DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 386 688 CS 012 246

AUTHOR Neff, Nancy; And Others
TITLE Improving Reading Comprehension at the First Grade Level.
PUB DATE May 95
NOTE 88p.; M.A. Research Project, Saint Xavier University. Figures are labeled 3, 4, and 5. There are no figures 1 and 2.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Masters Theses (042)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Action Research; Critical Thinking; Grade 1; Primary Education; Reading Aloud to Others; *Reading Comprehension; *Reading Improvement; Reading Research; *Thinking Skills
IDENTIFIERS Rockford School District 205 IL

ABSTRACT

A study investigated the effectiveness of a method for teaching strategies to students in order to increase their levels of reading comprehension. The targeted population consisted of first-grade students from three schools located in lower- to middle-socioeconomic neighborhoods in Rockford, Illinois. The problem of below grade level reading comprehension was documented by Starford Achievement Test scores, and further data were collected from the passage comprehension section of the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised), and teacher-made assessments. Analysis of the probable cause data revealed that children were limited in life experiences and in their prior knowledge they brought to literature, and children were not taught higher level thinking skills and reading comprehension strategies in kindergarten. A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of two major strategies of intervention: modified instructional practices that would increase the students' base of experiences, and procedures for teaching higher order thinking skills. Post-intervention data indicated a development of higher order thinking skills, and an increase in the level of reading comprehension. (Contains 25 references, 6 tables, and 3 figures of data. Appendixes present numerous survey instruments, a list of suggested books for "read alouds," and nine lesson plans.) (Author/RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 386 688

IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION AT THE FIRST GRADE LEVEL

by

Nancy Neff, Peggy Showers, and Charlene Vaughan

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master's of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

N Neff

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Saint Xavier University & IRI/Skylight
Field-Based Master's Program

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

Action Research Project
Site: Rockford, IL
Submitted: May, 1995

*Teachers
Maud Johnson Elementary
Ellis Elementary
McIntosh Elementary
Rockford, IL

CS012246

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

This Action Research was approved by

Priscilla Hartung Ed.D., SXU Facilitator

Sara Moser / Pat Wengrow, IRI/Skylight Facilitator

Dean, School of Education

Table of Contents

Abstract iii

Chapter

1. Statement of Problem and Description of Context 1

General Statement of Problem 1

Immedidate Problem Setting..... 1

Description of Surrounding Community..... 6

Regional and National Context of Problem 8

2. Problem Evidence and Probable Cause 10

Problem Evidence 10

Probable Cause..... 12

3. The Solution Strategy 17

Review of the Literature..... 17

Project Outcomes and Solution Components..... 21

Action Plan for the Intervention..... 22

4. Project Results 29

Historical Description of Intervention..... 29

Presentation and Analysis of Results..... 34

Conclusions and Recommendations..... 42

References Cited..... 44

Appendices 46

Appendix A - Passage Comprehension section of the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achivevement (revised)..... 47

Appendix B - Comprehension Teacher Check List..... 48

Appendix C - Criteria for Teacher Observations 49

Appendix D - Suggested books for "read alouds" 50
Appendix E - Lesson Plan for read aloud..... 54
Appendix F - Lesson Plan for five day plan..... 55
Appendix G - Lesson Plan for descriptive poems..... 56
Appendix H - Lesson Plan for riddle poems 57
Appendix I - Lesson Plan for oral language and writing skills..... 58
Appendix J - Lesson Plan for analyzing and making inferences..... 59
Appendix K - Lesson Plan for sequencing 60
Appendix L - Lesson Plan for predicting 61
Appendix M - Lesson Plan for recalling events 62
Appendix N - Assessment Tools - Samples of Students Work..... 63

Abstract

Author Nancy Neff
Peg Showers
Charlene Vaughan

Site: Rockford

Date: September, 1994

Title: Improving Reading Comprehension at the First Grade Level

ABSTRACT: This report described a method for teaching strategies to students in order to increase their levels of reading comprehension. The targeted population consisted of first grade students from three schools located in lower to middle socioeconomic neighborhoods in a Northern Illinois city. The problem of below grade level reading comprehension was documented by Stanford Achievement Test scores, and further data was collected from the passage comprehension section of the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised), and teacher made assessments.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed that children were limited in life experiences and in their prior knowledge they brought to literature; and children were not taught higher level thinking skills and reading comprehension strategies in kindergarten.

A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of two major strategies of intervention: modified instructional practices that would increase the students' base of experiences, and procedures for teaching higher order thinking skills.

Post intervention data indicated a development of higher order thinking skills, and an increase in the level of reading comprehension.

Chapter 1

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND DESCRIPTION OF CONTEXT

General Statement of Problem

The first grade students at the three targeted schools demonstrate reading comprehension that is below grade level as evidenced by the Stanford Achievement test, the passage comprehension section of the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised) (Appendix A), and teacher records.

Immediate Problem Setting

There are three schools in the targeted population. Each setting will be described separately as School A, School B, and School C.

Targeted School A is a Community Academy School as designated by the Federal Courts. It is a kindergarten through sixth grade school located in the southwest quadrant of Rockford, Illinois. The school was built in 1902 with an addition built in 1969.

The enrollment of 250 students consists of 20 percent White, 77 percent Black and three percent Hispanic. Eighty-nine percent of School A students qualify as low income; those coming from homes that receive public funds or are eligible for free or reduced price lunch. School A has an attendance rate of 94 percent, compared to 92.5 percent for all schools in District 205. This school has a student mobility rate of 60.1 percent, compared to 22.4 percent for all schools in District 205.

One of the three all day kindergarten classes held at School A is a special program with the students chosen through a lottery system. This system mandates that 50 percent of the class will be majority and 50 percent will be minority. .

School A teachers follow the District 205 curriculum guide, as well as utilizing special programs to enhance the academics. These programs include Success for All, a reading program developed at Johns Hopkins University; Reading Recovery, a computer laboratory consisting of 20 stations; "Teaching and Learning Computers" (T.L.C.), a hands on math program; daily adult tutors from area Churches, city of Rockford employees, and employees from Suntec, a local industry; after school activities conducted by volunteers and the Y.M.C.A.; Saturday academy for tutoring; and reading workshops for parents paid for with grant moneys. The newly formed P.T.O. is involved with several of these programs in an effort to involve the parents.

The staff at School A consists of one principal, a counselor (assistant principal), a Success for All facilitator, a special education resource teacher, 17 classroom teachers, one Chapter 1 teacher, five reading resource teachers, specialists in art education, music education, and physical education, a secretary, a building engineer, a custodian and several lunch aides. The administration and teaching staff are 83 percent majority and 17 percent minority. The average class size for this school is 16 students per class. The class size for the first grade discussed in this paper is 16 students.

School A salaries and budget items are paid through two accounts, the District 205 budget and the funds for Community Academy Schools, or C-8 schools as referred to in the federal law suit.

Targeted School B is a pre-kindergarten through sixth grade school located in the northeast quadrant of Rockford, Illinois. The school was built in 1954 and at the present time is in good to fair condition.

The enrollment of 447 students consists of 78.5 percent White, 14.8 percent Black, 4 percent Hispanic, 1.3 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1.3 percent Native American. School B is comprised of 21.3 percent minority students and 78.7 percent of majority students. All classes are integrated in compliance with the court order. Fifteen percent of School B students qualify as low income; those coming from homes that receive public funds or are eligible for free or reduced price lunches. The percentage of students attending school everyday is 95.3 percent, as compared to 92.5 percent for all schools. The chronic truancy rate is 1.4 percent, as compared to 8.6 percent for all schools in District 205. The number of chronic truants is six. School B has a student mobility rate of 12.7 percent, compared to 22.4 percent for all schools in District 205.

The school population draws from the surrounding neighborhoods and voluntary desegregation initiatives. Of 447 children attending School B, 206 are bussed to school, which is in a middle to lower socioeconomic area. At the present time an issue to consider is that unemployment is on the rise. Though it has not helped to boost family incomes, it has increased parent involvement in different activities.

School B teachers follow the District 205 curriculum guidelines, as well as utilizing special programs to enhance academics. These programs include: Read to Me, (a lending library to encourage parent/child reading), Great Books, (classics read and discussed in classrooms), All School Fair, (children can share their reports and projects). The following organizations and activities are provided for children to participate in throughout the year: Caring Council,

Student Council, peer-tutoring, Daisies, Brownies, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, basketball and soccer teams, Y.W.C.A. School Age Center, Grief Counseling, safety patrol, classroom monitors, and Pen-Pals with our 'Adopted Grandparents' from the Faust Landmark.

The staff at School B consists of one principal, a head-teacher, 18 classroom teachers, Learning Disability/Behavior Disorder (LD/BD) resource teachers, specialists in art, music, and physical education, Chapter 1 aide, two special education aides, one building engineer, one secretary, one night custodian, and several lunch and playground aides. The administration and teaching staff are 95 percent majority and five percent minority. The average class size for this school is 26 students per class. The average class size for the grade discussed is 22 students. School B has a Special Services Team that consists of principal, nurse, speech clinician, school psychologist, social worker, and LD/BD resource teachers. The team meets weekly to discuss team consultations and case studies.

School B has a very active P.T.O., which meets the first Tuesday of the month. In the past, the P.T.O. has purchased a copy machine, ditto machines, overheads, projectors, televisions, V.C.R.'s, and maintains their operating costs. The P.T.O. has paid for field trips for children, and during the past year, hired two groups of entertainers to perform for the children. To encourage parents to get acquainted with the staff and school setting, an ice-cream social was held on the first full day of school in the fall. An annual event is 'Muffins for Mom' and 'Donuts for Dad'. The P.T.O. has also purchased a popcorn machine and once a month there is a popcorn day.

School C, is a Community Academy School, as designated by the Federal Courts. It is a kindergarten through sixth grade school located in the northwest quadrant of Rockford, Illinois. The school was built in 1966.

The enrollment of 400 students consists of 45 percent White, 53 percent Black and one percent Hispanic. Seventy-five percent of School C students qualify as low income; those coming from homes that receive public funds or are eligible for free or reduced price lunch. School C has an attendance rate of 93 percent, compared to 92.5 percent for all schools in District 205. This school has a student mobility rate of 32 percent, compared to 22.4 percent for all schools in District 205.

Special programs at School C include one all day kindergarten and one Chapter 1 Assured Readiness for Learning (ARL) kindergarten. There are two self-contained behavior disorder classes and one special education class.

School C teachers follow the District 205 curriculum guide, as well as utilizing special programs to enhance the academics. These programs include Success for All, a reading program developed at Johns Hopkins University; Reading Recovery, a computer laboratory; French Club, and after school activities such as intramural basketball.

The school has an active Parent Teacher Organization. A group of parents and teachers, along with the principal, worked on a Mission Statement and goals for the school.

The staff at School C consists of one principal, an assistant principal, a counselor, a Success for All facilitator, a special education resource teacher, 16 classroom teachers, three Chapter 1 teachers, five reading resource teachers, specialists in art education, music education, and physical education, a secretary, a building engineer, a custodian and several lunch aides. The administration and teaching staff are 80 percent majority and 20 percent minority. The average first grade class size for School C is 21 students. School C salaries and budget items are paid through two accounts, the District 205 budget and the funds for

Community Academy Schools, or C-8 schools as referred to in the federal law suit.

The education of all students within District 205 will be affected in various ways because of the Federal lawsuit, which was filed in 1989. The outcomes of the lawsuit include the following: School District 205 has been found by the Federal Courts to be guilty of intentional abuse and benign neglect in class assignments, district leadership, bussing and facilities. The verdict stipulates that integration efforts will continue. A court-appointed master will remain in charge of desegregation programs. There will be a 13 percent tax increase as remedies are approved in 1994. School Board power could be further eroded, depending on the remedies. Schools with mostly minority students will continue to receive more money for improvements. Remedies may include a second west-side high school. Rockford tax payers will pay bills for all attorneys. The current case probably will continue for 10 or more years.

Description of Surrounding Community

Rockford, the second largest city in Illinois, with a population of 140,000, is located along the Rock River in north-central Illinois, 14 miles from the Wisconsin border to the north, and 92 miles from Chicago to the southeast. The city covers a 50 square mile area within the 803 square mile metro area (Winnebago and Boone counties).

The median household income for the first quarter of 1994 was $43,000. The median price of a home in Rockford during this quarter was $79,000, as compared to the national price of $112,000. These figures help put Rockford near the top of a housing affordability list. (Rockford Register Star, 1994.) However, these data do not accurately described the neighborhoods served by the targeted schools.

The household incomes of the students served by the targeted schools can be estimated by noting the number of students receiving free or reduced price lunch. The percentage of students receiving free or reduced price lunch in targeted School A is eighty-nine percent; in targeted School B is fifteen percent; in targeted School C is seventy-five percent. The median selling price of a home in each of the targeted school neighborhoods during the spring quarter of 1994 were as follows: targeted School A - $22,758; targeted School B - $79,792; targeted School C - $31,019. (Multiple Listing Services, 1994.)

The ethnic composition of Rockford has changed from 1980 to 1990. Numbers show that the White population has decreased, whereas the Black, Hispanic, and Asian population has increased.

White- 84.3 percent to 79.9 percent

Black- 13.2 percent to 14.8 percent

Hispanic- 2.9 percent to 4.2 percent

Asian- 0.5 percent to 1.5 percent

The Rockford School District population in 1992-1993 was 27,314 students. These numbers included 67.4 percent White, 23.7 percent Black, 6.0 percent Hispanic, 2.6 percent Asian-Pacific Islanders, and .03 percent Native American. The District allocates $5,395 per pupil.

The number of schools within the Rockford Public School District include: four high schools, four middle schools, 40 elementary schools 2 special education facilities, and two early education centers.

The Rockford School District recently restructured the administration into a team of a superintendent, two associate superintendents, one assistant superintendent, and one in-house attorney. There are eleven general directors on the administrative team. The School Board is composed of seven members elected from designated geographically determined districts.

Educational facilitiesoffer stability to the community through Rock Valley Junior College, Rockford College, University of Illinois College of Medicine, University of Illinois Engineering studies, Saint Anthony College of Nursing, Rockford Business College, and soon to be built Northern Illinois University satellite.

About 33 percent of Rockford's economy is strongly tied to manufacturing. The Chrysler Assembly plant in Belvidere is one of the area's largest employers. Rockford also has high employment concentrations in machining, metal working, and transportation equipment industries. The skills of Rockford's workers reflect the technical needs of these industries and have historically resulted in higher productivity levels than the national average. Government jobs represent less than 10 percent of the work force in Rockford.

Regional and National Context of Problem

Reading Comprehension is a topic of interest to educators and researchers, as evidenced by the numbers of books and articles written, the workshops conducted, and the research directed towards this issue.

Results from a study conducted in 1991 by Hodgkinson reveal that about one third of preschool children in the United States are destined for school failure because of povery, neglect, sickness, handicapping conditions, and lack of adult protections and nurturance (Kameenui, 1993). According to a study by Juel in 1988, the probability that a child who is a poor reader at the end of grade one will remain a poor reader at the end of grade four is near ninety percent (Kameenui, 1993).

Tens of millions of Americans, or approximately one-third of the American population, experience problems with reading and with related academic areas

that require reading skills (Chall cited in Anderson, 1985). In the 1970's, when compared to students from 15 countries, American students never finished in first or second place on any of the reading performance tests. American students ranked at or below the international average (Thorndike cited in Anderson, 1985).

The National Assessment of Educational Progress indicates that reading test scores of elementary school children show slight gains over the past two decades. Anderson states, "What was a satisfactory level of literacy in 1950 probably will be marginal by the year 2000" (Anderson, Osborn, and Tierney, 1984, p. 3). The overall decline in reading scores of students throughout the United States has led researchers to be concerned about metacognition; the awareness of knowledge, as well as the control of that understanding (Mier, 1984). The Kappan Special Report (1990) stated that veteran teachers have never before seen so many children with problems of reading comprehension in their classrooms.

Chapter 2

PROBLEM EVIDENCE AND PROBABLE CAUSE

Reading comprehension is a process of constructing meaning from clues in the text and information from the reader's background of experiences. How one thinks and how one solves problems are what reading comprehension is all about. The reading comprehension process is complex and involved. To become effective comprehenders, students must learn to use many different processes and skills. Comprehension is a process that a reader never completely masters, because at different levels of difficulty and in different types of text, readers must use their comprehension skills and processes differently. Comprehension instruction, beginning at the pre-reading level as oral and listening activities, continues throughout all levels of the reading program using specific reading comprehension strategies (Cooper, 1988).

Problem Evidence

The first grade students in the three targeted schools were asked questions by the classroom teacher concerning predicting, making inferences, recognizing the sequence of events, and comparing and contrasting stories the teacher had read to them. The teachers' checklists (Appendix B) indicated that 30.4 percent of all students frequently answered the questions accurately; 42 percent of all students sometimes answered the questions accurately; and 27.6 percent of all students rarely answered the questions accurately. This illustrates

a lack of development in listening comprehension and oral language skills. This is attributed to limited comprehension skills, as well as limited vocabulary.

Students in the Rockford School District demonstrate poor reading comprehension, as evidenced by the results of the Stanford Achievement Test. The reading comprehension section of the1992 Stanford Achievement Test results showed the first grade students in the Rockford School District scored in the 46 percentile nationally..

Table 1 illustrates the percentage of targeted school students that scored in each quartile on the comprehension section of the 1993 Stanford Achievement Test.

Table 1

Reading Comprehension Section
of Stanford Achievement Test
Percentage of Students in Quartile Ranges.

Quartile Ranges	School A	School B	School C
76 - 99%	0.0%	45.0%	5.0%
51 - 75%	11.0%	30.0%	16.0%
26 - 50%	22.0%	13.0%	38.0%
0 - 25%	67.0%	12.0%	41.0%

The students in the three targeted schools were given the passage comprehension section of the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised). It further indicates the students are below grade level in reading comprehension. Table 2 documents the results of this test.

Table 2

Passage Comprehension Section
of Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised)
given September, 1994

Grade Equivalent	School A	School B	School C	Total
over 3.0	0.0%	5.6%	0.0%	1.9%
2.4 - 3.0	6.3%	5.6%	0.0%	3.8%
1.6 - 2.2	0.0%	22.2%	0.0%	7.5%
1.2 - 1.5	12.5%	22.2%	15.8%	17.0%
K.0 - 1.1	81.2%	44.4%	84.2%	69.8%

The data from Table 1 and Table 2 indicate that students from the targeted schools performed below grade level on the reading comprehension sections of these tests. In targeted School A nearly 90 percent of the students fell at or below the 50th percentile on the SAT; in targeted School B, 25 percent fell at or below this mark; and in targeted School C, nearly 80 percent of the students were at or below the 50th percentile. Sixty-nine and eight tenths percent of all targeted students ranked in the K.0 - 1.1 grade equivalent level on the passage comprehension section of the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised). This clearly indicates the targeted first grade students are performing below grade level in reading comprehension.

Probable Cause

Children know before they learn to read that the little black squiggles on a page represent ideas, stories, and events. The foundation of reading and writing is based on this early knowledge. Youngsters knowledge about "print" is directly related to home environment. "Print" is defined as the use of coded symbols in

which the author expresses his message. At very young ages, many children can identify ,by the printed letters, a milk carton, a stop sign, a tube of toothpaste, or their favorite candy bar. Children know what signs mean and that they represent something real. They learn to understand print based on their knowledge of words and how these words are used in different context (Glazer, 1992). Research of the past decade states that young readers, and poor readers of every age, do not consistently see relationships between what they are reading and what they already know (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985). Comprehension will not take place if children do not make this connection between the print and its meaning.

The importance of prior knowledge in reading comprehension is not a new discovery. Prior knowledge is seen as the framework that helps the reader assimilate new information. Reading is a process in which information from the text and the knowledge possessed by the reader act together to make meaning. The meaning constructed from the same text can vary greatly among children, because of differences in the knowledge they possess. Anderson stated, "It may turn out that many problems in reading comprehension are traceable to deficits in knowledge, rather than deficits in linguistic skills narrowly conceived" (quoted in Johnston, 1984, p. 236).

Children entering first grade must have at least a basic vocabulary, a reasonable range of knowledge about the world around them, and the ability to talk about their knowledge. An important part of a reader's ability to comprehend is having an extensive vocabulary that allows the student to understand and use the words in the proper context. Vocabulary knowledge is closely related to background knowledge required for reading a text (Anderson et al., 1985).

Lois Farrell (1991) cited Johnson and Pearson (1982) as stating that prior knowledge influences the comprehension process at all levels. "It helps the

reader choose appropriate words that will make sense in a sentence, determine information to be stored in short term, as well as long term memory, decides the form in which it will be stored and helps the reader make inferences" (Farrell, 1991, p.36).

Reading must be seen as a part of a child's general language development, and not as a discrete skill isolated from listening, speaking and writing. Oral language development is of great importance to the beginning reader both for word recognition development, as well as for comprehension development. Oral language is the foundation on which all growth in reading is built (Anderson et al., 1985).

Collins and Haviland (cited in Allington, 1983, p. 550) argue that the problems of poor readers "Arise from too much stress on the decoding of words." Decoding interferes with comprehension. Good word decoders can be poor comprehenders. Goodman (cited in Smith, 1978) states that some readers are so obsessed with reading for accuracy that they neglect to read for meaning. He suggests that this overemphasis on decoding is a cause of poor comprehension. Smith (1978) concurs with Goodman's findings. "Overconcern with accuracy has the effect of directing too much attention to individual words - making comprehension impossible" (Smith, 1978, p. 139).

Durkin found that less than one percent of instruction time is spent in actual reading comprehension instruction. Much greater amounts of time are spent in such activities as assessing comprehension, giving assignments and helping with assignments. "Teachers spent 43 percent of their time in reading instruction activities and 56 percent of their time in reading and reading activities" (Durkin, 1978-79, p. 484). Silent reading builds the reader's confidence. However, studies show an estimate of scheduled silent reading time in the typical primary school classroom is less than 10 percent of the total time devoted to

reading, which indicates that a total of seven or eight minutes per day are spent in silent reading.

Parents lay the foundation for learning to read. A parent is a child's first tutor in unraveling the fascinating puzzles of written language. Parents are a source of strength for the children enabling them to believe they will become readers (Anderson et al., 1985). Research shows that parents of successful readers have a more accurate view of their children's performance. These parents know about their school's reading program. They visit their children's teachers, and observe in classrooms. These parents suggest reading as a leisure time activity, making sure there is time for reading. When parents are not actively involved, the students reading activities may be affected (Anderson et al., 1985).

Children enter grade school at varying degrees of readiness to read. Children coming from homes where stories are not read to them, display more frustration and confusion in the classroom reading groups. Failure is experienced because they have not had the repetition of stories and the exposure to print . The student's attitude toward the reading material and the reading situation may be a factor that greatly influences reading comprehension. Interest in reading, and in learning to read, often is a direct outgrowth of children seeing others read and perceiving a need for reading. If children have experienced pleasure from being read to, they are more likely to be interested in learning to read themselves. The desire to learn to read, like the desire to learn anything else, gives the child with this desire an advantage over the one who does not want to or see a need to read (McCracken, R. and McCracken M. as cited in Cooper, 1988). The quality and quantity of comprehension will be in direct proportion to the interest of the reader and the story. People respond positively, or become involved in what they read, if they are interested (Glazer, 1992).

Children's perceptions of themselves as learners have a powerful impact on their desire and abilities to read (Corcoran, Gordon, Lipson as cited in Glazer, 1992). Children who do not explore and experiment with different types of printed material demonstrate lower achievement in reading comprehension (Glazer, 1992).

Teacher observations of the targeted population indicate the students' exposure to printed material, verbal interaction, use of language skills, vocabulary development, and social experiences are limited. Parent participation at the 1994 Open Houses of the three targeted schools was 34 percent. This further illustrates the lack of parental involvement.

A summary of probable causes for the problem gathered from the sites, and from cited literature included the following elements:

1. limited prior knowledge/ life experiences and an inability to relate this prior knowledge to text,
2. limited vocabulary,
3. lack of development in oral language skills prior to entering school,
4. over emphasis on decoding instruction,
5. reading for accuracy interferes with reading for meaning,
6. lack of listening comprehension skills,
7. limited parental involvement,
8. limited exposure to printed material,
9. limited time for independent reading,
10. students' attitude toward reading material,
11. students insecure with themselves as successful readers.

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

Reading comprehension is a thinking activity. Students need direction and specific instruction to learn how to apply their comprehension skills to a reading situation. The categories of thinking, as defined by Bloom, are arranged in a hierarchy which is sequential and cumulative (Cooper, 1988). Studies have been conducted to determine if students can be made aware of reading comprehension strategies, or be taught skills that will transfer to independent reading situations (Tierney, 1985). Readence and Martin as cited by Farrell (1991) reported that the concept of explicit teaching of reading comprehension, or direct instruction, emerged as a direct result of research conducted to address this issue. Durkin (1978-79) discloses that reading comprehension *can* be taught and it *is* being taught, but the methods are not as effective as comprehension instruction needs to be if reading problems are to be reduced. A slightly different opinion is held by Tovey (cited by Durkin, 1978-79). He wrote that comprehension cannot be taught directly, but situations can be provided to facilitate and encourage the process of print meaning. Teaching to young children means providing situations that stimulate understanding; therefore, debating the terms direct teaching versus "providing situations" is not useful to the purpose of this paper.

The skills and strategies encompassed in reading comprehension instruction include accessing background knowledge, as well as developing the

higher order thinking skills of self-questioning, inferencing, summarizing, finding the main idea, and locating the details (Tierney, 1985). Smith (1978) includes sequencing and cause and effect training in the list of important strategies for teaching reading comprehension. Cooper (1988) concurs with the concept of teaching specific skills or processes for comprehension throughout all levels of the reading program.

As each strategy is modeled and ultimately taught by the teacher, the students learn its relevance or purpose, learn its definition and how to apply this strategy, and are then allowed time for guided practice. When a student demonstrates understanding of a specific comprehension strategy, the teacher allows the student to be responsible for using it and applying it to situations in and out of the school setting (Farrell, 1991).

Teachers can assist students in developing reading comprehension, as well as listening comprehension, by encouraging the amount of in -school and at - home reading, directing in depth vocabulary instruction, and providing instruction in comprehension strategies (Dymock, 1993). The young child begins to develop listening comprehension skills through conversations with family and friends prior to entering school. Instruction in listening comprehension leads to improved reading comprehension. Teaching listening comprehension through inquiry enhances language, expands experiences, and enhances higher order thinking skills. When listening comprehension skills are developed in kindergarten, the student will be intellectually stimulated to become a more competent reader (Griese, 1977).

Whether a beginner or an experienced reader, one must bring an adequate vocabulary to reading. Those who teach reading comprehension, at any grade level, must actively strive to provide the student with a variety of experiences and promote the vocabulary connected with these experiences

(Griese, 1977). A listener's or reader's vocabulary labels ideas that exist in the mind. These ideas are central to the comprehension process, making vocabulary development an important component of listening and reading comprehension instruction (Heimlich, 1986).

Chomsky (1972) as cited in Becoming A Nation of Readers (Anderson, 1985) states that the single most important activity for the building of knowledge, (vocabulary) required for eventual success in reading, is reading aloud to children. When a teacher reads aloud, students' backgrounds are broadened, vocabulary is strengthened, and there is exposure to literature that they might not otherwise be able to read on their own (Griese, 1977). Reading to students provides the opportunity for children to make inferences about plots and story characters, as they listen to the story and discuss it together (Labbo, 1990).

Richards and Gipe have developed a strategy called, "Getting to know my character", for increasing the young and at risk readers' reading comprehension through the recognition of information about story characters. This strategy strengthens vocabulary and develops inferences, as well as providing development in higher order thinking skills of comparing and contrasting information through the use of a character map. This graphic organizer answers facts about the character; what is known about the character's actions; what is known about the character's conversation; what is known about the character's thoughts (Richards and Gipe, 1993).

Semantic mapping is another graphic organizer, that helps students organize information about what they have heard or read. In its beginning stage, the semantic map looks like a web with the main idea or character of the story as the center circle. The attached circles stemming from the center may reflect the vocabulary contained within the story, problems and solutions that occur within the story, or the story characters. Children are able to expand and refine existing

knowledge by constructing this diagram. This graphic organizer is a visual image that may serve as an outline when the students begin to write (Heimlich, 1986).

Teaching children to construct mental images as they listen or read, enhances their abilities to construct inferences, make predictions, and remember what has been heard or read (Gambrell,1981). Using mental imagery is a tool for strengthening higher order thinking (Presley, 1976 as cited in Gambrell, 1981).

Higher order thinking skills are developed through the strategy of inquiry. The inquiry method uses questions to promote greater pupil awareness and insight. Open-ended questions about a story lead students to make inferences, to recall sequence of events, to recall past experiences, to perceive relationships, and possibly, to draw conclusions or develop a prediction. The teacher uses the same type of questions for assessing both listening and reading comprehension. An open ended question of, "What do you think..." followed by a "Why" question develops the mental activities related to the various aspects of comprehension (Griese, 1977).

The teacher's goal is to prepare the students to be independent, using strategies to become problem solvers. The teacher models the procedure repeatedly until the students are able to adapt the procedure on their own. Farrell (1991) listed six steps, developed by Pearson in 1984, to follow when questioning a student about a story that is to be a read aloud or one the student reads independently.

1. Begin the lesson with questions that focus attention on background experiences.

2. Allow students to use background knowledge to predict what might happen.

3. Set up a purpose for listening or reading.

4. During listening or reading, ask questions that connect the important story elements.

5. At conclusion of story refer to the purpose setting question(s).

6. Discuss the story using this sequence.
   a. students retell the story
   b. in-depth questioning:
      1) compare to own experiences
      2) compare to other stories
      3) speculate about characters
   c. discuss author's craft.

This type of questioning strategy instructs students in the use of vocabulary, and prior knowledge, along with the use of thinking skills for predicting, inferencing, sequencing, comparing/contrasting, and summarizing. Students will be encouraged to formulate a questioning attitude toward all reading materials (Tierney, 1985).

Teachers aid students in comprehension by providing activities and games that promote the skill of asking questions and validating answers (Tierney, 1985). The achievement gains of students who experience comprehension instruction, along with silent reading procedures, tend to be higher than the achievement gains of those whose instruction emphasized words and oral reading (Allington, 1983).

Project Outcomes and Solution Components

As a result of implementing modified instructional practices, during the period of September 1994 through January 1995, 50 percent of the targeted first grade students will increase their reading comprehension level by one grade equivalent, as measured by the pre and post testing of the passage comprehension section of the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised), and authentic assessment tools.

The actions for improving reading comprehension are designed to address strategies the three teacher-researchers will incorporate into their daily lessons. These strategies include teaching methods for accessing background knowledge, and for developing the higher order thinking skills of self-questioning, inferencing, sequencing, summarizing, and locating the details. Through the exposure to children's literature, students will use higher order thinking strategies and oral language skills. The improvement sought by the implementation of this plan is to increase the level of reading comprehension for each student.

Action Plan for the Intervention

The sequence to these interventions begins with listening comprehension and group work in order to develop a pattern for problem solving. Reading comprehension is an outcome of these strategies. These interventions, and their components, are a part of the daily reading and language arts program.

I. Through at least two "read alouds" a day, including books or poems, higher order thinking skills are taught, and oral language development is addressed. "Read alouds" are defined as selections from children's literature that are read to students. The students are asked questions that require them to predict what might happen next, to sequence story events, to analyze the story's problem and solution. The goals of this type of lesson are to increase the students' experiences through the exposure to new vocabulary, to develop thinking skills through open-ended questioning, and to increase oral language development. One of the "read-a-loud" books or poems is introduced and presented to the class to expose the students to a new experience and to increase the students' vocabulary. The second daily "read-a-loud" is used in a five day lesson plan,

such as the one that follows. This plan will be used with a different book each week.

Day 1-The book is presented by the teacher to the students. The teacher leads a discussion about the cover, the author, and the illustrator. The beginning, middle, and last pictures are shown and the students predict what is happening in these pictures. The predictions are written on sentence strips. Possible vocabulary words are selected by the teacher and written on word cards for use at a later time.

Day 2-The book is presented to the students. The teacher reads the selection for the first time. The student predictions from the day before are reviewed and compared with the actual events in the story. The chosen vocabulary word cards are introduced to the students.

Day 3-The book is presented to the students. The vocabulary cards are matched to the "print". The story is re-read by the teacher. A sequence activity is used at this time (semantic mapping, character mapping, sequential graphic organizer).

Day 4-The book is presented to the students. The students retell the story by dramatizations, story mapping, portrayal of character feelings, or the use of graphic organizers to compare and contrast.

Day 5-The book is re-read. An oral language or writing activity is presented by the teacher. Possible questions or sentence starters include: "What surprised you the most about the story?", "How was the story different from what you thought it was going to be?", "What do you think happened next to a specific character from the story?", or "What did you like or not like about a character?

II. Through writing their own descriptive poems, students are encouraged to think about language, to use parts of speech creatively, and to enhance their

vocabulary. The students are asked to suggest ideas to complete the following phrases: as big as_____, as cold as_____, as crunchy as_____, and as small as_____. The students create their poems using these phrases. This type of activity would be part of the language arts curriculum and would be used on a monthly basis.

III. Students are encouraged to write riddle poems. After the teacher has hidden an object in a box and modeled the process of making up similes as clues to the object, the students write their own riddle poems. The following riddle poem, which would be demonstrated to students, combines descriptive language with figures of speech.

The insect in the box is as small as an eraser.
It has stripes like a bumble bee.
It is fuzzy as a cat.
It wiggles like a worm.
What is it? (a caterpillar)

The students work in pairs or small groups to find an object and write a riddle poem to share with the class. The poems are published in a class book. Creating riddle poems would be included as part of the language arts curriculum. As a result of this activity, the use of meaningful and descriptive vocabulary is strengthened. Students would be encouraged to continue creating riddle poems as an independent activity.

IV. In order to develop oral language and writing skills, the teacher reads to the class the story Swimmy by Leo Lionni. The class brainstorms descriptive words about fish, in order to compile an extensive list. Using this list of words, they write one descriptive word on a shape of a fish, using all words possible. The

children cut out the fish, create a fish shaped cluster, and glue them to background paper. The students create an adventure story using the descriptive words from the fish shapes. The story may be completed as an oral or written activity, by an individual, or by the class.

Variation: The descriptive words are placed in a web graphic organizer and the students create a story from the web.

V. Another strategy for developing the skill of analyzing and making inferences is to read aloud a number of cumulative tales. An example is The Little Red Hen by Paul Galdone, in which the Little Red Hen repeatedly asks her animal friends, "Who will help me with this job?" and the friends respond "Not I". The students are asked to discuss the repetitive format of these tales, the relationship between the characters or events, and the order in which they are presented. A favorite cumulative tale is selected and the teacher demonstrates how to make a comparison chart. The students are asked to suggest categories for the chart: the setting, characters, what characters have in common, problems, and solutions. The students' suggestions are used to complete the chart. The following chart is an example of a story analyzation.

The Little Red Hen

Setting	Characters	Problem	Solution
farm	*hen*	*No one*	*The hen does*
	duck	*will help*	*the work and*
	cat	*the hen.*	*eats the cake*
	dog		*herself.*
	goat		

The class is divided into small groups. Each group reads a different cumulative tale and finds information for the class comparison chart. All the information is

put onto the class chart and each group shares its findings with the class. The similarities among the books are discussed. This type of lesson is used throughout the year with cumulative tales.

VI. In order to develop sequencing, the teacher reads a cumulative tale to the class. All the characters are listed as they appear in this tale. The students select one character to illustrate. When the illustrations are completed, the students arrange all characters in the correct sequence on large mural paper. The cumulative tale is re-told by the students and, if accurate, the characters are glued to the mural. An example is The Mitten by Jan Brett. The list of characters to be illustrated include the mole, the rabbit, the hedgehog, an owl, a fox, a bear, and a mouse. The students re-tell the story after arranging these characters into the correct sequence as they climbed into the mitten.

VII. Prediction skills are developed when the students preview books by looking at the beginning, middle and last pictures. The teacher asks the students, "What do you think the story is about?" The students' attention is directed to the beginning, middle, and last pictures in the book. The teacher asks the students what they think is happening in the pictures and what might happen next. These responses may be written in order to look back on them when the story has been read. In a group, or in pairs, students share ideas about what might happen as the story is read aloud. They discuss these ideas before finding out the solution and check written predictions when applicable. Using Millions of Cats by Wanda Gag as an example, the teacher might introduce the book by asking the students, "If you had too many cats, what could you do?" This question could be used for a general discussion or for a writing activity. (Having the students put one hundred unifix cubes together might help students picture what one hundred means.) The

book is previewed, the predictions made, the selection read and the predictions checked. This type of lesson is used with all stories read during story telling and re-telling.

VIII. A strategy for recalling events of a story involves listening and answering questions. Students listen to The Three Little Pigs by Paul Galdone. The students will be placed in groups and supplied with answer cards that have the story characters' names on them. Students are told to listen to the teacher's question and discuss the answer until everyone agrees on an answer. When an answer is agreed upon, member one holds up the selected character card. Possible questions include:

*What character in the story built a house of twigs?

*What character built a house of sticks?

*What character liked to trick others?

*What character was the safest in his house?

*Which character put a pot of water on to boil?

Each time, a different group member is chosen to share the answer. This type of lesson is used throughout the year to develop story recall skills.

Variation: A sequence map graphic organizer is made by the students to illustrate the events of the story. The events of the story are written on separate pieces of paper; the events are placed in the correct order, and pasted onto a large paper as if it were a map.

Methods of Assessment

The data collection methods to be used in order to assess the effects of the interventions include teacher observations, reading comprehension checklists, and a variety of graphic organizers.

Changes in the level of reading comprehension will be documented through teacher observations, the reading comprehension checklists, and the post testing of the passage comprehension section of the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised). The post testing of the passage comprehension section of the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised) will be administered in February 1995, and the results compared to the results of the same test given in September 1994.

Chapter 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of Intervention

The objective of this project was to increase the level of reading comprehension of first grade students. The implementation of strategies to teach higher order thinking skills, the use of students' background knowledge, and oral language skills were selected to effect the desired changes.

Children's literature was used to teach the higher order thinking skills of self -questioning, inferencing, sequencing, summarizing, and locating details. Oral language skills were developed as a result of discussions and activities from this literature. These interventions were taught daily for at least thirty minutes during reading or language arts time periods. Although the strategies were specifically taught during these times, the teacher-researchers found that, in addition, the targeted skills were used daily across the curriculum. Lesson plans devoted to each of the interventions can be found in Appendices E-M.

The interventions described were intertwined throughout the curriculum. There was no chronological order necessary. All interventions were employed repeatedly throughout the five months. Appendix D is a listing of books that are suggested for creating lesson plans to meet the objectives of the interventions.

There are eight components within the interventions. A description of each component follows.

I. Read-alouds

a. One Day Plan

Once a day, a selection of children's literature was read to the students in order to teach higher order thinking skills and to improve oral language development. This activity was part of the daily lesson plans throughout the school year.

Following the teacher's reading of Rosie's Walk, by Pat Hutchins, the students were asked to sequence the story events. This was accomplished through the use of duplicated pictures from the book. Groups of students were asked to arrange these in the correct order. (Appendix E)

The teacher selected three vocabulary words (examples *over*, *under*, *around*) for sight recognition and word meaning. The students matched the vocabulary word cards to the "print" and used the words in oral sentences. (Appendix E)

b. Five Day Plan

Day 1-The book, Caps For Sale by E. Slobodkin, was presented by the teacher to the students. The teacher led a discussion about the cover, the author, and the illustrator. The beginning, middle, and last pictures were shown and the students predicted what was happening in these pictures. The predictions were written on sentence strips. Vocabulary words selected by the teacher, *peddler*, *village*, *fifty cents*, were written on word cards for use at a later time.

Day 2-The book was presented to the students. The teacher read the selection for the first time. The students' predictions from the day before were reviewed and compared with the actual events in the story. The chosen vocabulary word cards were introduced to the students.

Day 3-The book was presented to the students. The vocabulary cards were matched to the "print". The story was re-read by the teacher. A sequence map was made by the class.

Day 4-The book was presented to the students. The students re-told the story through dramatization.

Day 5-The book was re-read. The teacher asked the students, "What do you think happened to the peddler when he went back to the village?" The students drew and wrote their answers. (Appendix F)

II. Descriptive poems to strengthen vocabulary

Writing poems to strengthen vocabulary, is a strategy for building upon known vocabulary and for developing new vocabulary. The use of similes and descriptive language helps students write free verse in order to understand that while poetry is language rich, it does not have to rhyme.

The teacher read selected poems about colors from books such as Hailstones and Halibut Bones by Mary O"Neill. The teacher modeled how to write a poem using similes by asking students to complete a phrase as green as___. After brainstorming activities about the color green, students completed other phrases using the color green with similes. The students chose their own color and independently created a color poem, illustrated it, and shared it with the class. The teacher published a class book from the poems. (Appendix G)

III. Use of descriptive language

Writing riddle poems is another strategy to develop meaningful and descriptive vocabulary. Complete sentences are used when writing riddle poems, whereas, in free verse poetry only phrases are used.

A box containing a hidden object was passed among the students. The students asked questions concerning the object's weight, size, color, shape, or smell. The correct answers were used to develop the riddle. The teacher used these answers to model the process for writing a riddle poem. The students were placed into groups. The group's task was to develop a riddle poem following the teacher's model. The riddle poems were read, and the class attempted to guess each group's riddle. (Appendix H)

IV. Oral Language and writing skills

In order to develop oral language and writing skills, the teacher read Swimmy by Leo Lionni, to the class. The class brainstormed words describing fish (big, little, gold, fat, shiny, slippery, smelly, red, yellow).All descriptive words were written on individual fish shapes which were clustered together to make a large fish shape. The students dictated a story to the teacher using the descriptive words from the fish cluster. Students read the story back to the teacher individually and through choral reading. (Appendix I)

V. Analyzing and Making Inferences

Higher order thinking skills of analyzing and making inferences were developed through the use of story charts. A cumulative tale, such as The Little Red Hen by Paul Galdone was read to the children. The class developed a chart that listed such categories as setting, characters, problem, and solution. After reviewing the chart, the students were asked, "What did the animals do?", "Why did each animal do this?", and "What does this tell you about each animal?" This intervention was implemented during reading time, and a story chart was developed once a week.

Analyzing a story was further developed by making comparisons between two books. The teacher read the stories to the children. Two possible stories were Chicken Little by Janet Hillman and Henny Penny by Paul Galdone. The characters, setting, and events of the story were compared using a Venn diagram. This procedure took four days to complete. (Appendix J)

VI. Sequencing

Oral re-telling of a cumulative tale helps to develop sequencing skills, as well as utilizes oral language skills. The teacher read a cumulative tale, such as The Mitten by Jan Brett. The students selected a story character and illustrated it. The students demonstrated their understanding of the sequence of story events by organizing and pasting these illustrations on mural paper in the correct sequential order. Each group re-told the story according to its mural.

This intervention was used during the language arts block of time. This type of lesson was taught at least once a week. (Appendix K)

VII. Predicting

Prediction skills are strengthened each time a selection of children's literature is presented to the class. The teacher asked questions concerning the beginning, middle, and last picture of the book, as well as questions about what the students think might happen next. The story's problem was discussed, and the children were asked to predict the possible solutions to it. As the selection was read, the predictions, whether written or oral, were checked with the actual story content.

In The Doorbell Rang by Pat Hutchins, children reviewed and discussed the illustrations, and predicted what they thought would happen each time the doorbell rang. The teacher used sentence strips to record student predictions.

After the selection was read, the teacher and students compared the students' predictions to the events in the story.

This intervention was used during a language arts block of time. The strategy of predicting occurred daily across the curriculum. It was the teacher's intent that students would develop this strategy as part of the reading process. (Appendix L)

VIII. Recalling events

Reading comprehension requires the ability to recall events of a story through repeated lessons emphasizing methods of questioning about who, what, why, and where as it pertains to a story. Students develop this strategy for recalling events of the story.

The teacher read the book The Three Little Pigs by Paul Galdone to the students. The class was divided into groups and were given three cards containing a picture of one of the little pigs. The teacher asked a question from the story. The students discussed which picture card correctly illustrated the answers, and when the group agreed on an answer that card was shown.

This type of lesson was used during a language arts block of time. Recalling details was a daily exercise applied across the curriculum. (Appendix M)

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the effects of teaching higher order thinking skills and using students' background knowledge and oral language skills, the passage comprehension section of the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised) was administered to first grade students of the targeted population in Schools A, B, and C in September 1994 and February 1995. The students from

targeted schools increased their levels of reading comprehension during this time frame. Tables 3, 4, and 5, present the data gathered from this test.

Table 3

Results of the pre and post testing
for the passage comprehension section
of the
Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised)

School A			
Student No.	September 1994	February 1995	Growth
1	0.4	1.4	1.0
2	1.2	2.6	1.4
3	0.0	1.3	1.3
4	2.6	4.2	1.6
5	1.2	2.2	1.0
6	0.9	1.3	0.4
7	0.4	1.1	0.7
8	0.4	1.1	0.7
9	0.0	1.1	1.1
10	0.0	0.9	0.9
11	0.0	1.3	1.3
12	0.0	1.3	1.3

The data from Table 3 indicate the grade equivalent scores of the pre and post testing for the passage comprehension section of the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised) for first grade students at targeted School A. One year on a grade equivalent table equals ten months. All students increased their level of reading comprehension. Sixty-seven percent of the students increased their scores by at least one year. This result is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Comparison of individual scores
from the pre and post tests
of the passage comprehension section of the
Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised)

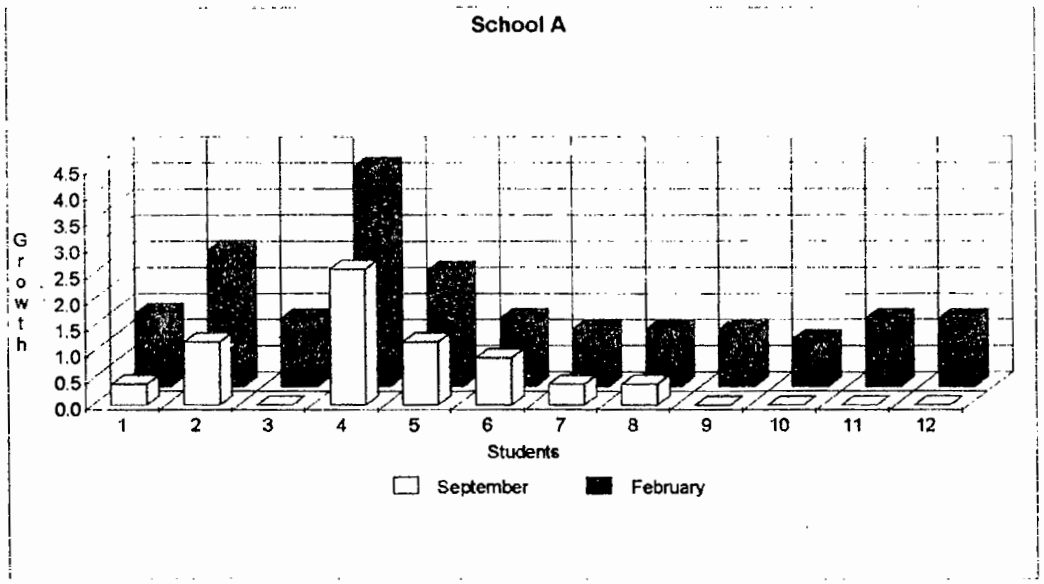


Figure 3 shows the comparison of each student's scores from the pre and post tests of the passage comprehension section of the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised) for School A. The gains are shown in grade equivalent terms. The increases ranged from four months to one year six months.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 4

Results of the pre and post testing
for the passage comprehension section
of the
Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised)

School B			
Student No.	September 1994	February 1995	Growth
1	1.2	2.2	1.0
2	1.1	2.2	1.1
3	1.1	2.2	1.1
4	2.8	5.6	2.8
5	1.2	2.4	1.2
6	0.9	1.6	0.7
7	2.2	4.2	2.0
8	1.1	1.7	0.6
9	3.6	6.9	3.3
10	1.1	1.7	0.6
11	1.6	3.6	2.0
12	0.9	2.0	1.1
13	2.0	3.9	1.9
14	1.1	1.6	0.5
15	0.9	2.4	1.5
16	1.2	2.4	1.2
17	2.0	5.6	3.6

The data from Table 4 indicate the grade equivalent scores of the pre and post testing for the passage comprehension section of the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised) for first grade students at targeted School B. One year on a grade equivalent table equals ten months. All students increased their level of reading comprehension. Seventy-six percent of the students increased their scores by at least one year. This result is illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Comparison of individual scores
from the pre and post tests
of the passage comprehension section of the
Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised)

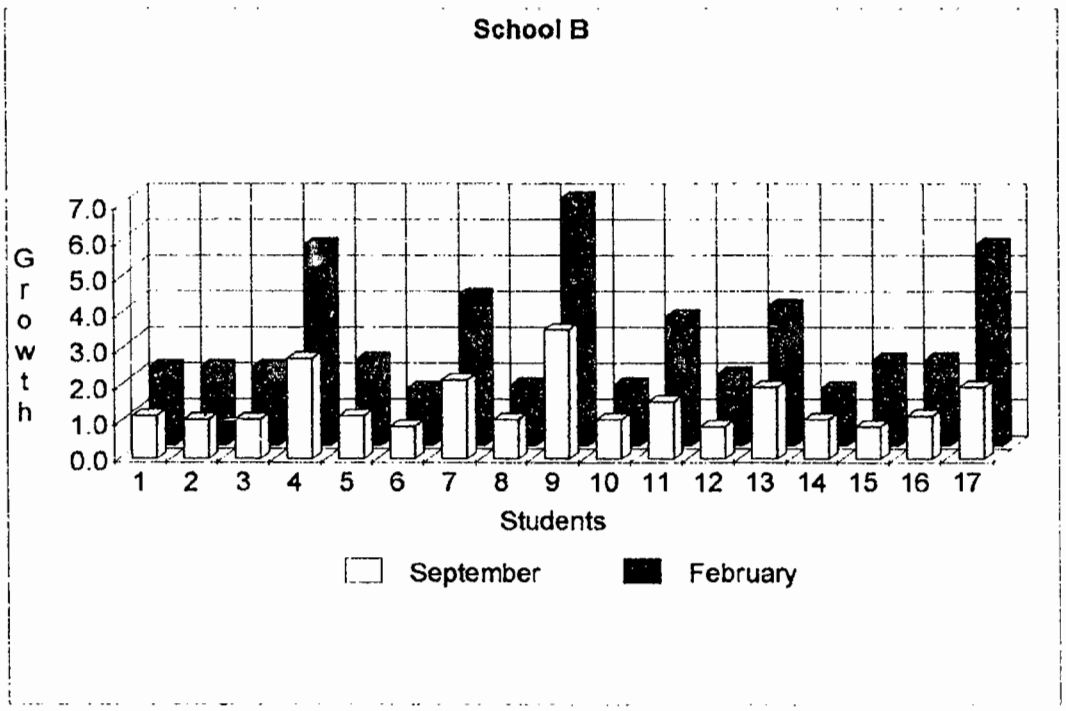


Figure 4 shows the comparison of each student's scores from the pre and post tests of the passage comprehension section of the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised) for School B. The gains are shown in grade equivalent terms. The increases ranged from five months to three years six months.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 5

Results of the pre and post testing
for the passage comprehension section
of the
Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised)

School C			
Student No.	September 1994	February 1995	Growth
1	1.5	3.9	2.4
2	1.5	3.0	1.5
3	1.1	3.0	1.9
4	0.9	2.4	1.5
5	1.1	2.4	1.3
6	0.9	2.2	1.3
7	0.9	2.2	1.3
8	0.4	2.0	1.6
9	1.1	2.0	0.9
10	1.3	1.7	0.4
11	0.4	1.7	1.3
12	0.9	1.6	0.7
13	0.9	1.6	0.7
14	0.4	1.6	1.2
15	0.9	1.4	0.5
16	0.4	1.3	0.9
17	0.0	0.4	0.4

The data from Table 5 indicate the grade equivalent scores of the pre and post testing for the passage comprehension section of the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised) for first grade students at targeted School C. One year on a grade equivalent table equals ten months. All students increased their level of reading comprehension. Fifty-nine percent of the students increased their scores by at least one year. This result is illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Comparison of individual scores
from the pre and post tests
of the passage comprehension section of the
Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised)

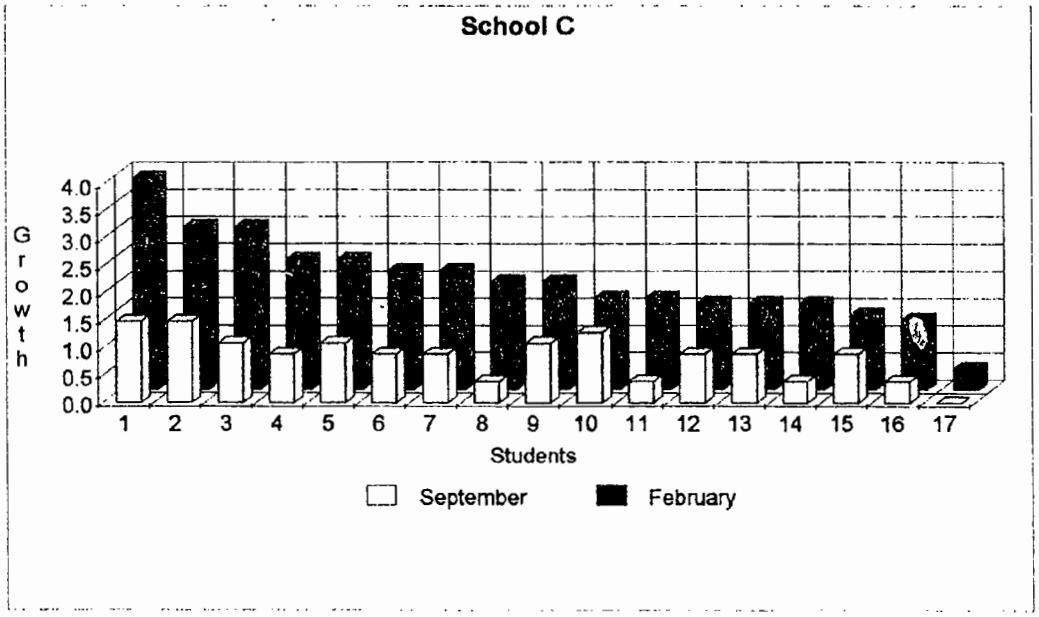


Figure 5 shows the comparison of each student's scores from the pre and post tests of the passage comprehension section of the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement (revised) for School C. The gains are shown in grade equivalent terms. The increases ranged from four months to two years four months.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The results of combining the data in Tables 3, 4, and 5 indicate that 67 percent of the tested students increased their levels of reading comprehension by one or more school years.

Teacher checklists of comprehension skills, summarized in Table 6, indicates that the percentage of students who frequently answered comprehension questions accurately increased during the five months of intervention.

Table 6
Comparison of the percent of students
accurately answering comprehension questions

	September	February
Frequently	39.4	53
Sometimes	42.0	40
Rarely	27.6	7

Comprehension checklists (Appendix B), were kept by the teachers to determine the frequency of accurate responses students made to comprehension questions.

During the implementation, the teachers' observations indicate an increase in the level of student interest, a more positive attitude toward reading, and less behavioral problems. The levels of student participation, as well as their enjoyment for reading, increased. This information was gathered by the teacher-researchers using anecdotal records. The criteria used are found in Appendix C.

Graphic organizers were used as tools to assess the understanding of stories presented to the children. Samples of the graphic organizers include

Venn diagrams, a KWL chart (what one **K**nows, what one **W**ants to know, and what one **L**earns), a T-Chart, webs, and sequence maps. (Appendix N)

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data on the levels of reading comprehension, the first grade students in the targeted schools showed an increase in their levels of reading comprehension. Beginning in September 1994, these interventions were taught through listening comprehension activities. As they increased their reading abilities, the students used these listening comprehension strategies to strengthen their levels of reading comprehension.

The teacher-researchers used children's literature to provide opportunities for students to experience adventures that they may not have the chance to actually "live out". By listening to stories, or reading stories, first graders develop understanding of such experiences. Students who already have prior knowledge, use this new information to build upon their existing knowledge. Appendix D is a list of suggested selections of children's literature. The teacher-researchers conclude, that all students broadened their experiences, and increased their vocabulary after listening to the selections from this list.

The purpose of the interventions was to increase the level of reading comprehension of the first grade students in the targeted schools. In addition to increasing their levels of reading comprehension, the students developed the **DESIRE** to **READ**. As written in Chapter 2 of this paper, Glazer stated that the quality and quantity of comprehension will be in direct proportion to the interest of the reader and the story (Glazer, 1992). With this concept in mind, the three teacher-researchers implemented the interventions with the intent to stimulate interest in each story presentation. From the data presented, the teacher-

researchers conclude that there was an increase in the interest levels of the students, as well as, an increase in the levels of reading comprehension.

In comparing first grade students from past years with the first grade students from the targeted schools, teacher observations indicate higher levels of self- confidence and self-esteem, increased interest in reading, ability to readily make comparisons, and an increase in the number of students willing to respond to comprehension questions. The teacher-researchers conclude that by implementing the plan of action, the first graders developed, or built upon these qualities.

The teacher-researchers conclude that by following these interventions, other students could develop and strengthen their higher order thinking skills and improve their oral language skills. The teacher-researchers recommend that these interventions, lesson plans, and assessment tools could be modified and implemented for students of all grade levels.

References Cited

Allington, R.L. (1983). The reading instruction provided readers of differing reading abilities. Elementary School Journal, 83: 1, 548-559.

Anderson, R.C., Hiebert, E.H., Scott, J.A. and Wilkinson, I.A.G. (1985). Becoming a nation of readers; The report of the commission on reading. Washington, DC: National Institute of Education.

Anderson, R.C.; Osborn, J., Tierney, R. (Eds) (1984). Learning to read in American schools. N.J.: Erlbaum.

Cooper, J.D.; Warncke, E.; & Shipman. D. (1988). The What and how of reading instruction second edition. Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Durkin, D. (1978-79). What classroom observations reveal about reading comprehension instruction. Reading Research Quarterly, 15, 481-533.

Dymock, S. (1993). Reading but not understanding. Journal of Reading, 37, 86-91.

Farrell, L. (1991). Research based comprehension stategies that work. Wisconsin State Reading Association Journal, 35, 35-40.

Gambrell, L.& Jawitz, P. (1993). Mental imagery, text illustrations, and children's story comprehension and recall. Reading Research Quarterly, 28: 3, 265-272.

Glazer, S.M. (1992). Reading comprehension: Self monitoring strategies to develop independent readers. New York; Scholastic Professional Books.

Green, Lisa (1994, July 22). Rockford still home of deals on housing. Rockford Register Star, p. 1.

Griese, A.A., (1997). Do you read me?: Practical approaches to teaching reading comprehension. Santa Monica, CA: Goodyear.

Heimlich, J.E. & Pittelman, D. (1986). Semantic mapping: classroom applications. Del: International Reading Association.

Johnston, P. (1984). Prior Knowledge and reading comprehension test bias. Reading Research Quarterly, 19, 220-238.

Kameenui, E.J. (1993). Diverse learners and the tyranny of time: Don't fix blame; fix the leaky roof. The Reading Teacher, 46, 376-383.

Labbo, L.D. & Teale, W.H. (1990). Cross-age reading : A strategy for helping poor readers. The Reading Teacher, 43, 362-369.

Mier, M. (1984). Comprehension monitoring in the elementary classroom. The Reading Teacher, 37, 770-774.

Reed, S. & Sautter, R.C. (1990). Kappan special report on Children of Poverty. Kappan, 71, K1-K12.

Richards, J.C. & Gipe, J.P. (1993). Getting to know story characters: A strategy for young and at-risk readers. The Reading Teacher, 47, 78-9.

Rockford Area Board of Realtors. (Spring quarter, 1994). Multiple Listing Services, Rockford, IL.

School Report Card (1993). Ellis Elementary School, Rockford School District 205, Rockford, IL.

School Report Card (1993). Maud Johnson Elementary School, Rockford School District 205, Rockford, IL.

School Report Card (1993). McIntosh Elementary School, Rockford School District 205, Rockford, IL.

Smith, F. (1978). Reading without nonsense. New York: Cambridge University press.

Tierney, R.J., Readence, J.E. & Dishner, E.K. (1985). Reading strategies and practices: A compendium (Second edition) .MA. Allyn & Bacon.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Scoring tools for the passage comprehennsion section of the Woodcock Johnson Test of Achievement (revised)

TEST 23

Passage Comprehension

Basal: 6 lowest-numbered items correct
Ceiling: 6 highest-numbered items failed

Score 1,0

1 ___ yellow bird
2 ___ red table
3 ___ little dog
4 ___ one book
5 ___ tree and chair

Tlat Mat Lat Mat

A ___ ___ man

6 ___ hat
7 ___ book
8 ___ road
9 ___ is
10 ___ pond
11 ___ road
12 ___ boy
13 ___ mother
14 ___ wakes
15 ___ did
16 ___ turtles
17 ___ bear
18 ___ spot
19 ___ shoo
20 ___ swimming
21 ___ yours
22 ___ Band-Aid
23 ___ pieces
24 ___ bats
25 ___ lie
26 ___ skin
27 ___ shortest
28 ___ known
29 ___ alphabet
30 ___ education
31 ___ leaves
32 ___ between
33 ___ stopping
34 ___ nomads
35 ___ developed
36 ___ job
37 ___ although
38 ___ secrets
39 ___ desire
40 ___ abrasive
41 ___ by
42 ___ other
43 ___ adapt

[ ] Raw Score

Test 23 - Passage Comprehension
Form A
SCORING TABLE
Enter table using raw for the Raw Score

Raw Score	W	SEM (W)	AE	GE
0	380	12	5.6	K.0[11]
1	394	11	5.9	K.4
2	404	9	6.0	K.9
3	412	8	6-2	1.1
4	419	8	6.3	1.1
5	425	7	6-5	1.2
6	430	7	6-7	1.3
7	436	7	6.8	1.3
8	441	7	6.10	1.4
9	446	7	7-0	1.5
10	452	7	7-2	1.6
11	456	7	7.4	1.7
12	461	7	7.6	2.0
13	466	6	7-8	2.2
14	470	6	7-10	2.4
15	473	6	8.1	2.6
16	477	6	8.4	2.8
17	480	6	8.7	3.0
18	484	5	8.10	3.3
19	487	5	9.2	3.6
20	490	5	9.5	3.9
21	493	5	9-9	4.2
22	496	5	10.1	4.6
23	499	5	10.5	5.1
24	502	5	10.10	5.8
25	505	5	11.4	6.2
26	508	5	12-0	6.9
27	510	5	13.0	7.8
28	513	5	13.8	8.3
29	516	5	14-6	9.2
30	518	5	15.5	10.0
31	521	5	16.6	11.0
32	524	5	17-10	12.0
33	527	5	19	13.0
34	529	5	22	14.2
35	532	5	25	15.6
36	535	5	30[14]	16.9[14]
37	538	5	30[14]	16.9[14]
38	542	6	30[14]	16.9[14]
39	545	6	30[14]	16.9[14]
40	549	7	30[14]	16.9[14]
41	554	7	30[14]	16.9[14]
42	562	10	30[14]	16.9[14]
43	570	11	30[14]	16.9[14]

5.3

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix B
Teacher Check List

Students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1. Has prior knowledge for story																				
2. Matches word cards to print																				
3. Able to answer questions about:																				
a.) Setting																				
b.) Characters																				
c.) Problems in story																				
d.) Solutions to problems																				
4. Makes predictions about stories																				
5. Retells a story in sequence																				

Key
+ Often
S Sometimes
R Rarely

Appendix C

Criteria for teacher observations

The criteria used for teacher observations of student **changes** during reading activites:

Interest level of the student.

Attitude and behaviors of the student.

Participation levels of the student.

Enjoyment levels of the student.

Levels of self-esteem and self-confidence of the student.

Transfer of strategies from group activities to independent activites.

Appendix D

Suggested books for read alouds

Aardema, Verna. Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears. New York: Dial Press, 1975.

Adler, David A. A Picture Book of Martin Luther King, Jr.. New York: Scholastic, 1989.

Ahlberg, Janet. The Jolly Postman. Boston: Little Brown Co., 1986.

Allard, Harry. Miss Nelson is Missing. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977.

Baker, Jeannie. Where the Forest Meets the Sea. New York: Greenwillow, 1987.

Barrett, Joyce. Willie's Not the Hugging Kind. New York: Harper & Row, 1989.

Barrett, Judy. Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs. New York: Macmillan, 1978.

Bishop, Claire. The Five Chinese Brothers. New York: Coward-McCann, 1938.

Brett, Jan. The Mitten. New York: Scholastic Inc.,1990..

Bridwell, Norman. Clifford's Puppy Days. New York: Scholastic, 1992.

Brooke, Leslie. Johnny Crow's Garden. New York:Frederick Warne, 1968.

Brown, Marcia. The Three Billy Goats Gruff. New York:Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1957.

Brown, Margaret Wise. Goodnight Moon. New York: Harper & Row, 1947.

Brown, Margaret Wise. The Important Book. New York: Harper & Row, 1949.

Burningham, John. Mr. Gumpy's Outing. New York: Scholastic Press. 1970.

Burton, Virginia. Katie and the Big Snow. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943.

Cameron, Polly. I Can't Said the Ant. New York: Coward, McCann, and Geoghegan, 1961.

Carle, Eric. Do You Want to Be My Friend? New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1971.

Carle, Eric. The Grouchy Ladybug. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1977.

Carle, Eric. The Mixed Up Chameleon. New York: Harper & Row. Crowell, 1975.

Carle, Eric. The Very Busy Spider. New York: Philomel Books, 1984.

Carle, Eric. The Very Hungry Caterpillar. Cleveland, Oh: Collins World, 1969.

Carle, Eric. The Very Quiet Cricket. New York: Philomel Books, 1990.

Carlstrom, Nancy. Wild Wild Sunflower Child Anna. New York: Macmillan, 1987.

Crews, Donald. Freight Train. New York: Greenwillow, 1978.

Dee. Ruby. Tower to Heaven. New York: Henry Holt, 1991.

dePaola, Tomie. Pancakes for Breakfast. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978.

Emberly, Barbara. Drummer Hoff. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976.

Ets, Marie Hall. Elephant in a Well. New York: Viking, 1972.

Flack, Marjorie. The Story of Ping. New York: Scholastic, 1993.

Freeman, Donald. Dandelion. New York: Viking Press, 1964.

Freeman, R. Corduroy. New York: Viking Press, 1968.

Galdone, Paul. The Gingerbread Boy. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975.

Galdone, Paul. Henny Penny. New York: Scholastic, 1973..

Galdone, Paul. The Three Bears. New York: Scholastic Press, 1972.

Galdone, Paul. The Three Little Pigs. New York: Seabury Press, 1970.

Gibbons, Gail. The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree. San Diego: Hartcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1984.

Giff, Patricia. Today Was a Terrible Day. New York: Puffin Books, 1980.

Greenfield, Eloise. Me and Nessie. New York: Harper & Row, 1975.

Guilfiole, Elizabeth. Nobody Listens to Andrew. New York: Scholastic Press, 1957.

Hillman, Janet. Chicken Little. Crystal Lake: Rigby, 1996.

Hoffman, Mary. Amazing Grace. Dial Books, 1991.

Howe, James. There's a Monster Under My Bed. New York: Macmillan, 1986.

Hutchins, Pat. Rosie's Walk. New York: Macmillan, 1968.

Hutchins, Pat. The Doorbell Rang. New York: Greenwillow,1986.

Keats, Ezra Jack. A Snowy Day. New York: Viking Press, 1962.

Keats, Ezra Jack. Peter's Chair. New York: Harper & Row, 1967.

Keats, Ezra Jack. Whistle for Willie. New York: Puffin Books, 1965.

Krauss, Ruth. A Hole is To Dig. New York: Harper & Row, 1952.

Krauss, Ruth. Carrot Seed. New York: Harper & Row, 1945.

Leaf, Margaret. Nessa's Fish. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1987.

Lionni, L. Swimmy. New York:First Pinwheel, 1973.

Lobel, Arnold.Frog and Toad Together. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.

McCloskey, Robert. Blueberries For Sal. New York: Viking Press, 1914.

McCloskey, Robert. One Morning In Maine. New York: Troll Associates, 1952.

McDermott, Gerald. Anansi the Spider. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1972.

Mahy, Margaret. The Seven Chinese Brothers. New York: Scholastic, 1990.

Marshall, James. George and Martha. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972.

Martin, Bill. Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970.

Martin, Bill. The Haunted House. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970.

Mayer, Mercer. There's A Nightmare in My Closet. New York, Dial Books for Young Readers, 1968.

Miller, E. Mousekin's Thanksgiving. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1985..

Minarik, Else Holmelund. Little Bear. New York: Harper & Row, 1957.

Numeroff, Joffe L. If You Give A Mouse A Cookie. New York: Scholastic, 1985.

O'Neill, Mary. Hailstones and Halibut Bones. Garden City: Doubleday, 1961.

Parks, Brenda. The Ugly Duckling. Maurbern Pty. Ltd., 1986.

Peppe, Rodney. The House that Jack Built. New York: Delacorte, 1970.

Petersham, Maud and Miska. The Rooster Crows: A Book of American Rhymes and Jingles. New York: Scholastic Press,1971.

Potter, Beatrice. The Tale of Peter Rabbit. New York: Golden Press, 1982.

Prokofieu, S. Peter and the Wolf. New York: Puffin Books, 1971..

Rey, H.A. Curious George. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952.

Ringgold, Faith. Tar Beach. New York: Crown, 1991.

Rossetti, Christina. What is Pink? New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965.

Scheer, Jullian, and Marvin Bileck. Rain Makes Applesauce. New York: Holiday House, 1964.

Seeger, Pete. Abiyoyo. New York: Scholastic, 1989.

Sendak, Maurice. Chicken Soup with Rice. New York: Scholastic, 1962.

Sendak, Maurice. Where the Wild Things Are. New York: Scholastic Press, 1963.

Scieszka, Jon. The True Story of the Three Little Pigs. New York: Scholastic, 1989.

Dr. Seuss. Dr. Seuss's ABC. New York: Random House, 1963.

Shaw, Charles B. It Looked Like Spilt Milk. New York: Harper & Row, 1947.

Slobodkin, E. Caps For Sale. New York: Harper & Row, 1968..

Steptoe, John. Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters. New York: Scholastic, 1987.

Stieg. W. Sylvester and the Magic Pebble. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1969.

Taylor, Byrd. Amigo. New York: Scholastic, 1963.

Tompert, Ann. Grandfather Tang's Story. New York: Crown, 1990.

Tressalt, Alvin. The Mitten. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1964.

Trivizas, Eugene. The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig. New York: Macmillan, 1993.

Turkle, Brinton. Deep in the Forest. New York: Dutton & Co., 1976.

Vaughan, Marcia. The Sandwich that Max Made. Crystal Lake: Rigby, 1989.

Viorst, Judith. Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day. New York: Anthenewn, 1972.

Waber, Bernard. Ira Sleeps Over. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972.

Waber, Bernard. Lovable Lyle. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969.

Westcott, Nadine Bernard. I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly. Boston: Little, Brown, 1980.

Williams, Karen. Galimoto. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1970.

Williams, M. The Velveteen Rabbit. New York: Lothrop, Lee, & Shepard, 1990.

Williams, Vera B. A Chair For My Mother New York: Greenwillow, 1982.

Wood, Audrey. The Napping House. Singapore: Tien Wah Press, 1984.

Zemach, Margot. The Teeny Tiny Woman. New York: Scholastic Press, 1965.

Zion, G. Harry The Dirty Dog. New York: Harper & Row, 1956.

Appendix E

Lesson plan for "read-aloud"

Materials

Rosie's Walk by Pat Hutchins
5 sets of duplicated of pictures from book
5 sheets 18x24 construction paper
Glue
Vocabulary word cards for *over, under, around*

Objectives

Sequencing - To demonstrate understanding of the sequencing of events in the story.

Oral language - To recognize and use selected vocabulary words (example *over, under, around*).

Procedure

The teacher introduces the book and then reads the story to the class. The teacher models self-questioning by asking, "Who is the main character?", and "What did the character do in the story?"

The retelling process is completed through sequencing. Students are divided into five groups. Each group is given duplicated copies of story pictures. After the groups discuss story events, they glue the pictures in the correct sequential order. Each group shares what has transpired.

At another time vocabulary word cards are presented and identified. Students match each vocabulary word card to its printed word in the book. The students use these words in oral sentences within the group. Some sentences may be shared with entire class.

Extended Activity

Dramatize Rosie's Walk emphasizing the concepts of *over, under, around.*

Appendix F

Lesson plan for a five day plan

Materials

Caps For Sale by E. Slobodkin
Sentence strip paper
Butcher paper
Markers
Glue

Objectives

Vocabulary development - To increase the students experiences through exposure to new vocabulary; *peddler , village, fifty cents.*

Sequencing - To demonstrate knowledge of sequence of events.

Day 1-The book is presented by the teacher to the students. The teacher leads a discussion about the cover, the author, and the illustrator. The beginning, middle, and last pictures are shown and the students predict what is happening in these pictures. The predictions are written on sentence strips. Possible vocabulary words are selected by the teacher and written on word cards for use at a later time.

Day 2-The book is presented to the students. The teacher reads the selection for the first time. The students' predictions from the day before are reviewed and compared with the actual events in the story. The chosen vocabulary word cards are introduced to the students.

Day 3-The book is presented to the students. The chosen vocabulary are matched to the "print". The story is reread to the children. The children are placed into groups to create a sequential map.

Day 4 The book is presented to the students. The students retell the story through dramatization.

Day 5 The book is reread to the class. The teacher introduces a writing activity requiring the students to answer the question, "What do you think happened to the peddler when he went back to the village?"

Extended Activity

Students bring caps from home. The color of the caps is graphed on a large sheet of paper.

Appendix G

Lesson plan for descriptive poems

Materials

Color charts from a paint store
Chart paper
Markers

Objective

Using descriptive language - To use descriptive language in writing poems.

Procedure

To begin the lesson numerous color poems are read using similes (comparing two things using like or as) to encourage students to write free verse. Color charts from paint stores are used for discussion concerning the variety of names for different shades of the same color. The color poems in Hailstones and Halibut Bones are read. The use of imagery and similes is modeled for the children. The teacher asks the students to complete the phrase as green as_____. The students look around the room for things that are shades of green, and the teacher lists the things they see on chart paper. Students are asked to think about and suggest ideas for the following frame: green smells like _____, green tastes like_____, green looks like_____, green feels like_____. A discussion of free verse follows this activity. It is explained that this type of poetry does not always rhyme or follow a rythmic pattern. Using the students' frames, the teacher helps the students compose free verse of the color green. The students use this frame to write their own color poems..The students illustrate and share their poems. The children's work is published into a class book entitled Colors.

Extended activity

Classroom learning centers provide the materials for the children to make rainbow toast, to dye eggs, to create rainbow gelatin, or to glue tissue squares to make their individual paper rainbow.

Appendix H

Lesson plan for riddle poems

Materials

Mystery box with hidden object
Chart paper
Markers

Objective

Vocabulary enhancement - To write riddle poems to enhance the use of vocabulary.

Procedure

The teacher places an object in a box and tapes it shut. The box is presented to children as they sit in a circle. The children are allowed to shake the box, feel its weight, and listen for any sounds of movement. The teacher models the process of making a simile (a riddle poem) as clues to the hidden object. For example: "The hidden objects are more than one of the same thing. They are the colors of the rainbow, smooth as glass, sweet as sugar, and oval like eggs. What is in the box?" Children ask questions, the responses are written on chart paper, yes answers are circled and reread as part of the clues to the mystery objects. The box is opened to show that jelly beans were the mystery item. The children are divided into cooperative groups. The task for each group is to select a mystery item and write a riddle poem to describe the item. The following day each group models the previous day's lesson. The riddle poems are published in a class book.

Extended activity

The students read a riddle a day over the intercom. The other classes submit their guesses for each day's riddle.

Appendix I

Lesson plan for oral language and writing skills

Materials

Swimmy by Leo Lionni
Pre-cut fish shapes
Fish shape drawn on large sheet of paper
Chart paper
Markers

Objectives

Oral language - To develop oral language skills by using descriptive words to create a story.

Procedure

The teacher reads Swimmy to the class. The class brainstorms words to describe fish and the teacher writes these words on the board. The students copy one descriptive word onto a pre-cut fish shape. These fish are clustered together to make a large fish shape. The students use these words to tell a story to the teacher, who writes the dictated sentences on chart paper to create the story. The written story is shared.

Extended Activity

The children share with their group a fish story.

Appendix J

Lesson plan for analyzing and making inferences

Materials

Chicken Little by Janet Hillman
Henny Penny by Paul Galdone
Chart paper
Markers

Objectives

Analyzing - To apply the higher order thinking skill of analyzing story content.

Making inferences - To apply the higher order thinking skill of making inferences.

Procedure

The teacher reads Chicken Little to the class. The class discusses the relationship between the characters and the events of the story and the order in which they are presented. The students suggest categories for the chart such as setting, characters, problems, and solutions. A chart is completed using the students responses for each category.

Comparing Procedure

The teacher reads Henny Penny to the class. They create a chart using the same categories used for Chicken Little. The students make a Venn diagram to compare these two stories.

Extended Activity

The children will dramatize both stories.

Appendix K

Lesson for sequencing

Materials

The Mitten by Jan Brett
Mural paper
Sets of character pictures
Mittens for characters
Simplified copies of the story
Markers

Objective

Sequencing - To apply the strategy of sequencing the story events.

Procedure

The teacher reads The Mitten by Jan Brett to the class. The story characters are listed on chart paper as they appear in the tale. The students select one character to illustrate. Cooperative groups are arranged so that each story character is represented in each group. In these groupings the children are asked to re-tell the story and arrange characters in the correct sequence. Each group is given a large piece of mural paper. The story characters are pasted onto the paper in sequential order. Each group completes its mural by adding background scenery and a border similar to that in the book. On completion of the murals, each group retells the story making certain to list the characters in the correct sequential order. Each child receives a simplified version of The Mitten, a large paper mitten, and a set of character pictures. The students place the character pictures into the mitten as they retell the story to an adult at home.

Extended activity

Using The Napping House, by Audrey and Don Wood, the teacher creates a sequencing center in the classroom. The teacher enlarges story characters on tagboard and provides a sentence strip describing these characters. The students sequence the characters according to the story order, and match the tagboard characters to the appropriate sentence strips.

Appendix L

Lesson plan for predicting

Materials:

The Doorbell Rang- Pat Hutchins
Sentence strips
Markers

Objective

Predicting - To apply the higher order thinking strategy for predicting events in the story.

Procedure

The book is previewed when the students are asked to look at the beginning and middle pictures, and to predict "what is happening", and "what might happen next". The student responses are recorded on sentence strips. The selection is read to the children. The class checks the accuracy of the predictions.

Extended Activity

Children bake cookies as a class project. The cookies are separated as dictated by the details of the story.

Appendix M

Lesson plan for recalling events

Materials

The Three Little Pigs- Paul Galdone
Picture cards for each group

Objective

Recalling events - To use a strategy for recalling events of a story.

Procedure

The teacher reads The Three Little Pigs by P. Galdone. The students are divided into groups of four, and given answer cards that have the story characters' names or pictures on them. The teacher asks questions about the story. The group discusses possible answers agreeing on one, and holds up the chosen card. Possible questions include:

What character in the story built a house of twigs?

What character built a house.of sticks?

What character liked to trick others?

What character was the safest in his house?

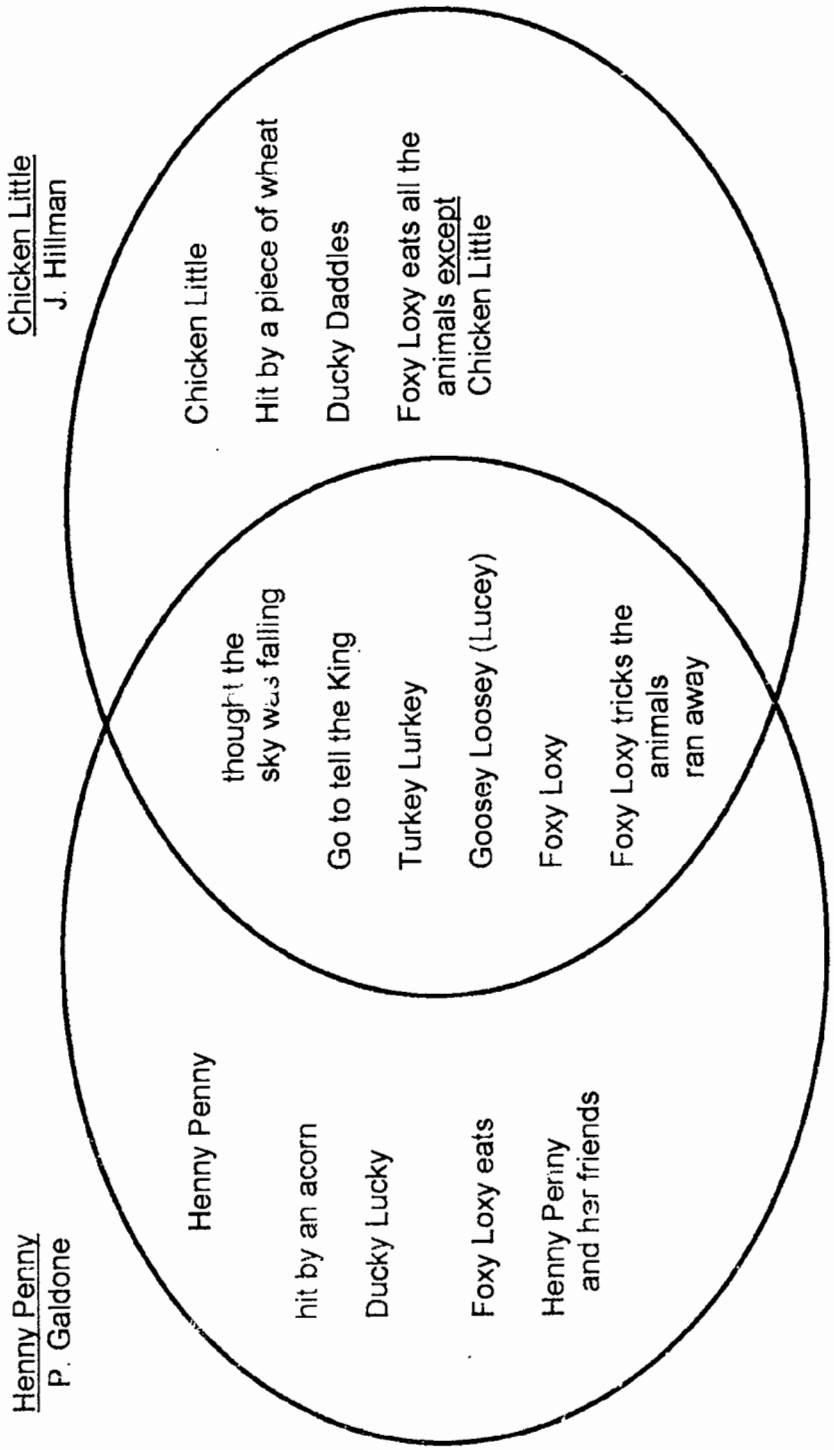
What character put a pot of water on to boil?

Each time the group shares its answer.

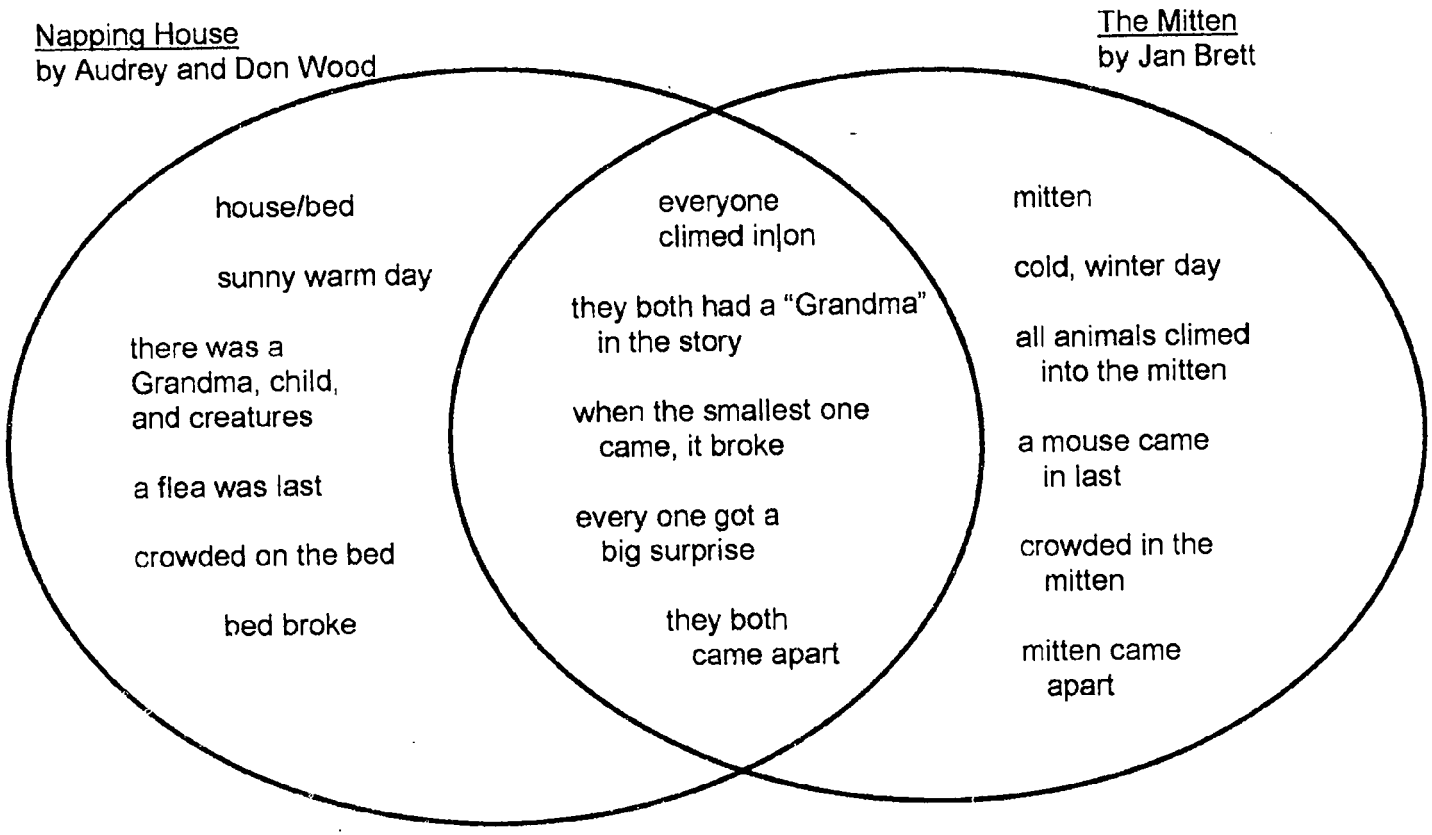
Extended Activity

Use the books that are variations on the story theme of The Three Little Pigs and make character comparisons. Books with theme variations are: The True Story Of The Three Little Pigs! by A. Wolf (Jon Scieszka) and The Three Little Wolves and The Big Bad Pig by Eugene Trivizas and Helen Oxenbury.

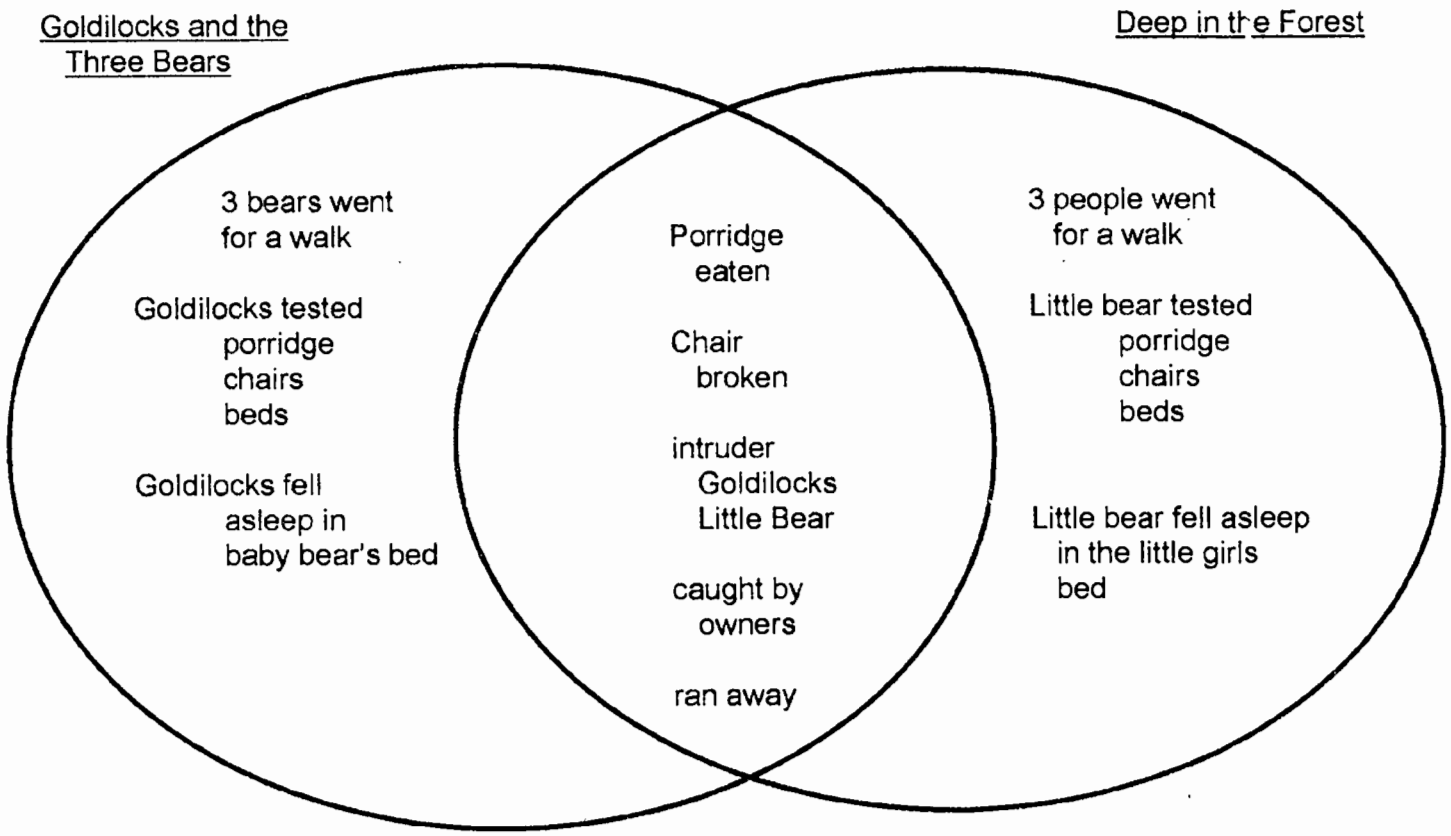
Appendix N continued
Assessment Tool -- Comparing and recalling



Comparison of two stories completed by a first grade class.



This Venn diagram comparing two stories, The Napping House by Audrey and Don Wood and The Mitten by Jan Brett, was completed by the first graders.



Venn diagram comparing two stories, Goldilocks and the Three Bears by Galdone and Deep in the Forest by Turkle. This sample was completed by first graders.

Brown smells like cinnamon
Brown tastes like chocolate candy
Brown looks like toast
Brown feels like my dog.

Red smells like a rose
Red tastes like a strawberry
Red looks like a stoplight
Red feels like a warm fire.

Green is:
as big as the Green Giant
as cold as lettuce
as crunchy as a Granny Smith apple
as small as a green grape.

Appendix N continued

Assessment Tool - riddle poem

It is as round as a circle.
It is brown as tree bark.
It is bumpy as a road.
It is _____. (penny)

It is red as apples.
It is rough as sandpaper.
It is as sweet as honey.
What is it?_____ (strawberries)

It is hard as wood.
It is white as snow.
It is shiny as sugar.
What is it?_____ (white rock)

Samples of riddle poems by first grade students

Appendix N continued
Assessment Tool – Descriptive language

Fog
by Carl Sandburg

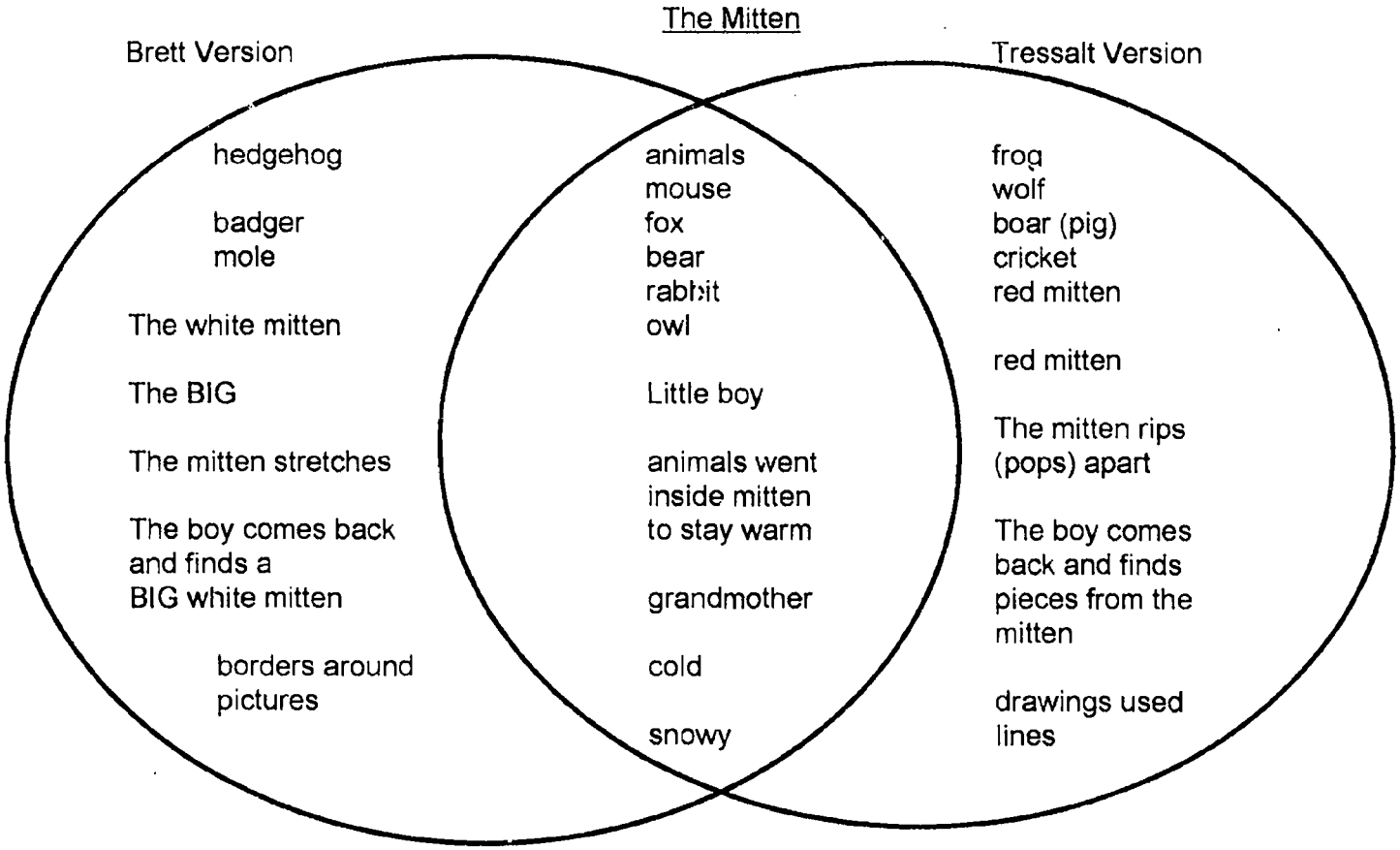
Looks like	Sounds like
moving darkness	quiet
shines	hissing sound
windows of car covered up	whistles
smoke	when hands move on and off your ears
dirt glowed in face	
hard to see through	
cloud close to ground	
pan on stove with "smoke" going in air	

This T-Chart completed by first graders after listening to the poem Fog by Carl Sandburg.

Appendix N continued
Assessment Tool -- Questioning and Recalling

K	W	L
He wanted people to walk hand in hand.	What was his Mom and Dad's name?	He was a Civil Right leader.
He wanted peace for all people.	Where was he born?	He wanted people to live in peace.
He wanted people to love one another.	What were his children's names?	He died -- somebody shot him.
He loved all people -- no matter what color	Did you like all people?	We celebrate his birthday on Monday.
He was a kind man.	What kind of work did you do?	

A "K W L" completed by first graders for the story:
A Picture Book of Martin Luther King, Jr. by D. Adler



Two versions of story read to class. The first graders compared the books by making this Venn diagram.

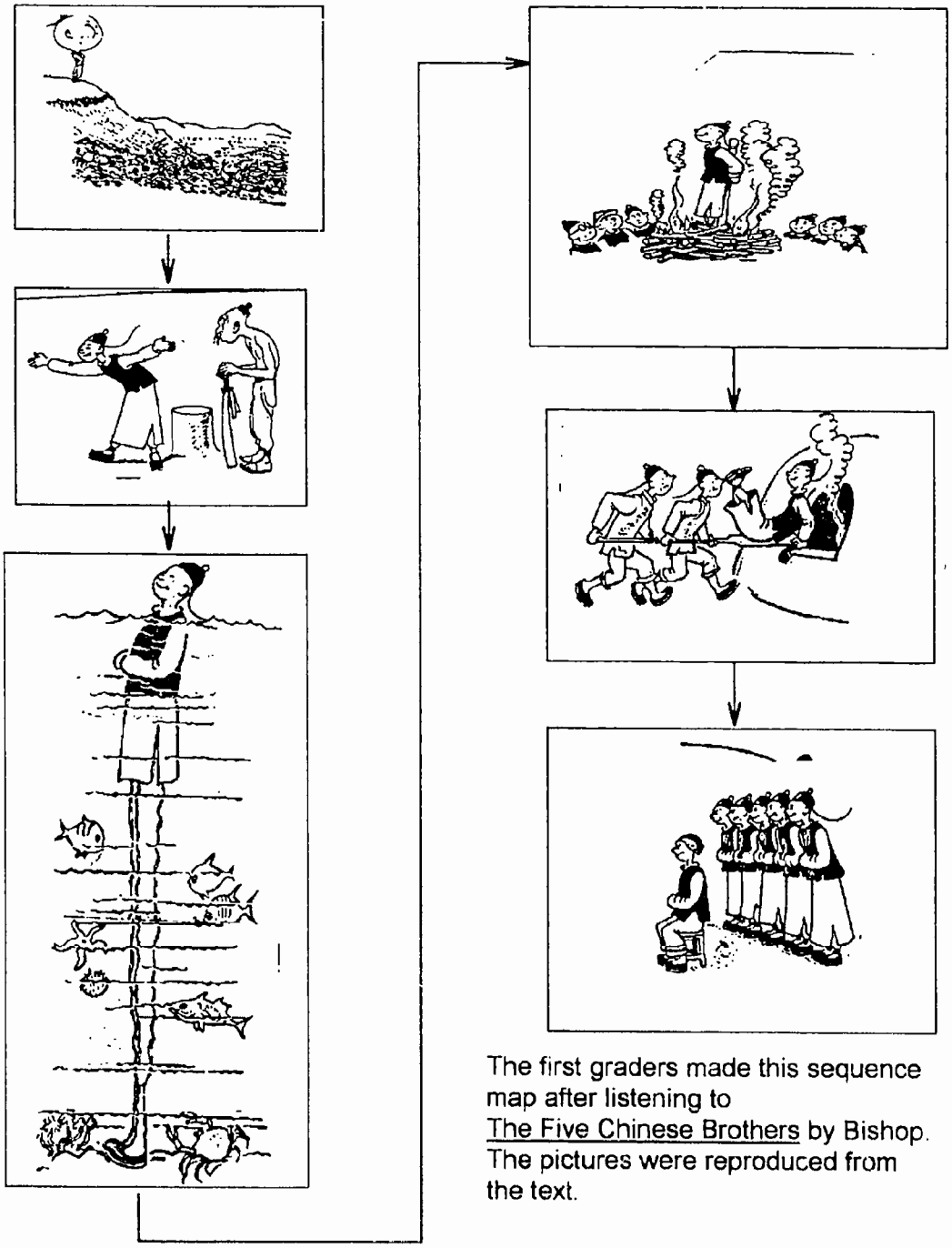
Appendix N continued
Assessment Tool -- Recalling

A Snowy Day

What Peter Saw	What Peter did	What Peter felt
snow flakes	put on snowsuit	snow on head
piles of snow	made tracks with feet	cold
boys playing in the snow	made tracks with stick	sad
snowball fight	hit snow from tree	
	made a snowman	
	made a snowangel	
	slid in the snow	
	put snowball in pocket	
	had warm bath	
	had dream of snow melting	

Chart completed by first grade class after listening to and reading A Snowy Day by Jack Keats

Appendix N continued
Assessment Tool -- Sequencing

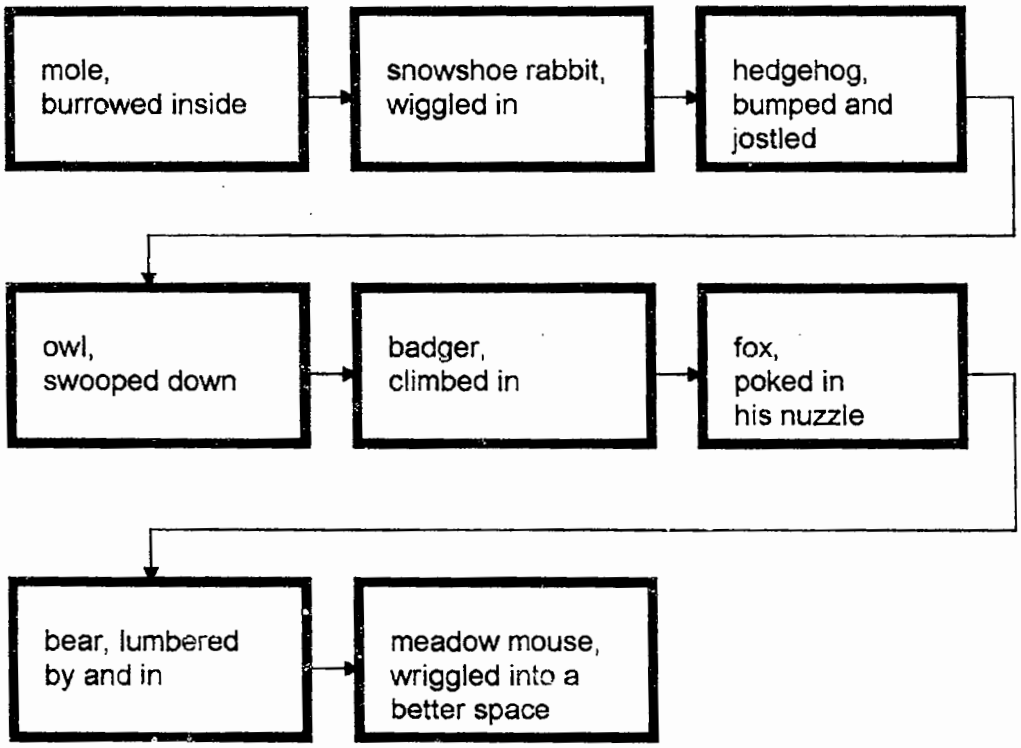


The first graders made this sequence map after listening to
The Five Chinese Brothers by Bishop.
The pictures were reproduced from the text.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix N continued
Assessment Tool -- Squencing

Problem: What was the sequential order of the animals into the mitten?
* name the animal and how it moved in?



This sequence map was completed by the first graders after listening to The Mitten by Jan Brett.

Appendix N Continued
Assessment Tool -- Sequencing

There was an egg on the leaf

↓

The egg hatched into a caterpillar.

↓

The caterpillar ate:

different kinds of fruit	lollipop
chocolate cake	cherry pie
ice cream cone	sausage
pickle	cup cake
swiss cheese	watermelon
salami	green leaf

↓

The fat caterpillar made a cocoon.

↓

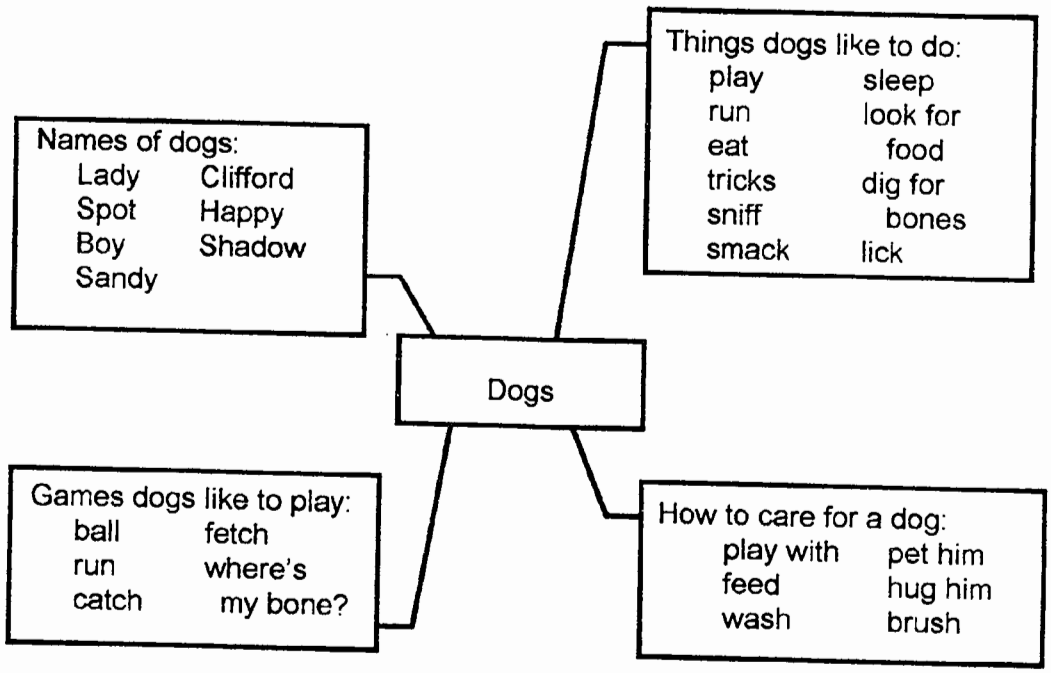
The cocoon opened up.

↓

There was a beautiful caterpillar

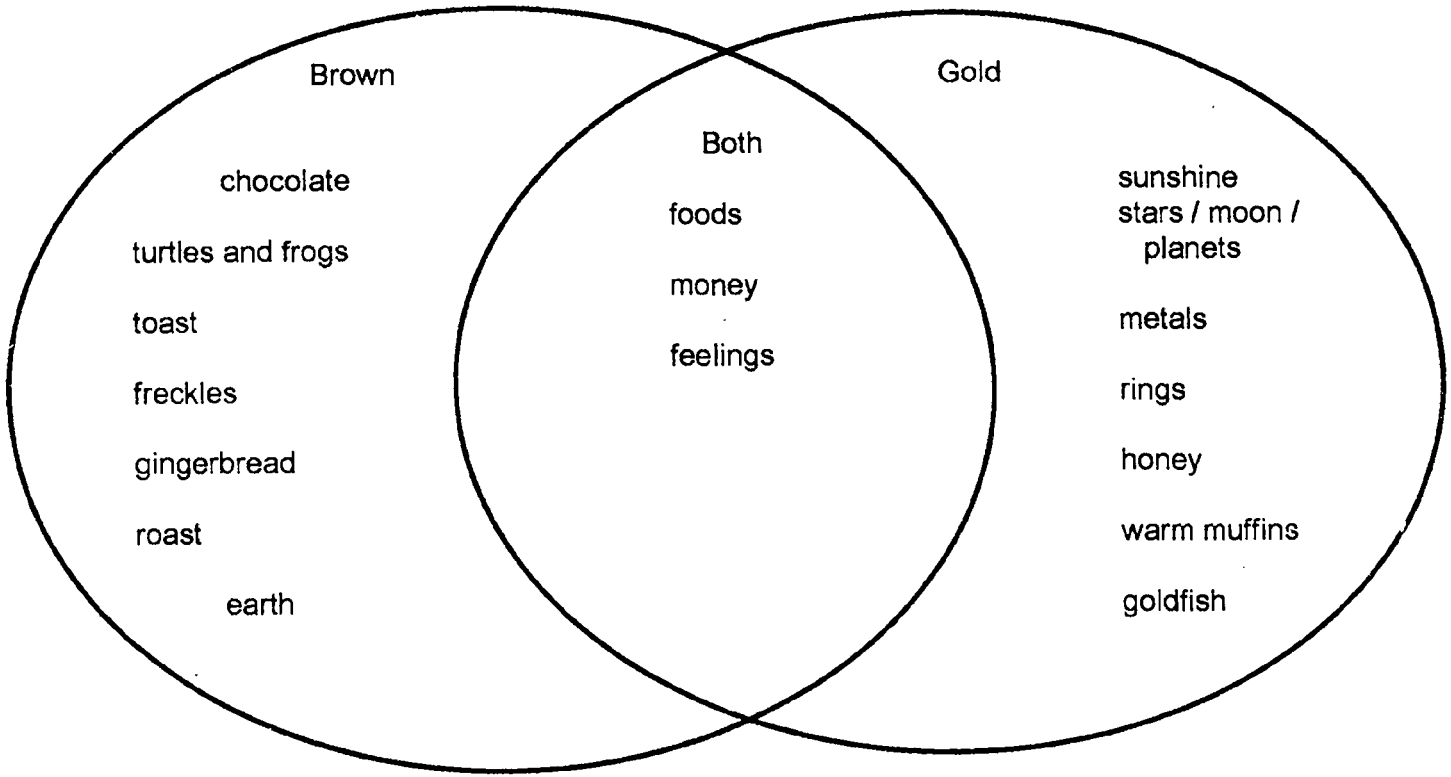
Sequence map completed by first graders for the story The Very Hungry Caterpillar by E. Carle.

Appendix N continued
Assessment Tool --Vocabulary development



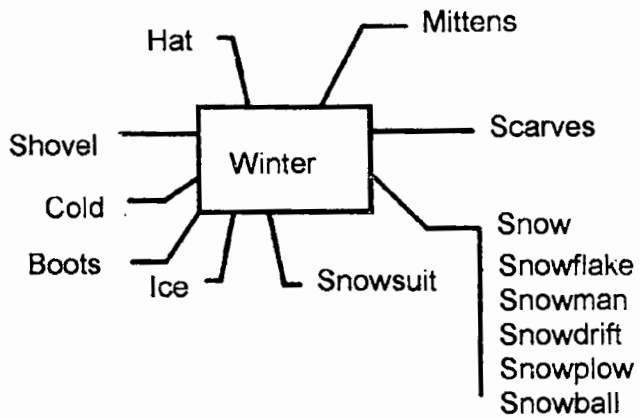
This was completed by a first grade class after listening to and reading Clifford's Puppy Days by Bridwell.

Hailstones and Halibut Bones by Mary O'Neill



After listening to the teacher read the poems What is Brown? and What is Gold? the first graders completed this Venn diagram.

Appendix N continued
Assessment Tool -- Vocabulary Development



Web completed by first grade students after listening to and reading books and poems about winter:

such as: A Snowy Day, Keats; Katy and the Big Snow, Burton; The Mitten, Brett or Tressalt.

Students brainstormed words
Students told each other winter stories
Students wrote stories using words from the web.

In Spring the same web was used to write poems

"Good bye scarf,
Good bye mittens,
Good bye snowsuit,
Helio windbreaker!"