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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF A TEACHER-RESEARCHER

BY

ELAINE DENET 

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION.

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(Roberta A. McKay, Supervisor)

(Robert K. Jackson, Committee Member)

(Margaret Iveson, Committee Member)

Date: September 24/92

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family

and

all those who have been or wish to become teacher-researchers

With respectful appreciation

to

an incomparable advisor, Dr. Roberta McKay

ABSTRACT

Current literature focuses on the shift from passive to more active teacher roles in staff development models (Lambert, 1989; Fullen & Connelly, 1987; Carr & Kemmis, 1983). The teacher-researcher stance is one of those staff development models that fits into the realm of the teacher taking a more active role. This naturalistic descriptive study chronicles my story as a teacher assuming the stance of a teacher-researcher, attempting to translate the theory of a reading-writing workshop approach into teaching practice.

In chronicling this story, I studied and documented my attempts to implement a reading-writing workshop approach with one level three-and-four class (equivalent to a grade three-and-four) over a ten month period. I kept a log and a dialogue journal with my university faculty advisor. I garnered further data from student questionnaires and a tape recording of students' reflections on implementation of the reading-writing workshop model.

In analyzing these data sources, I uncovered two major themes: the reality of planned versus lived experience and the role of reliving, reflection, recursion and re-evaluation

in this process. Some of the study's findings indicated that my role as a teacher-researcher is similar to the role of the student in current learning theories, in that as a competent, self-directed individual, I actively constructed my own learning based on my background language and experience.

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My family for their support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

> *Classrooms and students are particular in character. Theory is general. What the teacher must be able to do is see the connection--if there is one--between the principle and the case. But even where such a connection exists, the fit is never perfect. An imaginative leap is always required. But if we have no rules to follow, then how should we take this leap?* (Eisner, 1983, p. 9)

In providing the forward for a collection of essays that arose out of a three week institute and conference for teachers of English entitled "Teacher as Learner/Teacher as Researcher" held at the University of Calgary in July, 1983, David Dillon captured the essence of how we can take this leap. He says that in schools today, student learning is viewed as "*actively constructed through social interaction*" by "*competent, self-directed and significant individuals*" whose background language and experience is "*valued as a resource from which and by which new learning will be extended*" and knowledge structured. Teachers, therefore, must be regarded in the same way as the student learners so that they can make that leap between theory and practice:

> *This model suggests for teachers the same kind of outcomes we want for pupils: independence, creativity, competence, dignity. In short, it implies that teachers, like their pupils, become their own experts. Becoming the source of one's own expertise, through learning and researching in the classrooms, is a major way to enhance professionalism on the part of teachers. It can serve to erode the top-down, transmission-of-knowledge hierarchy of expertise--and of power--that dominates the field and keeps teachers often dependent and insecure. It seeks to change in major ways the dominant ideology of expertise, to help teachers break out of constraints that have bound them.* (Dillon, 1985, p. vii, viii)

Autobiographical Statement

After teaching twenty-one years at the elementary level for a large urban school board, I was granted a sabbatical leave for the 1990-91 academic year. A whole year off from my job! Not many individuals get the opportunity to shift gears and be able to stand back and survey what they have done in their career. The experience can be both satisfying and dismaying, especially if you are in the field of education. When you are caught up in the daily routine of the classroom, your reflexivity tends to be more of an immediate nature, such as what to do with Johnny who displays no motivation to write or Morgan whose family's religious beliefs do not support her

reading of The lion, the witch and the wardrobe.

However, when you have the time and the chance to reflect upon what you have accomplished and what you would like to change when you go back, you begin to view things with a different eye. When you are in the position of the learner rather than the teacher, things take on a whole different perspective. The interplay of the wealth of background experiences and the new role as you go through the processes of reflection and recursion enable you to question both old and new ideas.

Though the experience may throw a teacher into a state of chaos, ultimately the metamorphosis begins and the burning question becomes, "What have I really learned here this year that I can take back to share with my students that will make a difference in their metamorphosis? How can I help them and myself to develop those wings that we need to fly?" This thesis is a reflection of my journey through metamorphosis as can be noted in how my style of writing changes from a very traditional format in the first three chapters to a much more open and narrative style in the last three chapters.

Research Interests

In sifting through all the ideas I had encountered during that sabbatical year, these were the ones that had the most impact on me:

a) the power of myth and literature. Humans are beings who tell stories to make sense of their lives and experience that can lead us to different ways of knowing.

b) transactionalism. In exploring the parallels between new paradigms in the sciences and new paradigms in reading and literary theory, Weaver (1985) makes this succinct summation of transactionalism:

> *Among the major parallels....are the following concepts: reality is fundamentally an organic process; there is no sharp separation between observer and observed, reader and text, reader/text and context; the whole (universe, sentence, text) is not merely the sum of the parts which can be separately identified; meaning is determined through transactions between observer and observed, reader and text, reader/text and context, and among textual elements on and across various levels.* (p. 298)

c) the climate for learning. Humans learn best in a social climate which fosters an intensely personal construction of meaning, and

d) learning through doing. We need to learn to read by reading and to write by writing. As the old saying more or less goes--tell me or show me, I forget, let me do it and I remember.

Being a global learner, I had to see where all these pieces fit into the big picture of the jigsaw. What pieces were more or less in place in my teaching and what ones needed to be added? How could I put this jigsaw together? What could I do that would help me not only to remember the above, but also provide understanding? In searching for answers to these questions, I encountered Glenda Bissex's (Bissex & Bullock, 1987) description of a teacher-researcher:

> *A teacher researcher is not a split personality, with a poem in one hand and a microscope in the other....A teacher-researcher is an observer, a questioner, a learner and a more complete teacher.* (p. 4)

That description provided the context for researching the implementation of a reading-writing workshop approach which incorporated all these interests of mine: the power of myth and literature, transactionalism, the climate for learning, and learning by doing.

The Research Question

Reinterpreting my past teaching experience and new learning through the stance of a teacher-researcher, implementing the theory of a reading-writing workshop approach, began when I returned to the classroom in September, 1991. With the assumption of this stance emerged for me a heightened awareness and questioning of how I was to go about translating this new theory into practice. Through this heightened awareness, I formulated my central research question, "How does the stance of being a teacher-researcher affect the translation of a new theory (like a reading-writing workshop approach) into practice?"

Significance of the Study

The various aspects of this research (teacher-researcher, the process approach to reading and writing workshop, transactionalism, and the value of myth and literature in the elementary classroom) have all been subject to recent focus in the field of education. Through identification with scenarios in this study, interested teachers will be provided with a

means of reflecting on incorporation of these concepts in their own elementary school classrooms. It will also add to the understanding of the reading-writing process, the teacher-researcher stance and the parallels between teacher and student learning. It is also significant in terms of the researcher's personal growth, learning and insights.

Definition of Terms

These are terms which I encountered again and again in the process of my studies and research. They are ones which I felt I needed to really grasp and better understand. The following are my synthesized definitions of these terms which I derived from my readings:

Pedagogy: The art, science, or profession of teaching. Harris (1987) describes three areas in pedagogy: the use of language in the teaching situation, the preparation of the environment, and the engagement with feeling (p. 126). Used in this paper to indicate the unison between teacher's beliefs and practice.

Reflection: The introspective pondering and turning back upon a teacher's beliefs and practices. Maturana and Varela (1987) describe reflection as "*an act of turning back upon ourselves*" (p. 24) while Schon (1983) sees reflection in the teaching practice as "*spiralling through stages of appreciation, action and reappreciation. The situation talks back, the practitioner listens, and as he appreciates what he hears, he reframes the situation once again*" (p. 131-132).

Recursion: The return to a thought, idea, belief or practice for re-examination. Maturana & Varela (1987) use the term recursive as "*referring to a process that operates on the product of its own operation*" (p. 253).

Stance: The flexible intellectual and emotional attitude toward a position. Webster's Third new international dictionary (1971) defines stance as "*to take up or maintain a (specified) posture*" and "*to assume and maintain a particular position or attitude with respect to some question or course of action*" (p. 2223). In this research I assumed the position or stance of both a teacher and a researcher attempting to implement a reading-writing workshop approach into my practice.

Limitations

1. The study is delimited to a ten month period, September, 1991 to June, 1992.
2. The study concerns itself with my experiences and reflections on assuming the stance of a teacher-researcher, implementing the theory of a reading-writing workshop approach.

Assumptions

1. The principles of a teacher-researcher stance are valuable for enabling the teacher to become a learner and identify with what students go through as learners.
2. Through the keeping of a reflective dialogue journal and its subsequent analysis, I can capture and reflect upon my thoughts and experiences.

In the following chapter, I will review the literature that formed the basis for my research interests in the power of myth and literature, transactionalism, the climate for learning, and learning through doing.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

In 1981, Mike Torbe made the statement, *"...the teacher too must become the learner in order to make sense out of the theory and transmute it into practice"* (Torbe & Medway, p. 10). Taking that advice to heart, I felt that to implement a reading-writing workshop approach in my classroom I needed a better grasp of its components. Therefore, the importance of literature and myth, writing and pedagogy and the teacher as researcher stance are the focal points of this literature review.

To quote from Dorothy Watson (in Gilles et al, 1988, p. 3):

> *"It ain't (sic) enough to know where you're going. You gotta (sic) know where you're coming from." The Wiz's advice is just as applicable to teachers attempting to move into new literacy programs as it was to Dorothy when she and Toto were trying to*
>
> *find their way from Oz back to Kansas. If we teachers don't know where we are coming from--that is, if we don't understand the theoretical base that supports our curricula--it is easy to become*

> *diverted from our course, wandering aimlessly until we hitch another temporary ride on the next brightly painted bandwagon.*

The Importance of Literature and Myth

Central to the reading-writing workshop approach is the use of literature. The proponents of this approach (Calkins, 1990; Atwell, 1987) stress the use and value of literature as a key ingredient of the program. To gain a better understanding of the literary theories as they pertain to this approach, I turned first to the work of Louise Rosenblatt (1978).

The basis of Rosenblatt's transactionalist approach to literature began with the work of Dewey and Bentley:

> *Dewey and Bentley offered the transactional formulation, "in which is asserted the right to see together, extensionally and durationally, much that is talked about conventionally, as if it were composed of irreconcilable separates." Thus, a "known" assumes a "knower," a "knowing" is the transaction between a particular individual and a particular environment. (p. 17)*

In regards to literature, Rosenblatt said that a "poem" (an event, not an object or ideal entity) was created out of the

"coming-together" of the *"reader"* and the *"text."* Firstly, she saw the text as a stimulus activating the reader's past experience with life and literature and secondly, as a blueprint or guide for the selection, rejection and ordering of what is recalled and brought to the reader's attention (p. 11). She likened this transaction to that of a electric circuit or a chemical reaction where the *"poem"* that is created is dependent upon the components or elements of specific text, specific reader and specific time and place (p.14-15).

Rosenblatt viewed reading as either efferent or aesthetic, deriving directly from what the reader does. In efferent reading, the primary focus is *"...on what will remain as residue* ***after*** *the reading--the information to be acquired, the logical solution to a problem, the actions to be carried out"* (p. 23). In aesthetic reading, on the other hand, sensing, feeling, imagining, and thinking are centered on directly during the reader's relationship with that particular text (p. 26). From these extreme ends of the spectrum, a whole range of responses or *"poems"* can be generated.

Rosenblatt's theory, as I see it, holds direct implications for the reading-writing workshop approach, for Rosenblatt saw literary art as a social institution:

> *But part of the magic--and indeed of the essence--of language is the fact that it must be internalized by each individual human being, with all the special overtones that each unique person and unique situation entail. Hence language is at once basically social and intensely individual. In other words, the transactional view of human life applies here with all its force, and the transactional view of the reading act is simply an exemplification, with highly rarefied complications, of the basic transactional character of all human activity, and especially linguistic activity.* (p. 20)

Another literary theorist whose work holds further implications for the reading-writing workshop approach is Glenna Davis Sloan (1984). For her, literacy starts with literature which stirs, stretches and nourishes the imagination and makes a difference in the reader's life. *"The development of literacy and the education of the imagination through literature is a cumulative process resulting from a systematic and progressive study of literature"* (p. 18). A literate person learns to read not only fluently and responsively, but critically. To become a critic, for Sloan, means what children do when they study literature and she stresses the fact that literary works cannot be *"taught"* or *"learned"*, but must be *"experienced."* She states that criticism is the *"...knowledge of what literature is and how*

it works" and can be taught (p.20).

Sloan feels criticism begins with the early experiencing of literature in all its forms and includes reacting to *"...the total structure of a story or poem without necessarily trying to extract from it a Timeless Truth or Key Idea"* (p.21). Knowledge of structure is central to the understanding of how each piece of work relates to the coherent whole. In noting this fundamental unity and delineation of structural principles, Sloan quotes the work of Northrup Frye:

> *Literature as a whole he calls "one story," the quest myth: the quest of the human imagination for identity. The framework of all literature is a myth or archetypal story...* (p. 27)

Sloan sees this quest myth (fulfillment of hero's human desires and the establishment of a totally human society) as central to all literature. She also sees the critic as having a social function that could serve to unite literature with society. Through criticism of this quest myth, *"...comes awareness of its significance in one's own life, and in the lives of all"* (p. 27).

This centrality of myth to all literature noted by Sloan is brought into sharper focus by Joseph Campbell. Campbell

(1988) said:

> *Furthermore, we have not even to risk the adventure alone, for the heroes of all time have gone before us. The labyrinth is thoroughly known. We have only to follow the thread of the hero path, and where we had thought to find an abomination, we shall find a god. And where we thought to slay another, we shall slay ourselves. Where we had thought to travel outward, we will come to the center of our existence. And where we had thought to be alone, we will be with all the world.* (p. 123)

While Sloan (1984) emphasizes the underlying structures and themes of literature as a whole, her focus is on fiction. Metaphorically, poems and stories can encompass both imaginative and factual literature and as Lukens (1986) says, *"The line between fiction and nonfiction is a fine one in books for children"* (p. 217). Huck, Hepler and Hickman (1987) describe the relationship this way, *"Fiction gives a perspective that allows children to know facts in another way...to confirm what they are learning from informational sources..."* (p. 618). They advocate both aesthetic and efferent reading (as Rosenblatt, 1978, termed it) as an *"...exciting and satisfying way to learn"* (p. 618).

The Importance of Writing

Graves (1991) says that teachers must help children to understand the power of writing by extending their understanding of the uniqueness of writing in its many diverse forms. *"Unlike speech, where the transfer of information stops when the speaker stops talking, writing lasts"* (p. 48). Sloan (1984) sees writing as being an important aspect of the children's critical experience. Writing, she says, cannot be composed in a vacuum and it is out of children's exposure to literature that their own stories can grow. Original story composition must be an integral part of the literary studies curriculum *"...for it is through story that the child orders his experiences and orients himself to the world"* (p. 142). Sloan also sees literature as being where children learn *"...the nature, the uses and the joys of language."* She cites quotations from some prominent Pulitzer Prize winners who were solicited for advice regarding improvement of the writing of young students. These writers gave the clear message of reading in order to write and state:

> *"The urge to write is the child of the love of reading," wrote John Hersey. From Mary Stoz: "I have never known or known of a writer who was not a reader from the first dazzling moment when the*

> *letters assembled themselves and became the WORD." William Styron said, "The only absolutely indispensable factor in the teaching of writing is, it seems to me, an insistence on the necessity of* ***reading.***" (Sloan, 1984, p. 10)

The title of Donald Murray's 1984 book, Write to learn, is a very succinct description of why we need to write. Murray views writing as a process and as means of finding out what we think about and know by seeing what we say when we write. Often our writing can surprise us when we write things that we didn't even know we knew. He identifies five parts of the writing process:

1) Collecting: the brain's constant collection and recollection of information through all the senses;
2) Focusing: attention paid to the information that has particular meaning;
3) Ordering: building with the information as with building blocks until meaning evolves;
4) Drafting: constant internal conversation during writing; and
5) Clarifying: ongoing striving to understand and make writing sharper and clearer.

In his 1985 book, A writer teaches writing, Murray expands his reason for writing to learn to encompass writing to be surprised and to discover things. Through being

surprised and making discoveries writers become addicted. The addiction occurs because the writers surprise, educate and entertain themselves and see, feel, think and understand more when they write. This writing and teaching for surprise becomes the focus of his 1989 book, Expecting the unexpected: Teaching myself--and others--to read and write.

Judging from the title of Murray's 1989 book, he among many others like Smith (1986), Atwell (1987), Calkins (1990) and Harste, Short & Burke (1988), see a significant connection between reading and writing. Zinsser (1988), an advocate of writing across the curriculum, puts it into perspective. He views writing as "thinking on paper" and says that anyone who thinks clearly should be able to write clearly on any subject at all (p. 11). For him, knowledge is not compartmentalized and writing is the key that opens the door. "Writing is learned through imitation" and one can learn to write by reading writers who are doing what you want to do and trying to figure out how they did it. He does not consider this unethical:

> *Students often feel guilty about modelling their writing on someone else's writing. They think it's unethical--which is commendable. Or they are afraid they'll lose their own identity. The point, however, is that we eventually move beyond our models; we take what we need and then we shed our*

> *skins and become who we are supposed to become. But nobody will write well unless he gets into his eye and into his metabolism a sense of how the language works and what it can be made to do.* (p. 15)

The Importance of Pedagogy

The inclusion of this third section on the importance of pedagogy began with van Manen's (1986) statement of *"When we enter a classroom, we soon have a sense of what pedagogy is practiced there"* (p. 34). This notion of pedagogy was furthered by van Manen's (1990) theory of how being reflective on our pedagogy can contribute to one's pedagogic **thoughtfulness** and **tact**. From that followed the realization that in utilizing the reading-writing workshop approach, certain aspects of pedagogy out of many will merit specific attention.

My first consideration of pedagogy began with the assumption that in order for me to effectively make changes in my class, my students would need to be active participants and negotiators in the classroom. Bruner (1986) aptly describes the process that must be undertaken:

> *It is not just that the child must make knowledge his own, but that he must make it his own in a community who share his sense of belonging to a*

> *culture. It is this that leads me to emphasize not only discovery and invention but the importance of negotiating and sharing--in a word, of joint culture creating as an object of schooling and as an appropriate step en route to becoming a member of the adult society in which one lives out one's life.* (p. 127)

The second consideration was the advocacy of Atwell (1987), Calkins (1990) and Graves (1991) that the teacher sets the example for the students by simultaneously being a reader and writer with them. Smith (1986) calls this setting of an example *"demonstrations"* and says that children learn to do what is demonstrated, whether it be positive or negative. Graves (1983), for example, found that the writing of children is influenced by not only the teacher, but also by peer interaction and family response.

Learning through doing was the third key aspect of this approach. Smith (1984) first advocated learning to read by reading and learning to write by writing back in the 1979 version of his book, Reading without nonsense. Murray (1985) also notes that the student becomes the student's best teacher as he/she goes through the recursive process of reading and writing a passage many times before it is finished (p. 4). This process takes time and allotting time to this process is of vital importance as noted by Calkins (1990), Atwell (1987), and Hansen (1987).

A fourth key aspect, scaffolding (identified by Jerome Bruner as what a tutor does for a child that a child can not do for him or herself and which only lasts until the child takes over), began with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the **zone of proximal development:**

> *What the child can do in cooperation today he can do alone tomorrow. Therefore the only kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of the development and leads it; it must be aimed not so much at the ripe as the ripening function.* (p. 103-104)

Atwell (Newkirk & Atwell, 1988) refers to this factor when she says that teachers can ask predictable, open-ended questions that get young writers thinking and eventually anticipating questions that will be raised and beginning to formulate and incorporate questions and answers of their own.

A fifth aspect of pedagogy critical to this approach is observation. Bissex (Bissex and Bullock, 1987) considers the teacher-researcher to be an *"observer"* as well as a *"questioner"* and a *"learner."* This observation is a critical aspect because as Glenda Bissex says, *"...the logic by which we teach is not always the logic by which children learn"* (quoted in Atwell, 1987, p. 3). However, through observing children and asking questions of the children as well as of

themselves, teachers can learn from the students as Calkins did in Lessons from a child (1983). Yetta Goodman terms this observation *"kidwatching"* (in Jaggar & Smith-Burke, 1985) and said that as sensitive observers, teachers can play significant roles in their students' language development. And as Harste, Short and Burke (1988) said, *"Only by using children as our curricular informants--by studying the mental trips they take as a function of the curricular experiences we provide--can we judge whether a set of instructional activities has achieved what we hoped"* (p. 5).

A sixth and one of the most critical aspects of pedagogy is the establishment of a social climate within the classroom. This is necessary because of the social and intensely personal construction of meaning attested to by many researchers. Rosenblatt (1978, p. 20) says that though language is social, *"...it must be internalized by each individual human being, with all the special overtones that each unique person and situation entail."* Like Rosenblatt, Polanyi (1978) regards construction of knowledge as personal, *"I regard knowing as active comprehension of the things known, an action that requires skill"* (p. vii). He says that we know more than we can tell and though we may explicitly identify things of which we are focally aware, we cannot make this knowledge wholly

explicit. The meaning of the language we use lies in our tacit knowledge which involves the action of our bodies.

For Freire (1974) knowledge emerges through invention and re-invention and the endless, hopeful inquiry that people pursue with each other in the world. Vygotsky (1978) saw signs and words as serving children "*...first and foremost as a means of social contact*" (p. 28) and then as being transformed from *inter*personal to *intra*personal:

> *Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice; first on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals.* (p. 57)

Many other researchers share similar views on the construction of meaning. Britton (1970) says that whether or not we were a part of events that have taken place and are gone, it is from their representation that we can gain a sense of past and future existence in the world. Bruner (1986) views the construction of meaning as negotiatory and transactional, occurring socially through interpersonal negotiation. *"Social realities are not bricks that we trip*

over or bruise ourselves on when we kick at them, but the meanings we achieve by the sharing of human cognition" (p. 122).

The Teacher as Researcher Stance

In this type of action research, the research begins in the classroom with the teacher asking a question or questions about something that initially arises out of the classroom. James Britton (in Goswami & Stillman, 1987) labels this a *"quiet form of research"* but sees a valid connection: *"Teaching is something we do; research findings are something we come to know; development is the process by which we bring this kind of knowing into a relation with the kind of doing"* (p. 18).

Bissex (Bissex & Bullock, 1987) makes a strong case for being a teacher-researcher with her statement that teacher-researchers see things differently because they observe with an *"informed eye."* Along with being an observer they are also questioners and learners. Goswami and Stillman (1987) add to the strength of the case by saying that as researchers, teachers *"...become critical, responsive readers and users of*

current research, less apt to accept uncritically others' theories, less vulnerable to fads, and more authoritive in their assessment of curricula, methods and materials" (p. 1).

The most powerful recommendation for this stance comes from the work of Lawrence Stenhouse (1984). He sees this stance as have a liberating, empowering or emancipating effect: *"Emancipation is the process involved in liberating teachers and students from a system of education that denies individual dignity...and by returning to those individuals some degree of self worth through the exercise of professional judgment"* (p. 94).

The teacher-researcher stance was chosen for this study because of its complementarity with the reading-writing workshop approach. Both the teacher-researcher stance and the reading-writing workshop approach are holistic, integrative and interpretative in nature. Just like the student, the teacher-researcher, as a *"more complete teacher,"* is also an observer, a questioner and a learner. Both are concerned with constructing meaning and the only difference would be that the student "*...does not have as grand a collection of scripts and scenarios and event schemas as adults do*" (Bruner, 1986, p. 68).

Using the reading-writing workshop approach, I saw first

hand just how important literature and myth are to young students. Many is the time they would connect stories with instances or events in their own lives or to other stories. In doing their own writing they explored these relationships and through the act of writing were able to "see" what they "thought."

Adopting the stance of teacher-researcher to implement this approach enabled me to utilize all the aspects of my pedagogy that I considered of prime importance and which are inherent in this approach. Through demonstrations, I encouraged my students to become active participants and negotiators who learned through doing reading and doing writing in a social climate where this was the accepted and expected norm. When needed, I provided a scaffold for them, just as the books of Nancie Atwell, Lucy Calkins, and Donald Graves had provided a scaffold for me along the way. And all the time, I observed, questioned and learned along with them.

In chapter three, I will review the research methodology: action research, teacher as researcher and narrative inquiry which I employed to conduct my research.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

> *We know the world in different ways, from different stances, and each of the ways in which we know it produces different structures or representations, or indeed, "realities." As we grow to adulthood (at least in Western culture), we become adept at seeing the same set of events from* ***multiple*** *perspectives or stances and at entertaining the results as, so to speak, alternative possible worlds.* (Bruner, 1986, p. 109)

This chapter will discuss the methodology which was used to gather data for the study. It is a naturalistic, descriptive study which utilized a combination of:

a) a form of action research that has been termed a teacher-researcher approach. In this process the teacher looks again and again, reconsiders, questions and learns from what happens in the classroom. The knowing cannot be separated from the doing. The doing, in this case, is teaching and what is being taught is learning (Bissex & Bullock, 1986); and

b) narrative inquiry of which Connelly & Clandinin

(1990) say,

> *Narrative inquiry is increasingly used in studies of educational experience. It has a long intellectual history both in and out of education. The main claim for the use of narrative in educational research is that humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world. This general notion translates into the view that education is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories; teachers and learners are storytellers and characters in their own and others' stories.* (p. 2)

Action Research: Teacher as Researcher

Lambert (1989) observes that *"We have come to the end of an era. Staff development as we have known it has proven ineffective and limiting. To usher in a new era, we need a new vision of staff development--one that challenges and involves teachers in the honouring and creation of their own knowledge"* (p. 78). For this reason, the methodology of action research and in particular that of teacher as researcher was chosen because of its ability to provide the opportunity of looking at an old problem in a new way, putting theory into practice.

Wells and Chang (1986) say, *"The most effective learning occurs when the learner is treated as an active constructor of his or her own knowledge and is given the opportunity to share the responsibility for the selection, organization and evaluation of the tasks through which knowledge and competence are acquired"* (p. 1). Fullen & Connelly (1987) concur, saying that reflective, critical and inquiring teachers are comfortable with problems, continually developing, studying, reflecting on and refining the art of teaching throughout their careers (p. 50). Carr & Kemmis (1983) think that research activity can provide teachers with the skills and resources necessary to free them from dependency on habit and tradition and enable them to critically examine their educational practice (p. 120). Henry (1986) also believes that as educational researchers, teachers can shape their own research through planning and implementing strategic action and observing and reflecting upon its outcomes (p. 90). This in turn can promote theory building which can improve practice.

Regarding action research, Elliot & Adelman (1977) theorize that

> *...action research aims to feed practical judgement in concrete situations and the validity of the*

> *'theories' it generates depends not so much on 'scientific' tests of truth as on their usefulness in helping people to act more intelligently and skillfully. In action research 'theories' are not validated independently and then applied to practice. They are validated through practice* (p. 96).

Burton (1986) expresses similar sentiments, *"...the value of action research in education lies not in the 'findings' but ultimately in the meaning the researcher brings to it"* (p. 719). To bring meaning to research, Burton believes that problems are best solved by those who own them; knowledge is acquired through the reciprocity between thought and action and research should be an effort to uncover potential meanings --tentative solutions--rather than proclaiming certainties which will once and for all predict and explain teaching and learning. Britton (1987) speaks of teacher research as a "quiet form of research." *"Teaching is something we do; research findings are something we come to know; development is the process by which we bring this kind of knowing into relation with this kind of thing"* (p. 18).

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry has become increasingly prominent as a

method for presenting research data in qualitative research (Polkinghorne, 1988; Clandinin, 1991). Polkinghorne sees narrative as a *"cognitive process that organizes human experience into temporally meaningful episodes"* (p. 1) and the *"way that human beings give meaning to their experiences"* (p. 11). In studying narrative, Polkinghorne found that narrative communicates a *"different kind of truth"* as it functions as part of the whole of human action and events. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) also say that because of this focus on life's experiences, narrative is situated in a matrix of qualitative research (p. 3). They see narrative as a *"kind of life story, large and more sweeping than the stories that compose it"* and *"the study of how humans make meaning of experiences by endlessly telling and retelling stories about themselves that both refigure the past and create purpose in the future"* (p. 24).

Elliot Eisner, quoted in Connelly and Clandinin (1988), sees this value for narrative:

> *The use of narratives, and the epistemological frameworks through which these narratives embody and convey meaning, not only provides an important way to think about curriculum and teaching, but also is vital to understanding what goes on at school.* (p. x-xi)

As scholars increasingly employ the approach used

> *here, two important contributions can be expected: First, we can expect to acquire a fuller, more replete view of what curriculum and teaching means within schools; second, we will continue to legitimate personalistic, idiosyncratic, and experiential approaches to educational research. By doing this form of research we build a literature from which others can draw, and we strengthen further the foundations upon which new work can be built.* (p. xi)

Bruner (1986) also sees the importance of narrative as *"one of the two modes of thought--one mode the paradigmatic or logico-scientific, and the other the narrative mode"* and *"one way of ordering experience, of constructing reality"* (p. 42-43).

Teacher as researcher and narrative inquiry were seen to be compatible and appropriate methodologies for this research undertaking. Teacher as researcher is a form of critical action research (Carr & Kemmis, 1986) aimed at improving teaching through a self-reflective spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. It does not regard practice as "phenomena," independent of the researcher-practitioner and so allows participants to improve their practice by understanding their practices and the situations in which they are carried out. Factors are not considered in isolation from the setting and context which gave them meaning and this flexible, adaptable methodology allows for changes along the way.

Narrative inquiry enables participants to become storytellers who share their experiences through stories. What is important is not the chronology of the facts, but the meaning that is derived through the storytelling of events in the participants' lives. As Elbaz (1990) says, stories are "the very stuff of teaching" and "the landscape within which we live as teachers and researchers, and within which the work of teachers can be seen as making sense" (p. 32). For Bruner (1986), story is concerned with verisimilitude, the semblance of reality instead of formal, empirical truth. In 1990, Bruner adds that narrative inquiry is an "....*open-mindedness...a willingness to construe knowledge from multiple perspectives without loss of commitment to one's own values. Open-mindedness is the keystone of what we call democratic culture*" (p. 30).

In selecting personal narratives from my journal to include in my thesis, meaning is constantly being reconstructed and a new experience occurs as my perception of that experience changes. Bruner (1990) says that "this method of negotiating and renegotiating meaning by the mediation of narrative interpretations" is "one of the crowning achievements of human development in ontogenic, cultural, and phytogenetic senses of that expression" (p. 67).

This narrative inquiry uses three techniques described by Connelly & Clandinin (1990): broadening (provides a general character and social description of the study), burrowing (probes particular events as to origin and participant's feelings when embedded in the experience), and restorying (revisits the story to look at past and future implications).

Research Setting

Classroom Setting

I implemented the reading-writing workshop approach over the 1991-92 academic school year in a blended level three-four class of twenty-six students in a large urban elementary school. The school is located in a low to middle income district with minimal transiency. The students ranged in age from eight to eleven and out of the twenty-six, eleven of them had spent a extra year in school along the way. Besides the eleven there were also seven who received extra funding by the end of the year; one for behaviour disorder, one for English as a second language, one for learning disabilities, and four for adaptation (students who function at different grade level

for different areas like language learning and mathematics). The student who was funded as behaviour disordered was unable to interact positively and appropriately with her peers and to focus on learning tasks for any length of time. The one who was listed as an English as second language student spoke Chinese at home and still had difficulty understanding and communicating in English, especially written English. Her progress seemed to indicate that her first language, Chinese, had not been firmly established either. The learning disabled student found it difficult to express himself well in written language, having trouble with spelling, grammar, sentence structure and punctuation. Of the four adaptation students, all had difficulty expressing themselves in written communication (for two of these students, English was their second language, Laotian and Yugoslavian being their first) and two had extreme difficult in mathematics--remembering basic facts and doing problem solving.

The Reading-Writing Workshop Approach

The reading-writing workshop approach which I had planned to implement was based on a synthesis of these components

described by Atwell (1987, pp. 17-19, 170-197):

a) Regular chunks of time for writers "...to think, write, confer, read, change their minds, and write some more."

b) Choice of own topics by writers.

c) Response for writers "...from the writer's peers and from the teacher, who consistently models the kinds of restatements and questions that help writers reflect on the content of their writing."

d) Learning of mechanics in context "...from teachers who address errors as they occur within individual pieces of writing, where these rules and forms will have meaning."

e) Acquaintance with adult writers who can demonstrate the composing process.

f) Access of writers to "..a wide-ranging variety of texts, prose and poetry, fiction and non-fiction."

g) Writing teachers who take responsibility for own knowledge and teaching and become readers of recent research into children's writing, writers and researchers, observers and learners.

h) Readily available writing and reading materials.

i) Use of mini-lessons on procedures of writing and reading workshops, the craft of writing, skills, and literature.

j) Response to writers and writing through *status-of-the-*

class conference, conferring about content, group share sessions, topic conferences, conferring with oneself, editing conferences, and evaluating writing in conference.

k) Response to readers and reading through literary gossip, *kinds of a talk about books*, writing back, student-to-student dialogues, procedures for dialogue journals, and evaluating reading in conference.

In chapter four, I will explain how I went about putting this plan into action and then illustrate how this planned experience compared to my lived experience as a teacher-researcher trying to implement someone else's theory.

Data Collection

Data was collected from:

a) a log and a personal response journal which I kept during implementation of the reading-writing workshop in my classroom. The journal was regularly exchanged for dialogue purposes with my advisor at the university. In doing action research, McKernan

(1988) sees the journal as:

> *a personal document, a narrative technique and record of events, thoughts and feelings that have importance for the keeper. As a record, it is a compendium of data which can alert the teacher to developing thought, changes in values, progression and regression for learners. It summons up feelings and beliefs captured at, or just after, the time they have occurred, thus providing a 'mood dimension' to human action.* (p. 84)

b) pre (September, 1991) and post (June, 1992) writing and reading surveys (See Appendices: Atwell, 1987, p. 270-272) that were conducted with the whole class;

c) a tape recorded discussion with the whole class regarding their perceptions and feelings concerning the reading-writing workshop approach that was implemented throughout the year.

Data Interpretation

Data collected from the teacher-researcher's personal response journal and log, student questionnaires and the taped discussion were analyzed to

a) document my story of taking the teacher-researcher stance and how this influenced the implementation of the reading-writing workshop approach and the learning development of students;

b) understand the effect of the teacher-researcher stance on a teacher becoming a *"more complete teacher."*

The study was written up in narrative form, for narrative or telling stories is, as Polkinghorne (1998) sees it, the natural way through which practitioners make sense of their world. It is suited to their work and the context. He states,

> *The kind of meaning the narrative conveys about human existence requires the use of discourse, which can be differentiated from the mere collection of words or sentences. A discourse is a unit of utterance; it is something written or spoken that is larger than a sentence. A discourse is an integration of sentences that produces meaning that is more than that contained in the sentences viewed independently. (p. 31)*

So it is the whole story of this study that brings forth its import.

Ethical Considerations

The research proposal was cleared by the department's ethics committee in accordance with university policy which ensures the protection of a study's human subjects. Permission to participate and use data gathered was solicited from the school board, the school, the participants and their parents. The data gathered arose out of the regular course of daily routine in the classroom and the researcher was mainly investigating her own personal reactions during this study and only using student responses from questionnaires and a taped discussion, no potential harm for participants existed. Anonymity and confidentiality of student responses was guaranteed and only the responses of those who had indicated the willingness to participate were used.

In Retrospect

In assuming the stance of a teacher-researcher concerned with implementing a reading-writing workshop approach in my classroom, the primary hope was to achieve what Mike Torbe and Peter Medway (1981) call a *"climate for learning"*:

> *A climate that is good to live in can also be a climate in which learning flourishes: certainly, a learning climate first needs to be a living climate--because living and learning are not distinct activities. It is the product of the countless specific actions of teachers and students, and not something achieved by legislation. In particular, it is the product of the language that occurs in the normal day-to-day business of teaching, learning and social living together. There is no separation between an individual and that individual's language: not only are 'limits of my language the limits of my world', but 'what you say is what you are'.*
> (p. 141)

The next chapter will be a narrative account of my experiences of trying to be a teacher-researcher implementing a reading-writing workshop approach into the realities of my classroom. I will use Connelly & Clandinin's (1990) techniques of "broadening" to provide the general character and social description and "burrowing" to probe particular events as to their origin and my feelings when embedded in the experience.

CHAPTER FOUR

BROADENING AND BURROWING

Introduction

> *Thinking is an adventure. It becomes a journey towards self-knowledge. It is inherently hazardous, for thinking implies change, and change is usually uncomfortable. Yet, as Michael Polanyi says (1958, pp. 314, 327), '....in spite of the hazards involved, I am called upon to search for truth and state my findings...I must understand the world from my point of view, as a person claiming originality and exercising his judgment responsibly and with universal intent.'* (McNiff, 1988, p. 52)

> *Educational practices provide the data, the subject matter, which form the problems of inquiry...A constant flow of less formal reports on special school affairs and results is needed...it seems to me that the contribution that might come from the classroom teachers is a comparatively neglected field; or to change a metaphor, an almost unworked mine.* (Dewey, 1929, pp. 33, 46).

Through the process of keeping a dialogue journal, probing into student responses on the reading and writing questionnaires, and analyzing the discussion taped with the students in June, I have re-lived my story so many times. Re-writing it now is but another step in the metamorphosis

from teacher to teacher-researcher. Unlike the painted lady butterfly who goes through the process of metamorphosis once in her lifetime, I have gone back and forth through the stages similar to the egg, larvae, and chrysalis or cocoon so many times in a sometimes painful and sometimes exhilarating journey. Sometimes the steps have been tentative, sometimes I have strode forth and many is the time I have doubled back in order to understand. The way has been fraught with questions, decisions, choices and just "seeing" a place for the first time upon re-visiting it. In trying to capture the essence of this journey from a subconscious to a conscious level regarding one's practice, I know this stage will be riddled with what to tell and what to leave out in order to portray an experience from which someone else may vicariously benefit.

Broadening

The Physical Arena or Milieu

The proposal session was over and done with. Things had gone successfully and now I was ready to take up my new mantle

of teacher-researcher as the new school year dawned. Heeding the suggestions of Atwell and after consulting the various advertisements for the best deals, I made forays into the various stores to purchase the suggested supplies. There was something satisfying about putting together the neon coloured pencils, the pens with rainbow-hued ink, the stamper capable of any date, and the white-out that could transform any unwitting mark. The material things (including the hanging folders patiently awaiting the endless writing that would bulge their skeletal frames) were ready. Armed with my brand new theories of language learning, I eagerly awaited this writing from the faceless names on my classlist.

The first two days back at school were placid, with only adults around making plans for the upcoming year. I was filled with the euphoria that things would be great. Certainly, things were not going to be as difficult as I had anticipated with our school going to completely blended groupings except for the kindergarten. I was driven with burning enthusiasm for all the wonderful things I was going to do this year in "revolutionizing" my classroom. Thank goodness I would still have the weekend in which to do more preparation.

The first two days were spent with our family groups.

All the students from grades one to six were divided into eight groups or houses, each house consisting of a junior and a senior group. This was done so that student placement could be sorted out during this time and a student would not face the trauma of being moved to another class if they were incorrectly placed. I had the senior group (grades four to six) called the Spirit River House. That wasn't too bad even though by the second day the students themselves were getting impatient to get on with their lives and even asked for some "real work" to do. While that was kind of a shocker, I could empathize as I, too, was impatient to get my "own kids" who would be with me for the next ten months. One of the boys from this group, D (a grade four student) was on my potential classlist that I had been given. D was very similar to a boy I had three years ago who eventually was labelled behaviour disordered, so I started getting myself "psyched up" for having to deal with him in my classroom the rest of the year. However, a surprise was in store for me.

Wednesday, at noon we had a staff meeting and we were given our new official classlists and D wasn't on my list. He was on Mr. W's instead and I knew that Mr. W already had two difficult students on his list whom I had heard about, so I immediately started feeling "guilty" even though I had nothing

to do with the decision that had been made. Mr. W, himself, felt this placement was unfair and went to talk to Mr. L, the principal, about it, but Mr. L reassured him that while it may appear unfair, it wasn't. Mr. W relayed this to me when I spoke to him after school about my feelings.

On my way out that night, I was still concerned by all this, so I discussed it with Mr. L. We stepped into his office and he went over my list and I left a while later with information that I had ten children's names indicating problems of varying severity on my list. Of these ten, three were newcomers to the school, so the information on them was not complete. My "guilt" was being alleviated in a hurry.

Thursday morning, the students from all the family groups were sent off to the rooms that would be their homes for the forthcoming year and in trooped twenty-four third and fourth graders ranging in age from seven to eleven. Now I could put faces to names and eventually I would sort out who were the extended students (e.g., maybe half way through grade three mathematics, but has just finished grade two language arts) and who were the funded (adaptation, ESL, behaviour disordered, and learning disabled students) and so on. The morning went quite smoothly--culture shock had not yet set in--and I went to lunch feeling that Mr. L must have exaggerated

about all the problems.

In the afternoon that illusion soon disappeared along with our desks. Mr. L had ordered new adjustable desks for us (grade three up) in June. These desks were supposed to arrive in August, but were still not here. He had advertised the old desks for sale so that we would not be stuck with over three hundred desks to store when the new ones arrived. Tables and chairs were brought into the room and the children had to store all their new possessions in cubbyholes.

To my dismay, I soon learned that my students, not being used to sharing space or, the ensuing confusion caused by the situation, could not cope. The aggression and noise and lack of focus for most classes and mine in particular soon saw the reappearance in my room of any unsold desks for those who just couldn't cope at the tables. This was our physical scene until the new desks arrived on the afternoon of September 19th as the students were leaving for a long weekend. (September 20th was a professional development day for teachers at our school.) So eager was I at last to have something remotely resembling a normal scene that I spent that evening getting these new desks hauled down to my room, uncrated and assembled, so that we would have some normalcy come Monday morning.

I was back there Sunday afternoon to put the finishing touches to this stage setting of normalcy. A couple of other teachers searching for a missing rocks and minerals kit appeared in my room as I was hanging cutout head silhouettes of my students for the forthcoming "meet the creature night" (meet the teacher night). I stepped on one of those new adjustable desks and as I stepped on it, M (one of the teachers) saw one of the bolts from one of the legs go shooting out. Without any warning or even time to break my fall, I plummeted face first on the carpet between the desks while these two teachers stood rooted in horror. Thus I, too, became part of the physical arena for Monday morning. I was the star attraction for the school as rumour circulated and students came by to see my swollen rug-burnt face, a sight that remained until after I met the parents of my students for the first time at "meet the creature night." (A name that we had jokingly attributed to the evening that turned out to be more than appropriate in this case.)

The Social-Emotional Arena of the Learners

Our September 20th professional development day was on pro-social skills, one of the priorities for our school for

the year and as it turned out, very apropos for me. During the ten days prior to it, I had become acquainted with the problems that Mr. L had sketched for me. J, one of the new comers to our school headed the list. She had been in difficulty in all five of her previous schools. She was on medication for hyperactivity and could be fine one moment and then "blow" the next for no apparent reason. This was the first time in my lengthy career that I had ever been struck by a student and a seven year old girl at that. I was soon to come to know that she was also very bright and capable of using any angle whether physical or verbal for her own purposes whenever needed. Before long she was known throughout the whole school for her various escapades, if I could call them that, which were not isolated to my room alone. This little "axemurderer", as her mother and grandmother called her in her presence or anyone else's, stayed with us until she left for three weeks of assessment at our resident psychiatric and rehabilitative school in February. Then she returned to us until she left again to spend May and June back at that school.

While J's was the most extreme of the behaviours I had to deal with, there were many others. I grudgingly came to admit that I would have to use the techniques of pro-social skills

that we were being taught in our professional day, even though they thoroughly went against the grain of my nature. I likened them to operant conditioning that I had learned about in university and so I found it difficult to start using the techniques. The format of pro-social skills relies upon the teacher choosing the skills to be learned and when and how they are to be learned. It does not believe children to be significant, self-directed individuals responsible for their own choice and action, and so is contradictory to the beliefs of the reading-writing workshop approach. I had never been subjected to or experienced this kind of discipline when I was a young student and so could not relate to spending time in an isolation room that reminded me of what it could be like to be put in a closet.

A note in my journal during these times reads:

> *It seems ironic, now that I think about it, that no comment of any occurrences of this kind appears in books by Atwell and Calkins. Surely experiences such as these are not isolated to our locale and can greatly influence the implementation of new theories and plans. It certainly has in my case. The majority of those great and wonderful plans of mine are on hold until I get* ***desks*** *and see some effect from making use of pro-social skills.*

Why?? It was a question I was to ponder many a time in the

forthcoming year. Was I naive to think that I could do something that at this point in time seemed an impossibility? Was it going to be possible for me to be a teacher-researcher who could successfully implement that new theory that I was so enthusiastic about? Right now it seemed as though assuming the stance had not only triggered a heightened awareness, but had brought with it doubts.

Burrowing

The Subject: Chapters From the Never-Ending Story

After meeting the parents at "meet the teacher night" and committing myself to using the reading-writing workshop approach with their children, I did get started with its implementation, but at a much more cautious and slower pace than I had originally intended. My resolve had been tempered by the realization that even getting my class into a state where we could co-exist with relative harmony was going to demand my attention the majority of the time and my research dreams were going to have to take a back seat for the time being. However, with hopes for the future still high, on my official timetable, I set aside from 8:50 A.M. to 10:15 A.M.

everyday to do our reading and writing workshop. Reading and writing were divided pretty well equally within that time. We began with reading and the writing evolved out of what the students were individually reading, what I was reading aloud to them or topics of their own choice.

Consequently, we got under way with what I would call the more mundane. In comparison to the process of writing, I felt that the buying and setting out of the variety of writing supplies--the pens, pencils, rulers, tape, white-out, date stamp and pad, glue, hole punches, transparencies, markers and the different kinds of paper for students to use--was mundane. However, that perception changed in short order as these supplies, unfortunately, did not remain out in the open for too long. It soon became evident that my little friend, J had a penchant for these things and would take and hide them in her desk or proceed to use up or destroy them depending on her mood. Other students witnessed these actions and became distressed over what she was doing, so I was faced with the challenge of how to handle this situation. The solution I chose was to put these supplies out of temptation's way in my desk or cabinet or on my shelves with the understanding that the students could use them whenever they wanted as long as they asked.

Writing folders with pockets were set up for each of the children following Atwell's ideas. "Things (Child's Name) Can Do as a Writer", "My Ideas for Writing", and "Titles and Dates of Finished Pieces" were headings for sheets that I put in the writing folders. Over time, however, I was to discover that these sheets with the headings in the folders were not being utilized and that the students' writing was all over the place rather than where it was supposed to be. Perhaps, the students had difficulty using this kind of a system because they were swamped by too many pieces of paper and things to fill in and maybe it was that I was not adept enough in showing them how to use the sheets with the headings and the pockets. Gradually no attention was paid to these and instead the folders became storage for the pieces of writing in various stages.

Elementary ground rules were set out for the writing process we would try to work at mastering. These included:

-write on only one side of the paper

-double space to make editing easier

-draw lines through mistakes rather than erasing them

-concentrate on getting your ideas and thoughts down rather than on spelling words correctly, in other words, spell words the way you think they might be spelled in your first drafts

-label and date everything

-speak only in quiet voices when necessary for writing time is thinking time and working time

We began our journey into the writing process with a demonstration of what I meant. I would sit and write quietly and afterwards use an overhead transparency of my writing to show them how I had doubled spaced to make editing easier and then how I would go about my editing. Throughout the year, as often as was possible, I continued to write with the students when it was time for writing and I found that when I did this, they seemed to become more motivated to involve themselves in their own writing. Also when we adhered to the division between a time for just writing and a time for editing where others or myself could be involved in their editing process, the students seemed to be more productive. Having both writing and editing going on simultaneously just didn't seem to work, perhaps because of the students' level of maturity or my understanding about how to orchestrate the two processes.

Eventually, we drifted into making more use of the coil notebook idea that Calkins described in Living between the lines. The students used the coil notebooks to write on topics of their own choice and had a separate section in the

notebook for written responses to their reading. This section for the written responses was divided into parts that were called "Books I Have Read" (title and date), "Responses to Literature" and "Private Notes." Using a coiled notebook set up like this seemed to be more manageable for the students than using the folders with which we had initially started. When we began with the folders the students were always hunting for missing sheets of looseleaf in their desks. Now the students had their writing all in one place and they only used the folders to store paper for final drafts of their writing and if necessary, the final drafts themselves.

The reading part of the workshop got underway at the same time. We scheduled our class time to have a regular book exchange in the library on Wednesday mornings and the students were encouraged to have out two books of their choice at any given time. They could also go to the library to return books they had finished and get out new ones any morning as long as they used a library pass. In conjunction with this, they were encouraged to bring books from home to put on our class library shelves for others to read.

Every morning, it became our routine after attendance was taken to read silently from 8:50 A. M. to 9:15 A. M. The expectation was that the students were to actually spend their

time reading and only minimal and occasional time to go to the library to exchange books or to get a book from the class library. When this first began, there was quite a bit of fidgeting, but as time progressed they got to the stage that all with the exception of about two or three were reading straight through. Some of them even became so involved they had to be told it was time to switch to something else.

In addition to the students silently reading on their own, I brought in twenty-five to thirty books at a time on different genres like picture books or fairy tales. Picture books were actually what I started with and I decided to forgo Glenna Sloan's advice that children should "experience the elements of literature rather than being directly taught." In this kind of approach, it is believed that the students would learn elements of story (for example, how the picture in a picture book added detail or told part of the story) by reading the book themselves or having it read to them, rather than having certain elements pointed out or "taught" to them. This decision to forgo the "experiencing" approach was made on the basis of my class makeup--the eleven who had spent an extra year along the way and the seven who were or would be specially funded by the end of the year. Their initial performance at the beginning of September on things like

making up a picture book that told a story about themselves, indicated to me that they had not grasped the concept of the role that pictures play in picture books and so I saw teaching this as a primary need.

Thus, along with the students' own silent reading, I started reading to them every day from the books I had brought into the room, such as the picture books. I would proceed by asking them what they knew about a genre like picture books, then I would do a mini-lesson, like those suggested by Atwell, as I read the book to them. I would talk briefly about fairy tale elements like the use of magic, royalty, magic numbers such as three and seven, "once upon a time" and so on. In reading aloud subsequent books from that genre, I would have the students try to pick out and ask questions about the various elements of the fairy tale. In doing this I found that I was actually learning things along with them such as the various elements of a fairy tale that I really hadn't consciously thought about. In time, the students began to try to incorporate elements such as "once upon a time", royalty and magic numbers when they tried to write their own fairy tales.

To make them even more aware of the sequencing of a story, I read books to the students like <u>James and the giant</u>

peach and had them respond in their coil note books. As each chapter in James and the giant peach is very short, I would give them a couple of minutes and have them write what they chose about that chapter, be it a brief summary of what had transpired or a reaction to what had happened or a question that was brought up for them. Possibly because of the short time frame, they were enthusiastic about doing this kind of writing and some of them wrote up to a full page, even begging for an extension of that time frame. Frequently, I would have them share aloud with the rest of us what they had written. Doing this seemed to act as a stimulus as often there would be comments like *"I hadn't thought of that"* or *"that's not what I think"* or *"why did you say that?"*

Whether these kinds of activities were responsible or not (I would like to think they were), the quality of their writing began to show improvement. For example, I noticed that they became better at putting together a piece of writing that could stand on its own. This became especially evident in their writing during Social Studies. We were working on Topic 3A: Special Communities and were watching the videos on the Netsilik Eskimos. One in particular was called "Fishing at the Stone Weir." In these videos the only words spoken in English were during the introduction at the beginning of the

tape, the rest was entirely spoken in dialect. Through watching the actions of the subjects and making conjectures and drawing conclusions from their observations, the students were able to weave in English very believable stories of what they thought was transpiring. The quality and quantity of their writing was pretty consistent with what they could do in their narrative writing. Those who could already make up and sequence their own stories well, performed just as capably on this task, while others who had difficulty expressing themselves coherently in stories of their own also had difficulty with this kind of writing.

I was the only teacher in the school using the reading-writing workshop approach. In this approach, spelling is to be done individually in context as the child is doing his/her writing. For words that they do not know how to spell, students are encouraged to use inventive spelling as the key idea is to get ideas down in the first draft. Then when the student is editing, correct spelling can be obtained from a dictionary, another student or the teacher. A spelling program had to be worked into my learning to read by reading and learning to write by writing approach. Since I had three funded adaptation students at the beginning of the year, it was strongly recommended to me by two members of our learning

resources team that I have a structured spelling program in place for these students, in order to include this in their IEP's (these are Individual Education Programs which are required by the school district for students who receive special funding). I was the only teacher in the school working with learning to read by reading and learning to write by writing; and a formal spelling program was incompatible with this stance, but I was expected to do it. How to make this feasible was the big question and based on the nature of my class, I could not see how I would carry out these programs individually, so it became a program for all. Another inherent factor in deciding to make it a program for all of them was the consideration that the majority of the rest of the class were not considered strong language learners. Sixteen of them were already a grade level behind where they were supposed to be for their age and another one awaiting funding had tested far below the language and mathematical skills normally associated with her current placement.

I found a program called Spelling Workout and through using the overhead we were able to do the program orally and through writing down the answers. The students were quite amenable to doing the program as it was quick and fun. It was based on the idea of a baseball game with sections like "warm-

up", "pep talk", "practice" and "flex your spelling muscles" in which the students used the spelling words to solve riddles and crossword puzzles.

At first I was quite hesitant about using what seemed like an old "workbook" approach as it was at odds with my concurrence with Frank Smith's idea of learning to write by writing. In time, I came to notice that even the very weakest of the students were making use of the structures of words they were learning, writing words that were similar to those they had studied. Most of the time, they were correctly using in their writing the homonyms, antonyms and synonyms and other words they had studied. How much of this was actual transference or whether they already knew the words, I can't say, as I really did not get into doing pre and post testing. However, when editing their writing they were able to self-correct mistakes in spelling or usage of the words that were studied.

I had started out at the beginning with Atwell's basic framework of the reading-writing workshop to guide me, but I also included within that framework a set of questions from Weaver (1990) to give me another perspective. The first ten regard students (taken from Weaver, 1990, p. 126):

a) *How do the students view themselves as readers and writers? Does this perception change over time?*
b) *Do they consider meaning of prime importance when explaining what makes someone a good reader or writer?*
c) *Do they exhibit flexibility in solving problems they encounter as readers and writers?*
d) *Do they take risks as learners?*
e) *Are they learning to construct meaning from a variety of texts, written for differing purposes?*
f) *Are they learning to convey meaning through writing, for a variety of purposes and audiences?*
g) *Are they developing a flexible repertoire of reading and writing strategies?*
h) *Are they developing strategies for analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating when they read--and write?*
i) *Are they developing the ability to think not only critically but creatively, through language?*
j) *Are they developing the attitudes and habits of independent, self-motivated, lifelong readers and writers, thinkers and learners?*

For myself, the prevailing questions were:

a) How do my learning experiences with the reading-writing workshop parallel those of the students?
b) Does my stance as teacher-researcher make me more sensitive and perceptive of my students and my pedagogy?

These questions helped me to decide to include the reading and writing surveys that Atwell includes in the

Appendices of her book, In the middle: Writing, reading, and learning with adolescents. I was mainly concerned with getting a feel for how the students viewed themselves as readers and writers. I administered the first set of surveys in September and after looking over their responses and ascertaining that all except for a couple of the students viewed themselves as readers and writers, I put them away. It was not until about January, when I was going over the entry regarding administration of these surveys in September, that I decided to revisit these surveys. This time I looked at them differently, in more depth, and discovered how much I had missed the first time around. In particular, I looked at the other questions about how the students thought teachers decided who was a good reader, how teachers decided which were good pieces of writing, and how the students felt about reading and what they wrote in general. Some of their responses shocked me into an awareness of what had been demonstrated to them about reading and writing in the past and I was faced with questions about how I was going to go about changing those perceptions and attitudes. From that point in time, I decided to be much more careful of what I was demonstrating to the students and also to administer these same surveys in June to see if any of these perceptions or

attitudes changed at all.

Not only was I faced with trying to change perceptions and attitudes, but I realized that I had to make a concerted effort to help those students whose skills were so weak, especially in writing. For example, those students who did not view themselves as readers and writers were not going to change their perceptions and in particular, their attitudes, until their skills improved. From September to March, I did what I could given my context and number of students. In March, I started receiving assistance four times a week for a half hour in the morning from a member of our learning resources team. I discussed with this person what I had come to see as areas of need for these students, for example, their ability to pick out main ideas or thoughts from what they were reading and to sequence these thoughts or ideas in their own words in writing. She began to work individually with these students on a daily rotating basis. She had them read to her from whatever book they were reading at the time and they would discuss what they had learned from their reading and what else they knew that related to the topic. After bringing out their ideas and knowledge, she would have them orally sequence these and then write them out. This type of help lasted until the end of April, but it was enough to make a

noticeable difference in the students' ability to express themselves in writing.

When I administered these surveys again in June and looked over the results, the students now felt that they were readers and writers and were much better at doing both. I sometimes wonder if I would have made such a conscious and concerted effort if I had not looked at those surveys in January and I shudder to think that I might have missed a golden opportunity to make a difference for someone. I now can understand what Clandinin (1991) meant by this statement:

> *We see personal practical knowledge as in a person's past experience, in the person's present mind and body and in the person's future plans and actions. It is knowledge that reflects the individual's prior knowledge and acknowledges the contextual nature of that teacher's knowledge. It is a kind of knowledge, carved out of, and shaped by, situations; knowledge that is constructed and reconstructed as we live out our stories and retell and relive them through processes of reflection.* (p. 4)

After the school year was done, I returned to Weaver's (1990, p. 126) questions again to assess how my implementation of the reading-writing workshop approach had fared. These are my responses:

a) *How do the students view themselves as readers and writers? Does this perception change over time?*

In September, all the responses were "yes" except for two and in June, the responses were all yes, so the perception did change over time. However, in September many of the students considered writing to mean good handwriting or printing whereas in June, they gave such responses as "makes sense", "has lots of detail" and "is interesting" to the question about how a teacher decides which pieces of writing are good ones.

b) *Do they consider meaning of prime importance when explaining what makes someone a good reader or writer?*

In September, the students placed more of an emphasis on correct spelling and neat handwriting whereas in June, they included "reading a lot so you can write well" and "writing on topics you know well" in their answers to a similar question.

c) *Do they exhibit flexibility in solving problems they encounter as readers and writers?*

By June the students were more ready and willing to try to write something in a form of poetry if what they were writing was not working for them in prose and they soon learned to get their ideas down first and work on the mechanics and spelling later. They also learned to whom (peers, teacher) and where (library, home) they could go to for help. Whatever the students were reading about often came to form the basis for their writing.

d) *Do they take risks as learners?*

By the end of the school year the students were taking out a more diverse selection of

books from the library to read and in writing they were experimenting with different forms of writing and choosing on their own to try both fiction and non-fiction.

e) *Are they learning to construct meaning from a variety of texts, written for differing purposes?*

The students became much more comfortable with reading a variety of genres and being able to respond.

f) *Are they learning to convey meaning through writing, for a variety of purposes and audiences?*

During Education Week in May, the students became conversant with sharing their writing with audiences of different ages, including parents. Through listening to others share their writing, the students became aware of the importance of clarity and other techniques to maintain interest. They also wrote in the content areas.

g) *Are they developing a flexible repertoire of reading and writing strategies?*

The students learned to make guesses for unfamiliar words from the context and to sound out words from the things they learned in their spelling program. The spelling program also helped them in their writing. From their reading and being read to, the students learned to read their writing aloud to themselves or others to see if it made sense.

h) *Are they developing strategies for analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating when they read--and write?*

Mini-lessons helped the students to learn how to pull out key ideas and words from what they were reading and then to use these in their own writing. Webbing and outlining

techniques were also used.

i) *Are they developing the ability to think not only critically but creatively, through language?*

Through reading a lot the students were able to start making comparisons between things they were reading and to discover that information could differ from book to book and that it was not always necessarily correct.

j) *Are they developing the attitudes and habits of independent, self-motivated, lifelong readers and writers, thinkers and learners?*

By June, the students' responses indicated they no longer considered reading or writing an onerous task and were coming to realize that they were capable people who could read, write, think and learn.

Here are the results of what I had accomplished out of my planned course of action taken from Atwell (p. 17-19, 170-197):

a) *Regular chunks of time for writers "...to think, write, confer, read, change their minds, and write some more."*

The students were given this time.

b) *Choice of own topics by writers.*

The students chose their own topics.

c) *Response for writers "...from the writer's peers and from the teacher, who consistently models the kinds of restatements and questions that help writers reflect on the content of their writing."*

As the year progressed, we became better at doing this. For, example, if I were editing a final draft with a student, I would ask questions such as "What were you thinking of here?" to help him/her clarify what was to be written.

d) *Learning of mechanics in context "...from teachers who address errors as they occur within individual pieces of writing, where these rules and forms will have meaning."*

This I tried to do consistently.

e) *Acquaintance with adult writers who can demonstrate the composing process.*

Unfortunately, the only adult writer the students really had contact with who could demonstrate the composing process was me, as the visiting authors we had in our school worked with the grade fives and sixes.

f) *Access of writers to "..a wide-ranging variety of texts, prose and poetry, fiction and non-fiction."*

The students got books from the school library, from their homes and from the public library which represented a wide variety of literary genre.

g) *Writing teachers who take responsibility for own knowledge and teaching and become readers of recent research into children's writing, writers and researchers, observers and learners.*

I guess I can say that they were certainly exposed to this in that I was investigating my stance as a teacher-researcher implementing a new theory of reading and writing.

h) *Readily available writing and reading materials.*

Reading materials were readily available. The writing materials were accessible though not as readily available for reasons previously described.

i) *Use of mini-lessons on procedures of writing and reading workshops, the craft of writing, skills, and literature.*

Mini-lessons were used as consistently as possible with individuals, small groups or whole group on topics such as lead-ins or how authors use pictures to tell part of the story in picture books.

j) *Response to writers and writing through status-of-the-class conference, conferring about content, group share sessions, topic conferences, conferring with oneself, editing conferences, and evaluating writing in conference.*

Of this group all were accomplished expect for the status-of-the-class conference. I found that I could not do the whole class on a daily basis for whatever reason, and that I had to do a small group each day.

k) *Response to readers and reading through literary gossip, kinds of a talk about books, writing back, student-to-student dialogues, procedures for dialogue journals, and evaluating reading in conference.*

All of these were used on a consistent basis except for dialogue journals.

I guess that I can say now that it is possible to implement with younger students the reading-writing workshop approach that Atwell used with junior high school students. However, in doing so, I had to learn to tailor it to my situation (a class of level three and four students) and to my personality. To achieve any degree of success with this implementation, I discovered that I had to modify such aspects as the availability of the writing materials for students, the use of the writing folders, how the writing and editing processes were handled, and the inclusion of a structured spelling program which I was obliged to include, yet was

incompatible with the beliefs underlying this approach. In chapter five, I will restory as I reflect upon these experiences in doing this and the meaning they held for me.

CHAPTER FIVE

REFLECTIONS FROM THE RESTORYING

Introduction

> *Understanding human experience is the central task of the educational researcher. For it is in the stories of everyday lives, the drama, the meanings, the metaphors others live by, that the human researcher must practice his or her craft of telling.* (Valerie Polakow, 1985, p. 833)

> *"Metaphors are the legs of language, on which thought steadily advances or makes its more daring leaps. Without metaphor thought is inert, and with the wrong metaphor it is hobbled."* (Smith, 1983, p. 117)

When I first started out on my journey, the intention of my research was to investigate and examine my implementation of a reading-writing workshop approach in my classroom. My

original title, **The metamorphosis of a teacher: A teacher-researcher implements a reading-writing workshop approach,** seemed to indicate how I would have to go about implementing someone else's theory into the reality of my classroom situation and how I would have to deal with my preconceived notions and adapt my style to make this possible. This process lead to a place totally different from my original intent and I did not realize it until much later.

When I was going over my journal, midway through my research and then again preparatory to writing my thesis, the stance that I had adopted, that of teacher-researcher, appeared to be the primary focus and the implementation of a reading-writing workshop approach had become a secondary consideration. The approach had become the vehicle to bring to light the conscious or unconscious thinking and action and reaction that I, as a teacher, engaged in while attempting to carry out this plan and therefore the new focus of study. As van Manen (1990) says, we need to be creative in finding approaches and procedures and always keep in mind the fundamental research question in terms of the context (p. 163).

Emergent Themes

In going over the journal one of the themes that emerged was "the reality of lived versus planned experience." Prigogine & Stengers (1984) state that "reality is multiple, temporal and complex" (p. 15). When I got into the reality of trying to do my research back in the classroom, I found this statement to be ever so true. I had to become "wide-awake" as Greene (1978) says, to the instances happening in my own life in order to empower myself. I had planned to use writing folders with my students just as Atwell suggests; but once I tried it, the students had difficulty remembering to date every draft and keep track of them. I had also planned to let the students just "experience" literature as Sloan suggests, but I soon found that they were not picking up on the elements of a fairy tale, for example, as I had expected. Consequently, I had to examine things in a different light to create and re-create my own meaning and to see that the successes and failures of what I was trying to implement hinged on the realities of my classroom. These realities were not only the academic but the social/emotional status of the students from day to day. To be able to appreciate this, I had to change from a participant to spectator role referred to

by Britton (1970). Instead of remaining a participant and just describing my experiences arising out of my actions, I had to savour the joys, sorrows and surprises of my experiences so that I could become a spectator. I came in time to recognize that depending upon what was happening, I would teach in either a didactic or evocative mode.

In his book, The university teacher as an artist, Axelrod (1973) says that in the didactic mode, inquiry on the part of the student is not required or encouraged while in the evocative mode, the student is required to question if he is to complete successfully, the tasks set by the teacher. The teachers who achieve excellence in the didactic mode are called craftsmen while those who achieve excellence in the evocative mode are called artists. Following true to form, I would switch into the didactic or "control mode" whenever instances arose that made operating evocatively impossible, such as when J. was out of control prior to her going into the psychriatic and rehabilitative school for assessment.

Without reading back and being perturbed by this, I would never have "become" or "emerged." Prigogine & Stengers (1984) tell us that becoming only happens in far from equilibrium situations. Anything that disrupts the old order of our lives has the potential for triggering a transformation or a

movement toward greater openness and stress. For me, becoming aware that I was going into the didactic or control mode with J., certainly disrupted the order of my old life. I then realized that not only was teaching didactically difficult, it was basically contrary to what I had experienced as a young student, to how I prefer to learn, to the stance of teacher-researcher that I had assumed, and to my current beliefs about language and learners. When I was young, I was allowed to structure my own knowledge and was scaffolded in my learning through working cooperatively with other students of varying ages in a one room schoolhouse. Quite probably this background was what accounted for my great enjoyment of school and it is still how I like to learn today as an adult. Yet here I was, using pro-social skills to set the agenda and to control the situation. The students probably disliked being told what and how to do something and being made to practice these skills as much as I would were I in their position. Contemplating what Greene (1978) calls our "landscape" put into perspective Freire's (1970) notion "that the way we teach depends on our view of education and of humanity: "Every educational practice implies a concept of man and the world" (p. 205).

This insight or "emergence" that I was trying to teach

against my perceptions of how one should be in the world was painful, but as Harris (1987) said, "...emergence is a reminder to all teachers that for new life to be born, the teacher will probably have to live through moments of sadness and grieving and staying in the darkness even to live through periods of mourning and death" (p. 38). That emergence or insight that I was much happier, more comfortable and successful when I tried to teach evocatively liberated or freed me to move forward into teaching evocatively all the time. Freire (1970) identifies such liberation as a praxis--"...the action and reflection of men upon the world in order to transform it" (p. 66). Without that insight which liberated me, I would still have been teaching didactically against chaos instead of evocatively working with it.

I found truth in Greene's (1978) suggestion that "...we are more likely to ask questions and seek own transcendence when we are grounded in our lived lives" (p. 43). In being grounded in my lived life, I became conscious and as Greene says, "Consciousness is always of something; it is characterized by intentionality" (p. 14). Once I became aware of wanting to teach evocatively, I then consciously selected the parts of the approach that I attempted to implement. The parts that I tried were the ones that I felt

would work at that given point in time and if something did not work, I would try to implement that part of the approach at a later date. What seemed to work was a process of "trial and error" and the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). These notions were not referred to by Atwell (1987) and Calkins (1990), but were included by Donald Graves (1991) in Building a literate classroom. When something wasn't working well, I would return to the book where I had read the idea (i.e., Atwell or Calkins) and reread the book to see if there was something else I had missed. Sometimes I would turn to someone else like Donald Graves to get a different perspective. For example, I turned to Graves for help when things were not working as intended such as my hasty selection and implementation of the writing folders that Atwell suggested (I had not taken into account that the age and inexperience of my students as compared to Atwell's students might make it difficult to handle). Like Kazantzakis (1952) in Zorba the Greek, I finally learned to proceed slowly and selectively:

> *I remember one morning when I discovered a cocoon in the bark of a tree, just as a butterfly was making a hole in its case and preparing to come out. I waited a while, but it was too long appearing and I was impatient. I bent over it and breathed on it to warm it. I warmed it as quickly*

> *as I could and the miracle began to happen before my eyes, faster than life. The case opened, the butterfly started crawling out and I shall never forget the look of horror when I saw how its wings were folded back and crumpled; the wretched butterfly tried with its whole trembling body to unfold them. Bending over it, I tried to help it with my breath. In vain. Now it was too late. My breath had forced the butterfly to appear, all crumpled before its time. It struggled desperately and a few seconds later, died in the palm of my hand.*
>
> *That little body is, I do believe, the greatest weight I have on my conscience. For I realize that it is a mortal sin to violate the great laws of nature. We should not hurry, we should not be impatient, but we should confidently obey the eternal rhythm.* (p. 120-121)

The prospect of having things weigh on my conscience made me pause and evaluate what had happened thus far along the way and to make use of that "zone of proximal development." Eventually I would find an answer to my questions and this was one of the main reasons that I revisited the questionnaires I had given students at the beginning of the year. In the process, I noticed aspectss in the students' responses that I hadn't at the initial point of administration (September, 1991), for example, what had been previously shown or "demonstrated" to them, as indicated in the following responses:

-*"it's boring"* to the question, *"In general, how do you*

feel about reading?" (The question for me to ponder then became what had someone demonstrated to this child that had caused this individual to feel that reading was boring? What could I do that could possibly change that perception?)

-*"not too good"* to the question, *"In general how do you feel about what you write?"* (What was I going to do in the future to enable this student have a more positive attitude towards her writing?)

-*"spelled correctly, good printing"* to the question, *"How does a teacher decide which pieces of writing are good ones?"* (How would I continue from here, so that I can get across to students that correct spelling and good printing are not the most important criteria for a piece of good writing?)

Additional examples of concepts of literature and writing can be seen in "Transcription of Reading and Writing Survey Responses" in Appendix C.

From these expressions, and others, came a heightened awareness on my part of what the students had perceived about

reading and writing from what had been demonstrated to them to this point in time. I became conscious of what I would be trying to "demonstrate" in the future. While I don't think I can explicitly detail what I actually did to try to change these perceptions and attitudes, I was more conscious of what I was demonstrating to the students. In the end it appeared to have an effect on some of the students for their responses on the second administration of the reading and writing questionnaires were more positive. The changes noted included:

for the question, *How did you learn to read?*

Student A:
September response: *by practicing*
June response: *learned to read by writing*
Student B:
September response: *from home and school*
June response: *by reading a lot*

for the question, *How did you learn to write?*

September responses:
2 said from parents
3 said from home and school
7 said from school and teacher
other answers: practicing, by alphabet, by starting on small words, writing and copying handwriting on the board, no answer
June responses:
6 said from reading
3 said from home and school

other answers: make up a story - write it down, no answer, by watching TV and school, by learning sounds, writing alphabet, by parents, at school, by reading books/writing a lot

Another one of the most profound themes to emerge was the power of writing about one's experience. Writing about one's experiences gives the opportunity to re"live" and re"flect". In re-reading my advisor's comments to things I had written in my journal, October 28, 1991, I can now see how critical I was of myself. I had commented, *"So what has happened regarding that fantastic proposal for a master's thesis of mine that I wrote! Well, not much it would seem, though possibly more than is actually apparent at the moment."* I had written this prior to reiterating what it was I had accomplished and my advisor wrote back: *"WOW! Please read back from where I starred to here--you have done an incredible amount from this outsider's view--what <u>were</u> your expectations of yourself, Elaine?"* Having someone to respond to what one is trying to do is important for sometimes one can't "see the forest for the trees" as the old saying goes or as Hoff (1982) so aptly put it:

> *Knowledge and Cleverness, tend to concern themselves with the wrong sorts of things, and a mind confused by Knowledge, Cleverness and Abstract ideas tends to go chasing off after things that don't matter, or that don't exist instead of seeing, appreciating and making use of what is right in front of it.* (p. 146).

In the constructivist tradition (Bruner, 1986) the learner is an active participant in creation of his or her own meaning. This learning is interactive and socially and culturally constructed. A teacher-researcher operates within the constructivist tradition for in the process of learning and building his or her own theories, *"a learner continually constructs meaning of new information and events, as a result of the interaction of that individual's prior knowledge and experiences with his or her current observations"* (MacKinnon, 1988, p. 17). My meaning was constructed from re-visiting my journal and from the questions that my advisor raised regarding something I had written. These questions caused me to pause and reconsider what I had meant by the things I had written. Meaning also came when I looked again at the questionnaires.

The journal, the medium which generated these messages, became a metaphor, serving to bridge the gap between my being and my knowing. Weaver (1985) in looking at and describing

new paradigms for language processing, described these transactions through which knowing is achieved as a dance:

> *Just as the universe may be viewed as fundamentally a dance of transient forms that sparkle in and out of existence, so meaning, the poem, may be viewed as an ever-fluctuating dance that occurs more or less simultaneously on and across levels: letters, words, sentences, schemata; writer, text, and reader; text/reader and context; the present reader with other readers, past and present; and so forth; all connected in a multi-dimensional holarchy, an interlocking network or web of meaning, a synchronous dance in which there is no clear distinction between what is and what happens.* (p. 313)

This dance metaphor that Weaver used to decribe knowing is also used by Mitchell (1988) to describe being, which she calls Tao. She says you must be like the forces of nature, *"express yourself completely, then keep quiet"* (Chapter 23). Through opening yourself to and being one with the Tao, you open yourself to insight. Mitchell says that Tao, or being, can achieve harmony by listening to Self and to the natural order:

> *The Tao gives birth to all beings,*
> *nourishes then, maintains them,*
> *cares for them, comforts them, protects them,*
> *takes them back to itself,*
> *creating without possessing,*
> *acting without expecting,*

guiding without interfering.
That is why love of the Tao
is in the very nature of things.
(Chapter 51)

These metaphors of dance used by Weaver and Mitchell illustrate the complementarity of being and knowing and our inability to know the dancer from the dance. For me, my being and knowing were like the steps of a dance that went in and out and round and round and at times; I did not know whether it was the theory which was not working or my implementation of it.

Lakoff & Johnson (1980) consider metaphor to be the prevalent force in human life, in thought, language and action which governs our everyday functioning. They say metaphor "*plays a central role in defining our everyday realities*" (p. 3) and so view metaphor as the most basic device for understanding human experience. Now in retrospect, I can discern how metaphor became a prevailing theme through my journal, down to the most mundane detail as Lakoff and Johnson say it does. In describing my fall from a desk in September, 1991 and its subsequent effect upon me, I wrote in my journal:

"like a plummeting meteorite, I hit the carpet.."

"like a side show at the circus, I was the main attraction"

At that time, I don't think I really realized what effect this accident had on me and how it affected my ensuing course of action, but in looking back over my journal now, I can see the depth of its impact. Later in my journal, I had written the following after I had got into the implementation of the reading-writing workshop approach and was expressing my feelings about my experiences:

"maybe more of the gains have been in other areas with all that I've had sitting on my plate"

"I guess that I am just like an explorer charting new waters."

Elliot Eisner, in writing the Foreword to Connelly and Clandinin's (1988) book, Teachers as curriculum planners: Narratives of experience reiterates not only how difficult experiences are to pin down, but how key metaphor is to this process:

> *First, experience is slippery; it is difficult to operationalize; it eludes factual descriptions of manifest behavior. Experience is what people undergo, the kinds of meanings they construe as they teach and learn, and the personal way in which they interpret the worlds in which they live. Such aspects of life are difficult to relegate to a technology of standardized observation schedules or behavioral measures, yet what people experience in schools is central to any effort to understand what schools mean to those who spend a major portion of their lives there. (p. ix)*

Eisner says we must "*not only **see** what we look at*", we also must "***interpret** it.*" Interpretation can be accomplished by listening "*deeply to what people have to say*" and by seeing "*beyond what they do.*" This is the only way "*to grasp the meanings that their doings have for them.*" The metaphors in teacher narratives "*tell us more profoundly about what is going on in their lives as professionals than any measured behavior is likely to reveal*":

> *The use of narratives, and the epistemological frameworks through which these narratives embody and convey meaning, not only provides an important way to think about curriculum and teaching, but also is vital to understanding what goes on at school. (p. x-xi)*

Like Lakoff & Johnson, Connelly & Clandinin (1988) view metaphor as central to our practical knowledge and our language of practice (p. 71). They refer to Zerubaval's

(1979) metaphor of a glass wall and how we do not notice things until we bump into them: *"The little intellectual bumps that result will help to crystallize the idea of curriculum into visibility"* (p. 10). Several metaphors may appear and some may even conflict with each other as narratives are too complex to be reduced to a logical, coherent, seqeuntial story (p. 77).

The many "little intellectual bumps" that I experienced along the way in trying to put a new theory into practice I took for granted and did not attach that much importance to them then. It wasn't until much later when I was going over my journal and trying to piece together my narrative or story that I came to understand how significant they were. Too much of what one does in the normal course of teaching is done at a subconscious level and it is only when brought to a conscious level that the scope of thought and action can be enlarged.

The final theme that emerged out of my journal was the paralleling of my experiences with that of my students in being learners. When I started out, I had set for myself these two prevailing questions:

a) *How do my learning experiences with the*

reading-writing workshop parallel those of the students?

b) *Does my stance as teacher-researcher make me more sensitive and perceptive of my students and my pedagogy?*

To answer the first question, I looked at the 1992 Alberta Education Language Learning document whose beliefs and components mirror the beliefs and components of the reading-writing workshop approach. The document's primary focus is that children learn actively through a set of major purposes for which they use language in their learning: to **EXPLORE**, **CONSTRUCT** and **COMMUNICATE MEANING**. The Fundamental Principles (p. A1, A2) of these three components are:

1. *Learning and language growth are interwoven.*
2. *Meaning is central to language learning.*
3. *Language learning builds on what learners already know about and can do with language.*
4. *Language is learned from demonstrations of language in use.*
5. *Language is learned in supportive environments.*

6. *Language learning is enhanced through interaction.*
7. *In and of itself, language can be a source of satisfaction and delight.*

These principles apply not only to the students, but to me as well for I, too, was a learner in trying to become a researcher implementing this new approach.

Language learning theorists have lead us to now believe that children learn language through exploration. They must have the opportunity to explore language in both oral and written form within social contexts. They learn language through what they see **demonstrated** and when their explorations are **supported** in **interactions**. They learn to take **risks** for they are **constantly** building from where they are. As Frank Smith (1992) says, "...learning is vicarious; it is not a consequence of instruction and practice but of demonstration and collaboration" (p. 434).

As a teacher learner, I was no different, just more mature. Michael Fullan (1982) notes that unless teachers have the opportunity "...to reflect, interact with others, share, develop on the job", significant changes are not likely to occur. So just like the children, I had to **explore** the

reading-writing workshop approach in terms of my own teaching to see what it is I was already doing so I could build from there. Through exploration, I expanded my **zone of proximal development** (Vygotsky, 1962) and added to my repertoire because many times I returned to the books of Atwell, Calkins and Graves when things were not going as planned. This exploration caused me to become more of a **risk taker** and a **reflective practioner** (Schon, 1987) who is now better able to articulate my knowledge to others (Newman, 1990).

Wells and Chang (1986) say, "The most effective learning occurs when the learner is treated as an active constructor of his or her own knowledge and is given the opportunity to share the responsibility for the selection, organization and evaluation of the tasks through which knowledge and competence are acquired" (p. 1). This statement means more to me now that I understand how effective my learning and the children's were when we were motivated by interest and choice. We both needed to have interest and choice. The students needed to have interest and choice in what they were learning. I needed to have interest in choosing how I was going to create the situations in which this learning was to occur. None of this construction was done in isolation for we all need a framework upon which to build. For students, it was the exposure to the

thoughts and ideas of others through a variety of media and for me, it was the exposure to the theories of researchers.

Fundamental to this exploration and construction is the third component, **communicate**, for without communication there is little **meaning** and the other two components cannot exist. For humans, communication is a way of life and meaning can be unfolded through the use of words. As learners become more experienced, they begin to play with words, making use of figurative language such as metaphor to negotiate meaning for themselves and others. This can become a source of **satisfaction** and **delight**. Teachers often speak metaphorically, as noted in the various metaphors I used in my journal to express my experiences and feelings. It was the way Frank Smith (1983) expresses it that through use of the right metaphors we make our more "daring leaps".

I think I can honestly say that through my experience in learning to become a researcher, I did become even more perceptive and sensitive to my students than I had previously. In the course of my research I was constantly faced with not only the ups and downs of my experience, but with the effect of my pedagogy upon them. For if I were to be successful at all, I had to try to step into their shoes and to stay attuned to their thoughts, feelings and reactions which so readily

affected the daily course of events.

In the final chapter, I will draw some conclusions based on my experience as a teacher-researcher trying to implement a new theory into my classroom.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

-T. S. Eliot, "Four Quartets" (p. 1500)

Doll (1986) said that "Development, growth and understanding are not instantaneous, direct and continuous but come in punctuated spurts" (p. 15). This did not have much significance for me until the time came for me to contemplate my experience as a teacher-researcher and draw some conclusions that could hold meaning not just for myself but for others.

To specify in detail how one goes about becoming a teacher researcher is an impossibility. While it is complicated, it is a stance that one can grow into. It could be likened to learning how to ride a bicycle that Michael Polanyi describes in his 1958 book, Personal knowledge:

> *From my interrogations of physicists, engineers and bicycle manufacturers, I have come to the conclusion that the principle by which the cyclist keeps his balance is not generally known. The rule observed by the cyclist is this. When he starts falling to the right he turns the handlebars to the right, so that the course of the bicycle is deflected along a curve to the right. This manoeuvre presently throws the cyclist out of balance to the left, which he counteracts by turning the handlebars to the left; and so he continues to keep himself in balance by winding along a series of appropriate curvatures.*

Britton (1985) provides another example from Edmond Henderson, that of learning to ride a horse English style which could also be comparable to the elusive quality of being able to describe becoming a teacher-researcher (p. 3-4). The instructor did not tell Henderson how to ride at all, just positioned him on a compatible horse and worked at varied gaits alternated with short excursions. He bought a text on horsemanship and while he "understood" what he read, he could execute none of it until he became more skilled:

> *The point to be made here is that any particular skill will have meaning and utility only in the context of a larger state of skillfulness. When a readiness for its application has been achieved, the skill is learned almost instantly and thence soon integrated into the repertoire....The context to which this skill is added is tacit knowledge which derives from doing the activity altogether.* (Henderson, 1977, p. 349)

Even though I cannot express how I mastered this skill, it is what I have learned from doing it that is important. I learned that while more experienced practitioners and theorists can provide me with a new vision or "lore" as Stephen North (1987) describes it, in the end I had to make my own way. I was immediately challenged with the assumption from this lore that what has "worked" for one teacher should "work" for me. Even though Atwell and Calkins had done the kinds of things I wanted to do with "real" children, I could not transfer unchanged their experience to my classroom. When I first encountered this, I was overwhelmed and frustrated by the apparent contradictions between their classrooms and mine. I had not taken into account that the contexts and the students with whom Atwell and Calkins had worked were different from my context and my students. I lived with these doubts about myself and my ability to carry this through until I read Donald Graves (1991). I had been trying to implement Atwell's theory, in particular, into my classroom without considering these differences; so naturally, what I was finding was not going to match what Atwell had portrayed.

Graves (1991) brings up the notion of "*retrospective curriculum*" which "*will reveal a far more detailed use of curriculum than we could ever design in advance*" (p. 137).

This "*real or what happened curriculum*" needs to be

> *...evaluated more thoroughly than the prescriptive curriculum concocted in the absence of real data about what children can actually do. And as long as the curriculum is prescriptive, we will continue to underestimate what children can do.* (p. 137)

The realization finally did dawn that I needed to constantly evaluate what was happening so that changes could be made in order to have things work. Even though this was something I had done in past scenarios, this time I had become caught up in the idea that what I was doing "should work out as expected." As it was, the situation looked a lot brighter once I started to "adapt" rather than just "adopt" the parts of the theory that were needed for my reality. Harris (1987) said that "we teach best when we are more truly ourselves" (p. 158). Now I feel that these notions of adapting rather than adopting and being ourselves are something that theorists have to make more explicit, so that I would not have spent the time I did feeling guilty about what was transpiring. **Theory must be tailored to fit the individual practitioner's personality and the "real" situation** and not blindly replicated. To emphasize this observation that we need to learn to value ourselves as experts, I turned to The Tao of Pooh by Hoff

(1982):

> *"The only chance we have to avoid disaster is to change our approach, and to learn to value wisdom and contentment. These are the things that are being searched for anyway, through Knowledge and Cleverness. We can no longer afford to look so desperately hard for something in the wrong way and in the wrong place.*
>
> *The masters of life know the Way, for they listen to the voice within them, the voice of wisdom and simplicity, the voice that reasons beyond Cleverness and knows beyond Knowledge."* (p. 154)

Or as Freire (1987) says, "Experiments cannot be transplanted; they must be reinvented" (p. 185).

Through this process of becoming a teacher-researcher, teachers stand to benefit in many ways. By closely and critically looking at their own practice, they stand to develop and refine insights into the nature of their practices, autonomy and authority and thus be more able to give a reasoned justification of their work. As Shulman (1988) says teachers will become better educators when they can explicitly answer the hows and whys in their practice:

> *The capacity to answer such questions not only lies at the heart of what we mean by becoming skilled as a teacher; it also requires a combining of reflection on practical experience and reflection on theoretical understanding.* (p. 31)

By assuming the stance of a teacher-researcher, I now have a few more insights into my practice than I did previously. In the past my understanding and ability to articulate was not as rounded for I was just the "insider" and not both the "insider" and "outsider" as Spradley (1980) calls it. Ordinarily, the participant in a social situation experiences things immediately and subjectively, but the teacher-researcher as a *"participant observer, on the other hand will experience being insider and outsider simultaneously"* (p. 57). Being both insider and outsider through the stance of a teacher-researcher gave me the opportunity to grow in at least three ways: politically, professionally and personally.

Like many other teachers, this past year I was faced with many changes in the political arena. Schools have become involved in curriculum development and are encouraged to identify their own needs and to initiate action to meet those needs. Our school chose to go to blended groupings across the school to meet the needs of students who were at various stages of development and did not fit into individual grade level slots. The emphasis on curricula became more strongly based on process skills and attitude rather than content. No inservice training was given to teachers on how to handle this

new educational situation. My research on how I would act and react as a teacher-researcher trying to implement a reading-writing workshop approach became an added boon in helping me deal with this dimension as well.

My stance as a teacher-researcher gave me that chance to find out what it really means to be a professional. Teaching is called a profession and to continue to be regarded as such, it must maintain three of the distinct features of the character of a profession that Carr & Kemmis (1986) defined in their book, Becoming critical. Firstly, professions need to employ methods and procedures based on theoretical knowledge and research. Secondly, members of the profession must have an overriding commitment to the well-being of their clients. And thirdly, individually and collectively, members reserve the right to make autonomous and independent judgments which are free from external non-professional controls and constraints about particular courses of action to be adopted in any particular situation.

Teacher-research provided the method through which I could explore the life of a professional teacher. I could develop this kind of research and knowledge to test and improve my classroom practice. I had the freedom and confidence and resolution to change the course of things with

which I was dissatisfied. As I became more aware of the chain-reactions resulting from my decisions and actions as a teacher, I was able to explore ways and means to enhance the quality of not only my own life as a teacher, but the lives of the students in my care. In the process, I adopted a more thinking, critical attitude about my own practice and became more qualified to give a reasoned justification for my actions.

Personally, I grew as well. I traversed more of the distance between what McNiff (1988) calls "technician" operating in a service role to "real educator":

> *To qualify as real educators, teachers must be given the strongest encouragement to apply their wisdom, gained through long and strenuous experience, in their praxis. Education is not a business of manufacturing. It is literally a growth area, for pupils and teachers alike. Once teachers embark on the journey of self-education, then thinking becomes action, and action becomes a never-ending cycle of re-creation.* (p. 51)

Prior to undertaking the role of a teacher-researcher, I believed I was a good teacher. Now, I realize that I did not actively start to systematically think about what I was doing until I undertook this research. I came to understand what it means to be autonomous--a self-contained, self-directed yet

morally self-legislating professional independently responsible for the functioning of my classroom. Instead of standing on the sidelines being an observer and a manipulator of others' experience, I joined the game. I learned that I would win some and lose some but through it I would live and learn. Looking at things through "different eyes," maybe I became what Glenda Bissex (1987) called "a more complete teacher," capable of building my own pedagogy by crossing that heuristic gap between problem and discovery. As Lawrence Stenhouse (1983) so explicitly put it:

> *We shall only teach better if we learn intelligently from the experience of shortfall; both in our grasp of the knowledge we offer and our knowledge of how to offer it. This is the case for research as the basis for teaching.* (p. 193)

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Permission Letter Sent to Parents for Data Collection

Letter sent to parents requesting permission for data collection:

September/91

Dear Parents,

During this school year I will be using a reading and writing workshop approach with your children in regards to their language learning. In this approach students read and responded to books of their own choice daily and write on topics of their own choosing. Included with this will be a spelling program, **Spelling Workout** that is done via use of the overhead. At various times we also work on different kinds of literature like picture books and fairy tales and fantasy with emphasis on the elements. For instance, students learn about the things like "once upon a time," magic, numbers three and seven, and royalty that authors may use when writing a fairy tale.

The use of this approach is not only a way to fulfill the language learning component of your child's curriculum, but is also part of the research I undertook to complete my Master of Education degree. In July I will be writing up my experience in implementing this approach and its effectiveness as a method of instruction. In order to benefit future student learning, I would appreciate being able to include your child's response to this kind of approach. It is my intention to have students who have parental permission and have given their own permission, participate by filling out a questionnaire and taking part in a taped discussion of their experience and reactions. In writing up their responses their identity and that of the school would be protected through the use of fictional names as is customary in research.

Therefore, I would please ask that each child and parent indicate whether or not permission is hereby granted to participate in the above cited data collection. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Elaine Denet

****

_____Yes, I hereby give Ms. Denet permission to use my responses in data collected for this educational research.

_____No, I hereby decline permission for Ms. Denet to use my responses in data collected for this educational research.

_____
(Student's Signature)

_____
(Parent's Signature)

Appendix B: Reading and Writing Surveys

Student questionnaires regarding their views on reading and writing (Atwell, 1987, p. 270-272) were reprinted with permission from Nancie Atwell: In the middle: Writing, reading and learning with adolescents. (Boynton/Cook Publishers, Portsmouth, NH, 1987).

YOUR NAME_____ DATE_____

1. Are you a writer?_____(If your answer is YES, answer question 2a. If your answer is NO, answer 2b.)

2a. How did you learn to write?_____

2b. How do people learn to write?_____

3. Why do people write?_____

4. What do you think a good writer needs to do in order to write well? _____

5. How does your teacher decide which pieces of writing are the good ones?_____

6. In general, how do you feel about what you write?

NAME_____ DATE_____

1. If you had to guess....
   How many books would you say you owned?_____
   How many books would you say there are in your house?_____
   How many novels would you say you've read in the last 12 months?_____
2. How did you learn to read?_____
_____
_____
3. Why do people read?_____
_____
_____
4. What does someone have to do in order to be a good reader?
_____
_____
_____
5. How does a teacher decide which students are good readers?
_____
_____
_____
6. What kind of books do you like to read?_____
_____
_____
_____
7. How do you decide which books you'll read?_____
_____
_____
8. Have you ever re-read a book?_____ If so, can you name them here?_____
_____
_____
9. Do you ever read novels at home for pleasure?_____ If so, how often do you read at home (for pleasure)?_____
_____
_____
10. Who are your favourite authors? (List as many as you like.)_____
_____
_____

11. Do you like to have your teacher read to you?_____ If so, is there anything special you'd like to hear?

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. In general, how do you feel about reading?

_____

_____

Appendix C: Transcription of Reading and Writing Survey Responses

The students responded to these questionnaires twice, in September, 1991 and June, 1992. Responses are given for each student who completed these questionnaires both times. The responses are directly across from each other so that they may be compared.

YOUR NAME_____ DATE_____

1. Are you a writer?_____(If your answer is YES, answer question 2a. If your answer is NO, answer 2b.)

September	June
2 no responses	All yes responses
One no answer	
14 yes responses	

2a. How did you learn to write?

September	June
from mom & teacher	from reading
parents	parents & school
practicing	books & posters
by school	make up story - write it down
teacher	school & home
in grade 1	school & home
going to school	get ideas from books
by starting on small words	no answer
by alphabet	by watching TV & school
teacher taught me	by reading books
teacher taught me	by learning sounds
teacher gave me books about writing & we had to copy	writing alphabet
handwriting on board	by parents
from mom	at school
no answer	by reading books/writing a lot
at school & home	by reading books
parents & school	

2b. How do people learn to write?

September	June
no answer	no answer
no answer	no answer
teachers teach you	no answer
don't really know	by parents
no answer	no answer
no answer	no answer
no answer	read books, get ideas
no answer	no answer
no answer	no answer
no answer	no answer
no answer	no answer
no answer	no answer
no answer	no answer
no answer	no answer
by practicing	from books
no answer	by reading, parents, teacher
to know how to read	reading lots of books

3. Why do people write?

September	June
it's fun for fun/become good writer	it's fun to write letter/write in school it's fun to write
to get job/for fun/get an education to make a story handwriting faster than printing so they can read	it's fun to get good at it
it's fun for fun	so other people can read their writing they like to for other people to read
to learn	might want to send a letter to other people
to find a job easier	because they like to or have to
to make money don't know for fun don't know for fun to learn	using their hands for fun for something to do to make good books for fun to get a job

4. What do you think a good writer needs to do in order to write well?

September	June
make web & rough copy	need pencil & sheet of looseleaf
write all the time at school, write books	choose topics you know
practice	practice
write a lot	use periods, capitals, make it interesting
write a lot	practice a lot
practice	practice
practice	practice
practice	practice
practice	practice
practice	read a lot
practice	take time/spell correctly
go to school a lot	read a lot
know how to write	have a good hand
learn how to spell	use a dictionary
good printing & writing	learn to print/spell properly
by writing	work very hard
make a web & rough copy	practice
write	spell correctly/write nicely

5. How does your teacher decide which pieces of writing are the good ones?

September	June
by reading it	don't know
spell right, good printing, lots of effort	they look nice/are interesting
by you writing good	read it over
they sound good	if they are interesting
see which ones look best	if they have everything they need
by looking at the work	how much effort went in
the ones you spend time on	if it has detail
ones with periods & capitals	ones that make sense
by looking at the writing	neat writing/spelled right
way you write	read it over
the story	no mistakes
no corrections	how well you try
don't know	reads them & decides
by watching	checks for mistakes
reading & making corrections	thinks they're interesting
don't have wrong words	are neat

6. In general, how do you feel about what you write?

September	June
you think	good
like to write a lot at school	feel special when I write
confused when I write	it's okay
it's okay	good
feel happy	feel very happy
it's nice	like it
it's fun	sort of like it
good	I like what I write
good	good
good	good
good	good
good	good
ok & fine	feel proud of myself
not too good	very happy
fun when I like it/boring when I hate it	good
good	good

NAME_____DATE_____

1. If you had to guess....
   How many books would you say you owned?_____
   How many books would you say there are in your house?_____
   How many novels would you say you've read in the last 12 months?_____

2. How did you learn to read?

September	June
from school	from parents
parents & school	parents & school
dad	mom & dad
don't know	mom taught me from little books
first look then read then went to chapter books	parents taught me
going to school	learned words, then started reading
by practicing	sounding out letters
by practicing	learned to read by writing
in grade 1	by reading harder books
by looking at words & books	read by writing
by sounding words out	dad made little cards
in grade 1	by parents
in grade 1	in kindergarten
from home & school	by reading a lot
at school	by myself

3. Why do people read?

September	June
to learn & have fun	it's fun
to read letters & books	it's fun & interesting
to learn more	books are fun to read
to learn	it's interesting
can have fun when they grow up	if they can't read wouldn't sin & would have accidents
to get information	it's fun
it's fun	they like to read
to find out things	to learn
to be smart	for fun & to be smart
to learn more words	to learn more words or they like to
to learn new things, for something to do	to learn
help their eyes	to learn
with their eyes	to wait for something
to get good marks, for fun	they like to
to get good marks, for fun	to learn & get better
so they know how to	to get a job

4. What does someone have to do in order to be a good reader?

September	June
practice	practice
read to class, self, mom & at home	read every day, get books you're interested in
read a lot	keep reading books
read a lot	don't skip lines
read a lot, pay attention to words	read every day after school & during school
practice	pick books they like to read
read lots of books	if you learn to write you will be a reader
read lots	read correctly
go to school a lot	concentrate on what they're reading
learn how to read	read lots
learn how to read	read a lot
practice makes perfect	read little words, then bigger books
read every night	have to learn
no answer	practice a lot
learn	read lots of books

5. How does a teacher decide which students are good readers?

September	June
looking at them	by listening
who she sees reading all the time	by giving harder books to read
are quiet & see you got a book	when she sees a person really get into it
if they just read	if they read a lot
see who reads at the right time	decide by their writing
no answer	who reads lots
by the book you read	ones who read without mistakes
check if they read lots	check for loud reading
sees you read a lot	see you concentrating
yes, I think so	reading lots
how quiet they are	who really stops & reads
don't know	let them read to her
by watching them	by watching them
lets them read	reading not too slow & not too fast
who reads good	they read lots

6. What kind of books do you like to read?

September	June
chapter books	chapter books
Tom's New Bed, A Taste of Blueberries, Gorilla	fairy tales
marvel comics	marvel/Star Trek
chapter books	chapter books
chapter books	chapter books
the fast ones	detective books
long books	chapter books
long chapter books	picture & chapter books
chapter books	jets
comics	comics, novels
chapter books	novels, fairy tales, fantasy, dreams
Sweet Valley Twins	chapter books
chapter & non-chapter books	novels, fairy tales
chapter books	novels

7. How do you decide which books you'll read?

September	June
by looking at cover	by looking at cover
read back to see if interesting	have good titles/are interesting
look interesting to read	read back
ones I like	read some of it
looking at pictures	reading back
look in it	look inside
if cover looks good	by the cover
sounds good	read back
look inside	open & read some of it
if words are hard or easy	read back
if little & what's inside	look at cover
by cover	by author
read first chapter	read back to decide if interesting
by asking	reading back
read title, look at pictures	read back, look at cover
not too difficult	look at title

8. Have you ever re-read a book?_____ If so, can you name them here?

September	June
yes/Little Soup's Hay Ride	yes/Walt Disney
yes/Gorilla/Tom's New Bed/The Very Worst Monster/Two Bad Ants/ Birthday Presents/The Relatives Came	yes/Tiki Tiki Tembo/ If I Were a Cricket/ Amos's Sweater/ Gorilla/The Relatives Came
yes/ 50 Below/others by Robert Munsch	yes/Owls in the Family
yes/Wolverine/Namor/Fantastic Four/Dark Hawk	yes/Marvel Turtles 1 & 2
yes/Beverly Cleary/Nancy Drew/ Fifth Grade Magic	yes/The War With Grandpa
yes/Two Bad Ants/Five Chinese Brothers	no/no answer
yes/Wilma's Castle/The Indian in the Cupboard	yes/no
yes/Clifford	yes/Clifford
yes/no answer	no/no answer
yes/Cinderella/Snow White/Jokes	yes/Three Little Pigs/Goldilocks and the Three Bears/ Superfudge/Eighth Grade Changes Everything
yes/Gorilla/Mystery at Dark Wood/Wolverine	yes/First Aid/Jets
yes/Archie/chapters/Marvel	yes/Superfudge/Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing/Jacob Two Two & the Dinosaur
no/no answer	yes/James & the Giant Peach/The Horrible Disaster of Dirty Pete
no/no answer	yes/On the Beam/Hop on Top/Sweet Valley Twins/Clifford's/Play Ball/Amelia
yes/Three Bears	yes/Cinderella
yes/Amos's Sweater/If I Were a Cricket	no/no answer

9. Do you ever read novels at home for pleasure?_____ If so, how often do you read at home (for pleasure)?

September	June
yes/once a day	yes/once a day
yes/after school, supper, at bedtime	yes/read a lot at home
yes/once a week	yes/half hour a day
yes/not often	yes/not much
no answers	no/no answer
yes/once every 2 days	yes/sometimes
yes/once a month	yes/sometimes
yes/no answer	yes/no answer
yes/each night	yes/once a week
yes/lots	no/no answer
yes/half hour a night	yes/half or one hour
yes/when I get bored	yes/3 times a week
no/never	yes/not too often
no/no answer	yes/not often
no/no answer	yes/every night in bed
yes/once a night	yes/half hour every day
yes/every night	yes/every 2 days

10. Who are your favourite authors? (List as many as you like.)

September	June
Charles Robinson	Mark _____
Cynthia Rylant/Steven Gammet	Janet Adele/Mizmura/ Cynthia Rylant
Robert Munsch	Bruce Collier/Lurlene McDane/Stan Lee
don't have one	L. Konigsburg/Peter Dixon
Roald Dahl	Bruce Covelle/Roald Dahl
Eric Wilson	Franklin W. Dixon
Kevin C./Peter L.	Anne Martin
don't know	Franklin Dixon
Smith	Judy Blume/Betsy Byars/Beverly Cleary/Frances Pascal
Caroc	Cindy Bavege/Charles Sheffield
Judy Blume/Beverly Cleary	Charles M. Schultz/Dr. Zeus
Roald Dahl/Robert Munsch	Roald Dahl
no answer	good authors
E. B. White	Alida E. Young/Susan Tang/Cindy Bavege
don't have one	Jay Lebold/Franklin W. Dixon

11. Do you like to have your teacher read to you?_____ If so, is there anything special you'd like to hear?

September	June
yes/no	no/no answer
yes/ Two Bad Ants, Gorilla/Tom's New Bed	yes/The Little Mouse
yes/novels	yes/If I Should Die Before I Wake
yes/not often	yes/no
no answers	yes/Darth Vader
yes/chapter books	yes/no
yes/no	yes/no
yes/not really	yes/not really
yes/no	yes/no
yes/picture books	yes/anything
yes/chapter books	yes/Night Sky
no/no	yes/How It Begins & Ends
no/no answer	yes/no
no answers	yes/Nancy Drew
yes/don't know	sometimes love it/sometimes not
yes/don't know	yes/Is My Sister Dying?
yes/Cat in the Hat	no/no answer

12. In general, how do you feel about reading?

September	June
it's fun	good
like to read at home & school	feel excited to read
it's okay	feel it's a good thing
like it	like it
no answer	happy
it's fun	like reading
like it	it's fun
feel nice/like to read when mad	like it a lot
good	good
great	some times sad or happy depends on endings
good	my best hobby
it's boring	it's fun
okay	okay
no answer	good
sometimes love to/sometimes don't	like reading
good	like reading