), and poetry (17%). The most popular types of stories read by 100% of the teachers always or sometimes at this level were: story books, realistic fiction, fantasy fiction, and animal fiction. Types of books that were read by 83% of the teachers were biography and poetry.

In the fourth grade only one teacher chose the “always” category,
and this was for story books. Most of the choices the teachers made were "sometimes" or "never." Seventy-five percent or more of the teachers at the fourth grade level sometimes read story books, realistic fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. Seventy-five percent seldom or never read wordless books. The categories of historical fiction, fantasy, biography, and animal were divided equally (50%) between those that sometimes used them and those that seldom or never used them.

One hundred percent of the fifth grade teachers sometimes read historical fiction, biography, and poetry. They never read wordless books or fantasy. Realistic fiction was read always by 50% and sometimes by 50%. The categories of story book, animal and non-fiction were split 50-50 between sometimes and never, with one respondent reporting reading all three and the other reporting never reading all three.

These results indicate that at the primary level, teachers tend to read picture story books, poetry and non-fiction type books. At the intermediate level, teachers tend to read realistic fiction and poetry.
Question 3

3. Are there any trends evident between teachers' stated philosophies of teaching reading and: 1) stated purposes for reading aloud, 2) activities associated with reading aloud, 3) amount of time spent reading aloud?

Comparison of philosophies and purposes for reading aloud.

Philosophies were divided into 5 categories. Level 1 indicated low use of literature in the classroom, or a skill based program, level 2 indicated low average use, level 3 indicated average use, level 4 indicated high average use, and level 5 indicated high use of literature, or a literature based classroom. The purposes were divided into 15 categories. The numbers of teachers at each level, and the purposes that they stated are presented in Table 6.

No teachers reported being at level 1. Three teachers considered themselves level 2. Two teachers reported being at level 3. There were twelve teachers at level 4, and fourteen teachers at level 5.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philosophy</th>
<th>1 (n=0)</th>
<th>2 (n=3)</th>
<th>3 (n=2)</th>
<th>4 (n=12)</th>
<th>5 (n=14)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modeling</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exposure to literature</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enrich basal program</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expose to new ideas or information</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage students' own reading</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve listening comprehension</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach or reinforce skills</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop concepts</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>To hear language</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Familiarize with book language</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>To reinforce auditory learners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not read to in home</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At level two, 66% of the teachers listed modeling as their purpose for reading aloud. Thirty-three percent listed providing information, enjoyment, and encouraging students to read on their own as purposes.

One hundred percent of the teachers rating themselves a level 3 reported reading aloud to provide enjoyment. Fifty percent read aloud to reinforce skills, to provide a rich literature background, to provide information, or to encourage appreciation of literature.

At level four, 50% read aloud to provide students with a rich background in literature, and 50% wanted to enrich their basal programs. Forty-one percent of the teachers at this level read aloud to provide enjoyment. Thirty-three percent read aloud to model reading for their students. Twenty-five percent read aloud so that students might hear language. Seventeen percent wanted to use the read aloud to improve listening comprehension. Eight percent reported reading aloud to develop concepts, to provide information, to develop vocabulary, to encourage students to read on own, to familiarize students with book language, and to read to students not read to in the home.

Of the teachers rating themselves a level five, 64% read aloud to model reading for their students. Forty-two percent read aloud for enjoyment, and to provide a rich literature background. Fourteen percent used the read aloud to reinforce skills and to develop concepts. Seven percent reported reading aloud to provide information, to improve listening skills, to encourage appreciation of literature, to encourage
students to read on their own, and to reinforce auditory learners.

There was only one trend evident in these statistics. Teachers who rated themselves average in their use of literature in the classroom read aloud for enjoyment. There was an indication, however, that teachers at the highest two levels have more purposes for reading aloud than do those teachers at the lower levels.

Comparison of philosophies and read aloud activities.
The activities listed by the teachers were categorized into 22 categories. The philosophies were divided into 5 levels. The numbers of teachers at each level listing each activity are presented in Table 7.
### Table 7
Comparison of Philosophies and Read Aloud Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>1 (n=0)</th>
<th>2 (n=3)</th>
<th>3 (n=2)</th>
<th>4 (n=12)</th>
<th>5 (n=14)</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-Reading</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss prior knowledge</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set Purpose</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author/Illustrator</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making predictions</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book talk</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss book knowledge</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss setting</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss genre</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Post-Reading</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing/Drawing</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>Vocabulary exercise</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relate to Content</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role play</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character/story webs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparing to other books</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Skill activity</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Cloze</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Re-read</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compare to students writing</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verify predictions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
There were only two activities that appeared in all four levels (2-5). Teachers discussed students background and prior knowledge as a pre-reading activity at all levels, and held discussion after reading at all levels.

Of the teachers rating themselves as level two, 33% had children make predictions about the reading and 33% discussed children's background knowledge as pre-reading activities. Sixty-six percent held discussions during the post reading period. Thirty-three percent did a writing and/or drawing activity, and 33% did a vocabulary activity.

In the average (level 3) category, 100% discussed prior knowledge, and 50% percent discussed the author/illustrator, set purpose, and discussed genre as pre-reading activities. One hundred percent listed holding discussions as a post-reading activity. This was the only post-reading activity mentioned at this level.

Fifty percent of those teachers professing a high average use of literature in the classroom listed making predictions as a pre-reading activity. Twenty-five percent discussed the author/illustrator.
percent set purpose, discussed prior knowledge, or discussed genre as pre-reading activities. Sixty-six percent of teachers in this category did a post-reading writing and/or drawing activity. Sixty-six percent also held discussions. Forty-one percent related the material to a content area or theme/. Thirty-three percent constructed character or story webs. Seventeen percent did a vocabulary exercise, or compared story to previously read material. Eight percent did a role play, or a skill activity.

At the fifth level, 49% made predictions as a pre-reading exercise. Twenty-eight percent mentioned setting purpose prior to reading. Twenty-one percent discussed the author/illustrator. Fourteen percent listed review, discussing prior knowledge and discussing book knowledge as pre-reading activities. Seven percent mentioned doing a book talk, and doing an imagery exercise as pre-reading activities. Fifty-seven percent did a post-reading writing and/or drawing activity. Thirty-five percent did a skill activity. Twenty-eight percent held discussions, and related story to other stories read. Twenty-one percent related the reading to content areas or theme, did role plays, or did character or story webs.
Fourteen percent did a vocabulary activity. Seven percent did a cloze exercise, re-read, compared story to students' writing, or verified predictions as post-reading activities.

Two trends are evident here. One is that teachers who consider themselves as average literature users tend to use discussion of prior knowledge as a pre-reading activity. The other is that the same teachers use discussion as a post-reading activity. Other indications are that no matter one's philosophy, discussing prior knowledge and holding discussions are popular read aloud activities.

**Comparison of philosophy and amount of time spent reading.**

The times were divided into three categories: 0-15 minutes per day (mpd), 15-30 mpd and 30-45 mpd.

At level two, 66% of the teachers read for 15-30 mpd. One teacher (33%) read three times per week for 15-30 minutes each time. At level three 100% of the teachers read for 15-30 mpd. Fifty percent of the teachers in level 4 read for 15-30 mpd. Twenty-four percent read for
0-15 mpd, and 8% read for 30-45 mpd. Two teachers (16%) at this level read 3 times per week for 15-30 minutes at a time. At level five, 71% of the teachers read for 15-30 mpd. Twenty-one percent read for 0-15 mpd, and 7% read for 30-45 mpd.

Only one trend was evident in these statistics, that teachers whose use of literature in the classroom is categorized as average read aloud to their students daily for 15-30 minutes. Other indications are that the majority of teachers of all philosophies tend to read aloud daily for 15-30 minutes. It is interesting to note however, that three teachers who rated themselves as high average literature users and three teachers who rated themselves as high or exclusive literature users only read to their students for less than 15 minutes per day, and two teachers who rated themselves as high average users only read three times per week.

**Summary**

The analysis of the data of this research was organized according to
the three questions posed by the researcher. The responses to the questionnaire were recorded, tallied and categorically arranged, tabulated and rank ordered in the accompanying tables and appendices.

The results of Question 1 revealed that one hundred percent of the teachers responding read aloud to their classes at least three times per week, and the majority read daily for 15-30 minutes per day. They usually read to a large group. There was no clear trend as to the time of day that the read aloud activity occurred, although the teachers at the intermediate level tended to read in the afternoon. For the most part, the teachers provide a comfortable setting for the read aloud and the trend was to have students seated on the floor around the teacher. The most popular types of reading material were story books and poetry. The majority (58%) of the teachers selected material based on curriculum content and 37% chose according to theme or author/illustrator.

Although there was no clear trend, most teachers read aloud in order to model for their students. The second most stated purpose for reading aloud was for enjoyment. Teachers also read aloud to provide a rich
literature background for their students.

A clear trend, with 100% of the teachers responding was doing a pre-reading activity. The most commonly stated was having children make predictions about the reading. Ninety-four percent of the teachers reported doing a post-reading activity. The most common activity being a writing and/or art activity. Discussion was the second most popular post-reading activity.

More primary teachers re-read a story than did intermediate level teachers. One hundred percent of the teachers reported that students, at least sometimes, sought out material that had been read for their own reading. Ninety percent of the teachers reported that their students love to hear stories read aloud.

The results of Question 2 revealed that third grade teachers read aloud for enjoyment, and most fourth grade teachers (and 75% of the intermediate level teachers) read aloud to model reading for their students. No purposes for reading aloud were common to all grade levels.

Two trends were evident when comparing activities and grade
levels. Kindergarten teachers tend to use predicting and discussion as read aloud activities, and fourth grade teachers use predicting and writing as activities.

Results indicated that primary teachers read aloud to their students for at least fifteen minutes daily. At the intermediate level, 75% read aloud to their students, but tend to do so for shorter periods of time.

Teachers at all the grade levels used a wide variety of material with picture story books, and poetry being the most popular choices. At the primary levels teachers read story books, poetry and non-fiction. At the intermediate level they read realistic fiction and poetry.

The results of Question 3 revealed that teachers who rate themselves as average uses of literature in the classroom read aloud for enjoyment. There were no other trends evident when comparing philosophy and purposes.

Two trends were evident when comparing philosophies and activities. One is that teachers who consider themselves average users of literature in the classroom tend to use discussion of prior knowledge as a
pre-reading activity, and the second is that these same teachers use
discussion as a post-reading activity.

When comparing philosophies and the amount of time spent reading
aloud only one trend was evident. Teachers who consider themselves
average users of literature in the classroom read aloud for 15-30 minutes
per day. Two facts that stood out were that three teachers who rated
themselves as high average literature users and three teachers who rated
themselves as high or exclusive literature users only read to their
students for less than 15 minutes per day, and two teachers who rated
themselves as high average users only read three times per week.
Chapter V

Conclusion and Implications

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the read-aloud practices of regular classroom teachers in the elementary grades. This study focuses on how much time is allocated to the read-aloud activity, and what instructional activities accompany it in relation to the teachers' stated philosophies of reading instruction and to grade level taught.

Conclusions

Are teachers today more aware of the importance of reading aloud in the classroom? Eighty-four percent of the teachers responding to this study reported that they use literature based language arts curricula. A number of these teachers reported having attending various inservice programs or workshops provided by their school districts, such as ELIC
(Early Literacy Inservice Course) or I WILL (Integrate Whole Language Learning). A few attended Whole Language conferences. Two had masters of science degrees in reading, and two had graduate courses in children's literature. This would indicate that these teachers should be aware of the use of literature in the classroom.

The results of this research indicate that more teachers are using literature in their classrooms and are using the read aloud activity as an important teaching/learning activity as well as an opportunity to provide students with an enjoyable experience. They are immersing their students in literature, and are engaging them in meaningful interactions with print. They are also providing the interaction, the guidance and the feedback necessary to their students in order for the students to make sense of written language.

Children enjoy hearing stories. Nearly all the teachers responding reported that their students loved the activity. Many reported that it was the best part of the day, that their students applauded and begged for more or that their students were seated and eagerly awaiting for the stories to begin. This result was similar to the findings of Mendoza (1985).
The teachers in this study incorporated into the read aloud many activities that enhanced the students' knowledge of reading such as predicting, discussion, questioning, giving or extending information, relating the reading to life experiences, discussion of story schema, and discussion of prior knowledge. This was in contrast to the findings of Walmsley and Walp (1989).

The purposes that the teachers had for reading aloud were similar to the findings of the study conducted by Walmsley and Walp (1989). They found that the main purpose for reading was one of nurturing a love of reading. Other purposes included exposing children to books and authors, broadening reading horizons, and modeling good reading. The results of this study indicate that teachers read aloud to model mature reading behaviors, to provide enjoyment and to provide a diverse literature background for their students. The influence of the whole language philosophy can be seen in these purposes.

One hundred percent of the teachers in this study read aloud to their students at least three times per week, for 15-30 minutes per
These results are similar to the findings of Walmsley and Walp (1989) and Stahlschmidt and Johnson (1984), but in contrast to the 50% of teachers reading aloud reported by LaPointe (1986) and the 40% reported by Trelease (1985). One trend that was similar to these two studies (LaPointe, 1986 and Trelease, 1985) was that intermediate grade level teachers tend to read aloud less often than primary level teachers.

The teachers in this study had very specific reasons for why they selected the material that they read aloud, in contrast to the findings of Walmsley and Walp (1989). They most often selected literature that related to a theme or to curriculum content. This may be due to the influence of the whole language philosophy on teachers and their attitudes toward the teaching of reading and the use of literature in the classroom. The majority of teachers in this study not only used literature to teach reading but integrated literature into the content areas as well. The how of the selecting in this study was similar to the findings of Sword (1982). Most of the teachers selected material on the basis of children's proven interest.

The intermediate level teachers responding to this study read
fiction (chapter) books and poetry. This was similar to the findings of Sword (1982). In contrast to Sword’s study, the primary teachers in this study read picture story books and poetry rather than fiction. These findings were not unexpected, as young children often need the aid of illustrations to help them visualize and understand what is being read. Younger children also need stories that can be read in one session.

The large majority of teachers in this study reported that their students always or sometimes seek out the same material read for their own reading. This substantiates the research findings of Mason and Blanton (1971), and Martinez and Teale (1988). These researchers concluded that the material read aloud in the classroom influences what children select to read on their own. That children select material that has been read aloud to them for their own reading may also affect the teachers’ choices of material to be read aloud. Younger children are not able to read chapter books, so this type of material is not often read aloud to them. An intermediate level teacher who wants to encourage students to read more difficult material will read chapter books.

In summary, the finding of this research indicate that many more
teachers at all levels are not only more aware of the importance of reading aloud to their students but are reading aloud more to their students. Their purposes for reading aloud reflect the findings of current research. They use predicting, questioning, setting purpose and dialogue that can improve the quality of the read aloud experience for their students. They are also incorporating many activities such as writing, sharing personal reactions, relating concepts to life experiences, doing related skill activities that have a sound research base, into the read aloud experience that extend students' knowledge not only of reading but of themselves.

Implications for the Classroom

The results of this study indicate that there is a greater awareness on the part of teachers of individual reading development, and that there is a greater enthusiasm for literature based language arts curricula. If this trend is to continue, school districts and teacher education programs need to continue to educate student teachers, and veteran teachers in children's literature and its use in the classroom.
In particular, this training should emphasize the efficient use of the read aloud activity as a teaching tool, especially at the intermediate levels and above.

Reading aloud to students is highly motivating. One hundred percent of the teachers responding reported that their students seek out material read aloud to them for their own reading. This is especially significant to the intermediate levels and higher where reading aloud tends to become a less important part of the school day. Reading aloud at this level is justified if only for the reason that all of the teachers at this level reported that their students always or sometimes sought out books read aloud for their own reading. Reading aloud is an enjoyable and efficient means of encouraging students to read on their own.

Teachers also need to be made aware of the importance of group size when reading aloud. Nearly all the teachers read exclusively to large groups when research has shown that smaller groups may be more effective if the object of the read aloud is imparting knowledge, or learning. Research has also shown that the small group may be more conducive to the students' enjoyment as all can better hear and see what
Implications for Further Research

The questionnaire is not an efficient means of gathering information. While all of the respondents to this study completed the entire questionnaire (and in many cases very enthusiastically) some of the answers were not as complete as was desired. This may be due in part to the ambiguity of some of the questions. In the effort to make the questions as easy and as less time consuming to answer as possible some meaning may have been lost, and confusion as to the purpose of the questions may have resulted. In the future, studies such as this might better be achieved through the use of observation or interviews.

The results of this study indicate that teachers' attitudes toward reading aloud in the classroom are changing. The importance of exposing children to a wide range of literature, and providing children with many and varied opportunities to interact with print is realized. If reading aloud in the classroom can have so many benefits to children as far as exposing them to literature and motivating them to read on their own,
what of the home environment? Are parents reading to their children? What are their attitudes toward reading aloud, especially towards reading aloud to older children? These are some questions that could be addressed in future research.

Summary

Thirty-one teachers responding to a questionnaire provided insights into the read aloud habits of elementary school teachers. More teachers today are incorporating the read aloud activity into every school day. They are using the read aloud to nurture a love of reading, and to provide a rich literature background for their students. As a result they are increasing their students' understanding of the written word as well as motivating students to read on their own. These classrooms, and classroom such as these that immerse their children in literature and provide meaningful interactions with print, will produce lifelong learners and lifelong readers.
References


APPENDICES
Appendix A

Read Aloud Practices Questionnaire

School District:_____________________________________________________

Grade level presently teaching:_________ Yrs. at this level:______

Class makeup: 1) Heterogeneous  2) Homogeneous

Ability level(s) of current students:_____________________________________

Reading series you are currently using:__________________________________

Coursework or training related to the use of literature in the classroom:

Indicate with an "X" where would your own personal philosophy of reading instruction would fall on this scale.

Skill 1 2 3 4 5 Literature based based 1 2 3 4 5 ("Whole Language")

Please answer the following questions as completely as possible. You may indicate NA if not applicable. Answers may be continued on the back.

1. How do you use/teach literature in the classroom?

2. Do you read aloud to your students?  Yes  No

3. Why do you or don't you read aloud to your students?

4. How often do you personally read aloud to your students? (Do not include time spent in Big Book sharing sessions, children reading aloud, or other adults reading aloud)

   Daily: ___________ minutes/day
   or
   Weekly: __________ times/week __________ minutes/session

5. What time(s) of day do you usually read to your students?
6. To what size group do you usually read?
   A. one to one
   B. small group (3-7)
   C. large group
   D. other

7. Where & how do you usually read to your students? (ex. sitting on the rug, children are at their desks, lights are off/on, children are eating, share illustrations, use special effects, etc.)

8. What kind of pre-reading or post-reading activities, if any, do you usually engage in?

9. How often do you re-read the same story to your students?
   A. Always
   B. Sometimes
   C. Seldom
   D. Never

10. What kinds of materials do you usually select to read to your students?
    Please circle how often you use a particular type of material.
    
    Wordless books
    Always	  Sometimes	  Seldom	  Never
    
    Picture story books
    Always	  Sometimes	  Seldom	  Never
    
    Fiction: (chapter books)
    
    Realistic
    Always	  Sometimes	  Seldom	  Never
    
    Historical
    Always	  Sometimes	  Seldom	  Never
    
    Fantasy/Sci.F
    Always	  Sometimes	  Seldom	  Never
    
    Animal
    Always	  Sometimes	  Seldom	  Never
    
    Nonfiction
    Always	  Sometimes	  Seldom	  Never
    
    Autobiography/biography
    Always	  Sometimes	  Seldom	  Never
    
    Poetry
    Always	  Sometimes	  Seldom	  Never
11. How and why do you usually select these materials?

12. How often do your students seek out the same materials that you read to them for their own reading?
   A. Always
   B. Sometimes
   C. Seldom
   D. Never

13. How do your students react to hearing stories read by you?
## Appendix B

### Times of Day for Reading Aloud

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<th>Time Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<td>Mid-morning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-afternoon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Before lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>End of day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Varies</td>
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</tr>
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<td>First thing in morning</td>
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<td>After specials</td>
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Appendix C

Pre- and Post-Reading Activities

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<td>Make predictions</td>
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<td>Discuss author/illustrator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss prior knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set purpose</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>Enjoyment</td>
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<td>Review</td>
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<td>Check book knowledge</td>
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<td>Do book talk</td>
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<td>Discuss setting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss genre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage use of imagery</td>
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<table>
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<th>Post-Reading</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Writing and/or art</td>
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<td>Discussion</td>
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<td>Relate to content areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Story or character</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relate to other books read</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocabulary exercise</td>
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<td>Skill activity</td>
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<td>Re-telling</td>
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<td>Cloze activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Re-read</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compare to students' writing</td>
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<td>Verify predictions</td>
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Appendix D

Comparison of Grade Levels and Amount of Time Spent Re-Reading

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<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
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### Appendix E

Comparison of Grade Levels and Amount of Time Students Seek Out Material For Their Own Reading

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<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Never</th>
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