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Children's perceptions of the purpose of a literature-based reading program

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reading program**

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San Jose State University, 1992

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**CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE PURPOSE OF A
LITERATURE-BASED READING PROGRAM**

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Education
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
Plan A

By

Suzanne Michelle Nunes

December, 1992

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE PURPOSE OF A LITERATURE-BASED READING PROGRAM

By Suzanne M. Nunes

This thesis examines students' perceptions of a literature-based basal reader. For this study 102 elementary students were interviewed. The district in this study recently transitioned from a traditional basal to a literature-based basal. This study sought to determine 1) What children perceive as the major purpose for classroom reading; 2) What criteria children use for judging success in reading; 3) If children's views on reading closely match the aims of the reading program; and 4) If a change in instructional practice has accompanied a change in reading curriculum.

This study found that students using a newly adopted literature-based basal placed the same emphasis upon skill, procedure, and meaning, as students working in traditional basals. However, students using the new literature-based basal rely less upon the opinions of others and comparison with others when evaluating themselves as readers. Finally, more students reading the literature-based basal than traditional basal read for enjoyment.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the field of education, curriculum materials and practices are influenced by the social, political, and economic forces of the time. Debate is the common denominator of each era. No other subject area has generated the controversy over theory and practice as has reading instruction. Controversy in the area of reading centers around material as well as method. The complexity of the subject is described by Venezky (1987).

Within the school curriculum, mathematics has been taught primarily to further numeracy, spelling to advance writing, and geography to increase the understanding of the earth's natural and political arrangements. However, reading has never been taught simply to advance literacy. Skill in reading, as a general competency, has always been comingled with inculcation of what to read.... For the early colonist, reading was taught for theological ends... In the post-Revolutionary period, reading was the route to good character. Late in the nineteenth century, reading became the means for acquiring an appreciation of good literature.... Attitude, though has never been as important as skill (Venezky, 1987).

Historical factors have influenced the content, purpose, and methodology of reading instruction. Modern educators continue to debate the advancement of literacy, and specifically the emphasis placed on skill development versus content. In recent years the focus of many educators has been on the contrasting ideologies of the traditional basal proponents and whole language advocates.

Today the typical American student learns to read with the basal reader (Goodman, Shannon, Freeman, and Murphy,

1988). A basal is a textbook designed to be a comprehensive, developmental, continuous-progress program that provides for the sequential and systematic learning of all reading skills (Manley, 1988). Traditionally, basals subscribe to a bottom-up conceptual framework. In this framework reading acquisition is viewed as the act of mastering and integrating a series of word identification skills (Vacca, 1987). Teachers who view the reading process as a bottom-up process believe students must decode letters and words before they are able to fully derive meaning from the written text.

Research indicates that an interactive, top-down approach is needed (Goodman, et al., 1991). In the top-down approach reading for meaning is the essential component of all reading instruction. To promote literacy children should be immersed in real reading experiences, with understanding literature as the means as well as the goal. Proponents of this approach, such as the whole language advocates, believe instruction should center around the interests of the child, and that reading instruction should be relevant to the child and purposeful in nature.

Interactive models of reading assume the process of translating print to meaning involves making use of both prior knowledge and print (Vacca, 1987). Experienced teachers are aware that one approach, or ideology, will not meet the needs of the diverse student population found in elementary classrooms. Interactive models combine elements of the contrasting reading frameworks, and encourages teachers to choose what he or she deems appropriate.

In light of recent research, basal proponents are currently facing their biggest challenge. A revolution in reading instruction has taken place. In California, the new state English-Language Arts Framework (1987) recognized the importance of a literature-based language arts program in the

schools. Literature is to be used in an integrated, meaning-based language arts curriculum. Moreover, stories are not to be restricted to the reading hour, but rather integrated into the different subject areas. The value of the traditional basal, consisting of stories created with the use of readability formulas, and workbooks emphasizing sequential skill-work are now being questioned. Authentic language is being proposed as a more natural way to learn about language. There is a new enthusiasm for a whole-language philosophy concerned with relevancy and student response to literature.

Many California educators are turning to the use of trade books as a means of teaching reading (Handbook for Planning an Effective Literature Program, 1988). Basal publishers must adapt in both theory and format to meet the call of the state's framework, or risk high profit loss. This study will examine a recently published basal that attempts to meet the standards set by California, and that calls itself "literature-based."

The changes being made in California's reading curriculum will effect the practices of teachers across the nation, and will be closely examined by educational researchers. The debate between differing ideologies will continue. As an educator seeking answers in the area of reading curriculum, there is a perspective rarely represented in the research: the voice of the student.

It is essential to examine student perspectives of the reading process to better create and evaluate reading programs, and to improve classroom reading instruction. Researchers focusing upon reading ideals such as relevancy and meaningfulness must consult student opinion. The intent of this paper will be to attempt to determine student perceptions of the purpose of a literature-based reading program, as presented in a newly adopted basal reader.

Specifically, the paper will attempt to show how the student perceptions compare and contrast with the objectives or goals of a literature-based program.

For the purpose of this study, a literature-based basal is examined, rather than a literature-based reading program consisting of trade books. Although current research and a number of educators argue for allowing students to self-select trade books to teach reading, the response of many districts has been to up-date the current basal, by adopting the literature-based basal. A question to be examined is whether the literature-based basal adopted in one district promotes literature-based instruction, or traditional basal practices.

Background

In 1990, a northern California school district made a major transition in the reading curriculum. The transition involved 27 elementary schools, affecting over 15,000 students. The district discontinued use of the current basal program, and in an attempt to comply with the recommendations of the state framework, adopted a new literature-based basal reading series.

Briefly, the adoption procedure involves the following actions. The state establishes a panel every seven years to review textbooks that meet the necessary criteria -as stated in the state's framework. These texts must be approved by the State Department of Education. Once the texts pass this process each school district forms a committee and selects a text from the approved list. The district studied for the purpose of this study examined five different reading series for the 1990-91 school year, piloting different textbooks in classrooms around the district. The district choose the

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Reading Series (1989), feeling the series met the guidelines set in the California State Framework, as well as the district's scope and sequence curriculum guidelines.

As previously stated, the focus of this study is student perception. However, it is necessary at this point to explain how the district's Supervisor for Instructional Material and the district's textbook selection committee felt HBJ, a literature-based basal, differed from the traditional basal used in previous years, and why the HBJ series would be more closely aligned with the State framework's recommendations. The views of these educators are important if one is to determine if there is a mismatch between the aims of educators and the perceptions of the students.

A major difference between HBJ and other basals, according to the district's representatives, is that the HBJ offers students unedited, abridged selections of children's literature rather than stories which have been adapted or created using readability formulas, as was found in previous basal material. The language students are exposed to is authentic rather than scientifically designed. Many of the district's teachers have noted the sophisticated vocabulary level, some expressing concern about the level of difficulty for students. There has been some research, however, indicating that students prefer the unadapted language found in real literature to the controlled vocabulary found in basal stories (Kramer, 1989).

Another difference between the traditional basal and HBJ's literature-based basal, cited by the district, is that there is less an emphasis on skill work. Reading skills are a part of the HBJ program, however in a literature-based program decoding skills are viewed as a tool used in achieving literacy. Educators hope that reading literature

is interesting and exciting to students, that new worlds are opened, and that the students' interpretations of meaning are respected in the reading classroom. This study will attempt to see if these aims are reflected in the students' perceptions of the literature program's purpose.

Another difference between HBJ and traditional basals is the way in which the skill work is organized in the HBJ program. The skill work in the HBJ is based on the reading selections, rather than abstract in content. The skill work is also more flexible in sequence, spiraling throughout grade level texts rather than being presented in the linear order of previous basal material. A teacher may organize the lessons as she feels appropriate rather than follow a prescribed order. The HBJ company provided the district with skillpacks (student workbooks consisting mainly of fill-in-the-blank skill lessons) free of cost for the first year of adoption, in the hope that the district would opt to purchase the skillpacks in future years. The district has chosen not to purchase the workbooks. Eliminating workbooks would constitute a major change in classroom practice, but what remains in question is whether individual schools will opt to purchase workbooks using their own funds.

Student grouping represents another way practice is changing using the new basal. In the traditional basal, teachers assessed a student's reading level, and assigned a student to a reading group at the beginning of the school year. In most cases, the student remained in the same group the entire year. In the new basal teachers are encouraged to abandon static reading groups. In the HBJ series small reading groups are formed according to the concept or skill of the day or week, and student participation in skill groups is constantly changing. In other words, the traditional

basal practice of having a group of Bluebirds all year is becoming a thing of the past.

In summary, the district's instructional media supervisor and a textbook committee member expressed the feeling that HBJ met the requirements of providing an integrated language arts program with the use of a variety of selections of literature, eliminating isolated skill instruction and modifying traditional grouping practices.

As with the basal readers of the past, the HBJ literature series provides teachers with suggested activities, in a less scripted style, and with a greater emphasis on reading and writing experiences. Many feel there is less of a test-teach-test format, and that the use of literature more accurately reflects current thinking about reading instruction. Others argue that this type of reading program does not truly constitute a literature program, but instead is simply an updated basal in which the language found in the teacher's manual reflects current theory, but in actuality will have little effect on actual classroom practice during the reading hour. Some educators argue that any reading texts that are organized into grade levels, and do not provide student choice in selection and interpretation of meaning are not really different from the basal programs that are contradictory in nature to the new English-Language Arts Framework (Freeman, 1989). Similarly, Goodman coined the term "basalization," which refers to structuring the teaching of literature into a basal-like format (1988). Still many educators see the introduction of literature-based reading programs, such as the HBJ series, as an opportunity to de-emphasize skill and drill and focus on meaningful interactions with literature.

A more detailed examination of what the HBJ reading series includes, and how it compares with basals of previous

years will be included in Chapter Three of this paper. Throughout this thesis, the phrase "traditional basal" is used when referring popular basal series found in most school districts in the past two decades, which utilize readability formulae and emphasize sequential reading skill work. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich (HBJ) is the new literature-based reader discussed in this 1991 study.

Statement of the Problem

Theory influences method and material, and ideally educational research leads to improved practice. Informed educators utilize the improved methods and materials in the classroom setting, and return to re-examine and perhaps modify the original theory. To develop a reading program that is more meaningful to students, and to examine if the form and content of the basal is consistent with the aim of the reading program, one must consult student opinion if practice is to evolve. Evidence shows that children's perceptions of the purpose of basal reading activities indicate a focus on materials and procedures rather than on meaning (Cairney, 1985). In a 1985 study, Cairney interviewed 178 primary children in an attempt to identify: (1) what children perceive as the most important reason for reading basal readers, (2) what children perceive as important when making judgments about themselves and others as readers, and (3) what purposes do children perceive for related support materials in a reading series. Cairney's findings were discouraging. Twenty-six percent of the children felt decoding or word recognition was the most important reason for reading basal readers, with only 6% suggesting enjoyment or interest as a reason. When judging themselves as readers, 29% of the students assessed their

decoding skills. The student response to questions about support materials indicated a lack of student awareness of the specific purposes of the worksheets.

Cairney is not the only researcher who argues that there is a mismatch between children's perceptions and the aims of reading teachers. In one study, John and Ellis (1976) found that few children feel reading is concerned with a search for meaning: 64% of the answers to the researcher's question "What is reading?" concerned classroom procedures or educational value. Twenty five percent reflected a word recognition or decoding emphasis.

As California transitions from traditional basal reading programs to literature-based programs, student perceptions need to be re-examined. The goals of an exemplary literature program, as stated by California's Handbook for Planning An Effective Literature Program, include:

- heightening students' sensitivities and deepening critical thought
- serving as a pleasurable, effective basis for reading instruction and encouraging independent reading
- introducing students to the cultures of the world and helping them to become culturally literate in American society
- enabling individuals to transcend time, place, age and individual condition and culture (1988, p. viii).

It is clear that the current student focus on decoding and skill development as found with traditional basal use is not in accordance with the aims of today's California reading teachers. According to Bay Area Reading Project member, Barbara Bosworth, teachers feel basals are:

... overstuffed with isolated skills and seem to include everything-including the kitchen sink! Basal writers have limited

knowledge of children, the reading process, and teaching. A basal doesn't even look like a book. Basals don't teach kids how to read in the real world. For all their "skills," basals do not help children develop reading strategies. Teachers don't teach when they are using basals; they are told what to say (Bosworth, p. 171, 1991).

So, what is yet to be determined is if the change in reading curriculum from the traditional basal programs to literature-based basals will have an effect on student perception of reading instruction purposes. Is reforming the basal enough to move towards the State's vision of a literature-based reading program, or will classroom practice and student perception continue to focus on skill and procedure.

Statement of Purpose

This research examines students' perceptions of a literature-based reading program. The study is based on the work of T. H. Cairney's 1985 research, which attempted to identify students' perceptions of the traditional basal reader.

For the purpose of this study, 102 children, from six schools in one district, were interviewed. Interview questions were used to evaluate student perceptions of the purpose of the newly adopted HBJ literature program. The interviews also attempted to discover information about children's perceptions of themselves and their classmates' success in reading. Finally, questions asked children to compare their personal reading success and quantity of reading time with last year's basal program. The interview questions will be provided in detail in Chapter Three, along

with an explanation regarding the source of origin of each question.

The district involved in the study changed in 1990-1991 from a traditional basal reading program to the HBJ literature-based reading program. Teachers are advised to supplement the text with district-recommended trade books.

Because each teacher's individual use of materials influences results, a short, informal survey of each teacher's instructional reading activities was conducted. The purpose of this survey was twofold: (1) to enlighten the researcher about the student's daily reading activities, and (2) to inquire about the changes in teacher practice that accompanied the transition in curriculum.

Research Questions

With the new literature-based reading text

1. What do children perceive as the major purposes for classroom reading? (Cairney, 1988).
2. What criteria do children use for judging success in reading? (Cairney, 1988).
3. Are children's views on reading closely matched with the aims of the reading program?
4. Has a change in instructional practice accompanied a change in reading curriculum?

Operational Definitions

Basal reader--A textbook designed to be comprehensive, developmental, continuous-progress programs that provide for

the sequential and systematic learning of all reading skills (Manley, 1988).

Basalization--The process of modifying literature, or trade books, into the instructional format found in current basals. Term originally coined by Ken Goodman.

Bottom-up--Models of reading that assume the process of translating print to meaning begins with print (Vacca, 1987).

Decoding emphasis--Any reading program which focuses upon word attack skills, such as phonics.

Holistic--A teaching-learning approach that emphasizes whole subject matter (Manley, 1988).

Hornbook--One of the earliest reading books in American schools, containing the alphabet, simple syllables, and the Lord's Prayer.

Interactive--Models of reading that assume that the process of translating print to meaning involves making use of both prior knowledge and print (Vacca, 1987).

Linguistic approach--Reading programs that emphasize the regularity of letter-sound associations through consistent spelling patterns.

Literature-based texts--Basals which contain authentic, abridged selections of children's literature.

Metacognition--The self-appraisal and self-management of cognition (Olson, 1990).

Primer--One of the earliest readers in American schools. Primers began with the alphabet and a syllabarium, and continued with word lists, alphabet rhymes, the catechism, the Lord's Prayer, and the Apostle's Creed.

Readability formulas--Materials which yield estimates of text difficulty. These estimates are typically determined along a single dimension of an author's writing style: vocabulary difficulty and sentence complexity, measured by word and sentence length, respectively (Vacca, p. 1987).

Skillpack--A student workbook that often accompanies the basal's student reader. Skillpacks are comprised of reading skill practice work, often with a fill-in-the-blank format.

Top-down--Models of reading that assume that the process of translating print to meaning begins with the reader's prior knowledge (Vacca, 1987).

Trade book--Books that, unlike textbooks, are produced "for trade," that is, sold to consumers. Trade books comprise the majority of the stock found in bookstores and libraries, and are without fixed vocabulary or sentence length. An example of a children's trade book is Charlotte's Web.

Whole language--A belief, or ideology, that maintains that learning experiences should be "rich, authentic, and developmentally appropriate and that learning is as real, relevant and easy in school as it is outside." In the area of reading, it means "reading real literature, not workbooks

and skill sheets. It means writing when you need to write because you have a real purpose and something to say" (Goodman et al., p. 4, 1991).

Assumptions

The interview format of this research study assumes that students are capable of articulating their perceptions of the reading process and that the researcher's best judgment to understand and organize student responses will allow for accurate and sincere interpretation of student thinking.

It is also assumed, by the participating district, that the transition to a literature-based text represents the intent of California's 1987 English-Language Arts Framework.

Limitations

Cairney states some of the obvious difficulties of conducting an interview study.

It is always difficult to be sure that the responses of the subjects reflect their real beliefs. Are some answers restricted due to the subjects' verbal ability? Do some subjects offer responses which they believe the researcher wants to hear? Does the context within which the interview is conducted alter the responses significantly? If the children were asked to respond during reading, would their responses be different? (Cairney, 1988, p. 427).

A limitation specific to this study may be the student's ability to remember the basal program of the prior year. Some of the interview questions ask the students to compare their reading performance of this year with last year's

experiences using the basal. It is highly likely that some of the younger children will have difficulty with these questions. Memory may produce the opposite problem for the older children. Will their three or four years of experience with the basal influence the answers they give, even though the questions will be clearly stated in reference to the new reading program?

Another limitation is the time factor. Although a good representation, or sampling, of children will be interviewed, it would be informative if more time were available to spend in dialogue with classroom teachers, as well as observing students during the reading hour.

Delimitations

This study examines students' perceptions of a literature-based reading program in which a literature text book is used for the purpose of instruction. There are many literature based reading programs that use only trade books, and these programs are not represented in this study.

Significance of the Study

The California Reading Initiative launched statewide in 1986, has attracted the attention of educators in the United States. It recommends a literature-based program, which will allow children to read in an enjoyable, thoughtful manner (Larrick, 1989). Traditional basals are literature-based, but focus on sequential skill-building. Instead, a literature-based program encourages students to seek new meanings and information from literature, with skill acquisition as a tool, not an end in itself. Classroom activities and discussion center upon student interpretation

of literature, and attempt to help students develop the ability to critically examine new ideas. Educators realize the use of literature opens new worlds and expands students' lives. Teaching how to read is viewed as a top priority of our educational system, and literature-based programs are replacing traditional basal programs as a form of reading curriculum.

In an effort to examine this transformation in California's reading curriculum, the student perspective of the reading process was studied. This research study, in the attempt to identify students' perceptions of the literature-based reading program, provides information about current reading attitudes held by students. This information informs educators about the purpose of the literature-based reading program as seen by students, and asks if student perceptions are in agreement with the intentions of the California State Framework, and focus on interest and meaning; or if instead, there remains a focus on skill and procedure.

Summary

Chapter One discusses the problem found in many reading classrooms today. Children often perceive reading to be about completing workbook pages and moving to the next level reader. Very few view classroom reading as interesting or meaningful (Cairney, 1988). This study, by examining a district transitioning from the traditional reading program to a literature-based reading program, will enlighten educators about student's perceptions of the current movement in reading instruction.

Chapter Two discusses a review of the related literature. The current status of the basal reading program,

and the emergence of the literature-based program will be described. Also included will be a look at past research that has focused on student perception of the reading process.

Chapter Three will explain the methodology used to develop the interview study, and an explanation of how the data was then interpreted by the researcher. Chapter Four will present the findings of this research study. The conclusions and recommendations for future research will be described in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Related Literature

There have been many studies in the last decade critiquing traditional basal reading programs (Cairney, 1988; Goodman, 1988; Shannon, 1989) and demonstrating the importance of a literature-based reading program (English-Lang. Arts Framework, 1987; Handbook for Plan. Lit. Program, 1988; Silvern, 1988; Huck, 1991). Research and action on the part of educators has lead to a revolution in the way reading is being taught in California in the 1990s.

Textbooks can serve the function of linking theory to classroom practice, and in response to research and the California Reading Initiative publishers of basal series have up-dated readers. Basal reforms include replacing controlled vocabulary stories with literature in an unadapted, edited form; emphasizing teacher judgment by presenting activities as resources rather than requirements and eliminating the direction to present activities in a text-directed order; and stating an intent to focus upon meaning and purpose with less emphasis on skill acquisition.

The intent of this study is to examine an up-dated basal, the HBJ series. Specifically, this research will attempt to determine if student's perceive the purpose of reading the literature-based basal as related to enjoyment and understanding or, if as true in past studies with basal readers (Cairney, 1985) students perceive the purpose of the reader to be about skill and procedure.

Chapter Overview

Chapter Two examines: (1) The Development of the Basal Reader, (2) Rationale for Literature In the Reading Curriculum, and (3) Student Perception of The Reading Process. Chapter Two provides the reader with an annotated history of the basal reader, and demonstrates how social and political influences have shaped the content and style of reading textbooks. Presently, the educational agenda includes an interest in increasing the use of literature during the reading hour, and this chapter highlights the research regarding this movement, as well as discussing the effect this change in curriculum presents for the creators and users of basal materials. Lastly, this study is concerned with the perceptions students hold of the reading process, specifically their opinions regarding the new literature-based reading program; therefore, Chapter Two will highlight past research pertaining to student perception of the reading process.

1. The Development of the Basal Reader

Most educators agree that the institution of the basal reader did not truly develop until the 1960s, when it rapidly became the dominant means of teaching reading in America. However, the themes that have shaped the style and content of the basal reader must be examined in historical perspective, because basal readers, like all curriculum materials, are a product of social context.

Many educators have written about the social or historical influences on the development and current status of the basal reader; Ken Goodman (1988), Patrick Shannon

(1988) & (1989), Dolores Durkin (1987) and Richard Venesky (1987).

Author R.L. Venezky, in his article "A History of the American Reading Textbook" (1987), theorizes that the modern basal series has evolved over more than 300 years, beginning with the single-sheet hornbook and the New England Primer. The hornbook consisted of the alphabet, simple syllables and the Lord's Prayer. Primers consisted of the same, and continued with word lists, alphabet rhymes, the catechism, and Apostle's Creed. The author notes that although the modern basal is longer and consists of more components, there are two themes that transcend the development of the American textbook from these early readers to today's basals. First, Venezky notes, reading instruction has been constructed around a selection of reading selections, and secondly, there is, and always has been, "a conservative, narrow representation of society and the child's role in it" (1987, p. 247). Modern basal advocates would disagree with the latter of Venezky's opinions, pointing to the diversity of today's basal selections and the emphasis placed on subjects of interest to children. What is generally accepted as true by educators is the point that Venezky and many other authors have noted: that early reading instruction in the United States was a form of religious indoctrination, and reading textbooks continue to be a product of our social and political context.

In the late eighteenth century, themes of nationalism and moralism dominated the political scene, spurred by rapid growth, immigration, urbanization and industrialization; thus there was a need for public schools to adapt to a changing society. One example of public education's efforts to adapt to these changes is the wide-spread usage of Webster's spelling book, which attempted to standardize

language, thus Americanizing or uniting a diverse student population. By 1790 Webster's spelling book was the best-selling American reading text and remained so for almost a half-century (Venezky, 1987), providing the public schools with the creation of an American, uniform standard of spelling and pronunciation.

Along with religion and nationalism, commercialism has been another consistent influence on the development of readers. According to Venezky, "textbook publishing was as entrepreneurial an activity in the early republic as it is today." He goes on to note, "By the later seventeenth century, schoolbooks were the second most popular import from English publishers, outsold only by theology texts," and "By the 1830s, schoolbooks represented about one-third (by dollars) of all books printed in the United States" (1987, p. 248). It is Venezky's opinion that the success of the McGuffey Eclectic Reader, published from 1836 until 1920, selling an estimated 120 million copies, was due to shrewd marketing practices rather than noteworthy content or pedagogy (1987, p. 251). The author notes that the McGuffey Eclectic Readers were not markedly different from other readers of the time, but none enjoyed more popularity or endured as long. That content is determined more by what can be marketed successfully than by concern for pedagogy remains an issue today.

Venezky's historical perspective is noted by McCallum (1988) who argues that basal series have historically kept abreast with changes in society, specifically with the continuous development of our understanding of the reading process. Along with the influences of religion, nationalism, and humanism on textbook content outlined by Venezky, McCallum adds that content changes in the 20th century

include a literary emphasis, and the inclusion of minorities, women, and the handicapped in reading selections (McCallum, 1988).

Modern influences on the development of basals are discussed by Dolores Durkin in her article "Influences on Basal Reader Programs" (1987), and in Report Card on Basal Readers (Goodman, Shannon, Freeman and Murphy 1988). The latter of the two examines the influence of the rapid increase and emphasis on scientific information beginning in the late 19th century, and the way in which scientific management has influenced the development of "basal technology." Durkin's article outlines the way in which the testing movement, the increase in technology and technical thinking in educational practice, and two educational authors, Chall and Fries, have all greatly influenced the development of the basal reader.

According to Goodman et al. (1988) the ethos of business, science and psychology in the early 20th century inspired the development and implementation of scientific management. Scientific management as translated into educational practices is evidenced in the reports published by the Committee on the Economy of Time in Education (1911-1915). The reports argued for a scientific instructional design which involved the following steps:

1. Analyzing the learning environment during instruction to identify instructional methods
2. Measuring the effects of various methods with specifically designed texts
3. Adopting the methods that yield the highest test results (Goodman, 1988, p. 13-14).

It is the opinion of Goodman et al. (1988) that the Committee's spokesman, William S. Gray, "enunciated the key criteria on which basals have been constructed since"

(1988, p. 14-15) in his work, "Principles of Method in Teaching Reading, As Derived from Scientific Investigation." What scientific management meant for reading texts and instruction was that the act of reading and teaching reading could be broken down into small parts, analyzed and evaluated to seek test performance improvement. Reading texts that had been without detailed instruction now contained manuals with prescribed instructions, norms for student progress across grade levels were outlined for practitioners, and instruction suggestions emphasized efficiency. The practical implications of basal technology affected more than just the texts and tests used in reading instruction. It also had, and still has, according to the authors, affected our ideas about the responsibility of teaching reading. Our belief and reliance in technology has led educators to trust that the basal will "solve the problem of developing universal literacy for all Americans" (Goodman, 1988, p. iv). When the system fails, and the student does not learn to read, the basal technology points to either teacher or learner error; the material remains intact. According to Goodman et al, "The rationale for and the format of the basal reading materials were set by the spirit of the first two decades of the twentieth century" (1988, p. 19).

Durkin discusses the events and people that have been a part of the development of the basal reader, starting from the 1960s. She argues that two major influences on the basal reader program have been the published works of Jeanne Chall (1967) and Charles Fries (1962). In the 1960s Chall conducted a four year study and published her results in a highly publicized book, Learning To Read: The Great Debate (Chall, 1967). Briefly, the book recommended that a stronger emphasis be placed on phonics, and specifically that

basals should contain "earlier and more frequent attention to phonics" and "instruction that identifies sounds apart from words..." (Durkin, 1987, p. 333).

Fries's book, Linguistics and Reading (1962), critiques phonics instruction, arguing instead for a linguistic approach. Fries' method deals with whole words selected on the basis of spelling patterns. However, the particular method being advocated by Fries or Chall is not the issue. What is of importance is that these works, widely read and discussed, influenced basal publishers, and their recommendations were incorporated into basal readers. The first example of a basal reflective of the Fries-Chall influence was the Ginn basal series, Reading 360, which contained the new linguistic emphasis and increased phonics instruction (Durkin, 1987, p. 334).

Durkin, like Goodman and Shannon, also discusses the effect of greater technology on reading instruction. Durkin's discussion focuses on the 1970s, when the political pressure to get "back to basics" included demands for teacher accountability, behavioral objectives, criterion-referenced tests, and mastery teaching. Here again is a dependence upon so called objective factors to insure that learning occurs; the act of teaching and learning is broken down into skill sets of which the effectiveness and efficiency will be determined by some sort of written evaluation. Durkin writes, "...in a surprisingly short time, basal manuals, workbooks, ditto masters, and tests displayed the features that characterize management systems. Basal reader advertisements now boasted, 'We cover more than 300 subskills!' (1987, p. 335).

By the 1980s the testing movement was so much a part of public schooling that basal publishers were fully aware of the need to demonstrate exactly what the basal program taught

and how it assessed material covered. Publishers made a point of showing that basal content matched both the content and format of frequently used achievement tests. The assessment procedures found in basal programs were equated with instruction (Durkin, 1987).

In conclusion, examining basals using a historical approach allows one to see how basals have made necessary adaptations to adjust to the political and social influences of the changing times. In the beginning, readers reflected the new settlers' religion-dominated lifestyle, and as the country adopted new values and attitudes, such as nationalism or scientism, so did the American reader. The changes have not always, in fact often do not, represent current educational research; instead, success involves using politically correct language and extensive marketing strategies.

Today's Basals: The Technical Influence

The word 'basal', as used to describe reading textbooks, emerged in the 1960s. The term 'basal' was a staple of the professional literature by the early 1960s, and was adapted by reading textbook publishers around 1970 (Venezky, 1987).

Today, the most modern basals reflect conflicting ideologies. A technical approach to education, critiqued by Goodman (1988) and Shannon (1988, 1989), among many other authors, continues to influence basal textbooks and classroom practice. In the technical approach the interest is in the control and manipulation of the learning environment. This approach implies that if we discover the laws which govern learning, encourage classroom teachers to implement these laws, i.e., by acting as classroom managers, the result will

be an educated student (Grundy, 1987). In the technical approach there is the belief that scientific laws can be applied to the humanistic act of learning. Basals offer teachers theory translated into practice, advising them to follow guidelines in the sequential order scientifically developed for the best reading instruction. Examples of this technical approach found in modern basals include: the detailed teachers' manuals which script teacher-student interaction; the listing of learning objectives that can be quantified by student behavior; the test-teach-test format; the breaking down of holistic reading into numerous, individual skills; and the translating of authentic language to scientifically appropriate language for learners. In the technical approach to reading, control lies with the textbook authors, while both the teacher and student are controlled by the judgments and content derived from an external source. Educator Elliot Eisner states, "...the consequences for curriculum of the interest in control and measurement have been to break up complex tasks into small, almost microunits of behavior and in the process to render much of the curriculum meaningless to children" (1985, p. 20). Educators and authors who emphasize the issue of control, and who believe schools should be liberating individuals to resist cultural, political, or economic oppression have taken a critical position. One well known critical theorist is Patrick Shannon (1989). Shannon opposes traditional basal instruction, stating basals degrade teachers and students by controlling the learning environment. He believes basals force teachers and students to depend on others for knowledge and direction, and argues that educators must defeat reading programs that manage teachers and students (Shannon, 1989). Goodman agrees that basals seek to control learning, and believes this is in part due to the trust educators place in

the readers. "In no other aspect of education does this total trust in technology reach the level that it does in reading instruction; and this is no accident, since the technology of reading lessons is embodied in a huge brightly illustrated package, the basal reader...." (Goodman, 1988, preface)

The pressure for accountability from educators, which began in earnest in the last decade, the concern about America's educational system and our ability to compete intellectually on an international level, along with the current administration's national agenda which emphasizes standardized testing, are all factors which have resulted in an environment which encourages a technical approach to teaching in which instruction and student learning can be objectively assessed.

Literature-Based or Basalization

Although the technical approach dominates reading instruction and continues to be a major influence on the format and use of basal readers, voices from another camp are making an impact on the development of the basal. Educators advocating the use of literature as a means to teach reading have provided arguments, backed with current research, justifying the value of literature in the classroom and debating the need for the basal reader in its traditional form.

Two groups of educators support the increase in literature in the schools as advocated in the California English-Language Arts Framework (1987). First are the whole language advocates. Whole language, as defined by Goodman et al. (1991) means learners are exposed to "rich, authentic, developmentally appropriate school experiences. It means

learning that is as real, relevant, and easy in school as it is outside school. It means reading real literature, not workbooks and skill sheets" (1991, p. 4). This group argues that the use of authentic language (unadapted and unabridged) that is meaningful to students is the most powerful means of communicating to students the joy and skill of reading. Pure whole language advocates are against basal readers, in any form, being used to teach reading; instead they propose that reading instruction take place with trade books. Sometimes referred to as "basal bashers" these educators warn against the "basalization" of literature. They fear that classroom teachers, by now so accustomed to the style, format, and doctrines of basal readers, will organize literature instruction in a similar manner.

Thomas (1987) relays her personal experiences with "basalization." She describes a recent situation in which she received many letters from one classroom's students. The children wrote to express their confusion about the conclusion of Thomas' book The Comeback Dog. From the letters, Thomas learned the classroom teacher had cut the book into chapters, and had given each student a chapter to read. The students then discussed the entire text, finishing the lesson in 30 minutes. The students conveyed frustration in their letters, and Thomas responds to the experience by stating,

This experience is the latest in a long, painful series that suggests that adults' attitudes toward children's literature interfere with children's enjoyment of reading. Such teaching methods certainly interfere with writers' efforts to communicate with children as fellow human beings, through art. Many people seem not to understand that literature is art and that art is a mystery, in the sacramental sense of the word. They think that they can tear the bird apart to reveal what makes it tick, and when they have finished, the bird will

fly across the heavens as beautiful as the day it fledged (Thomas, 1987, p. 782).

Freeman, in her article, "Literature-based or Literature: Where Do We Stand?" (1989) presents another case against literature-based basal programs. Freeman, a whole language advocate, argues that commercial publishers are producing programs (whole textbooks and curriculum guides for trade books) that are no different from the traditional basal programs. The chart on the following page, created by Freeman, outlines the differences between the teaching with literature and the basalization of literature.

Literature-based Versus Literature: Where Do We Stand?

Literature-Based

Assumptions

- *Literature can be organized into into grade levels.
- *Children at certain levels should read the same books.
- *Children will get the same meaning from a piece of literature.
- *Children at each grade level the same interests and background.

Learners

- *Have no real choices.
- *Are controlled by the materials.
- *Find someone else's meaning.
- *Answer someone else's questions.
- *Write what is suggested.
- *Follow directions.

Teachers

- *Follow the lead of the materials.
- *Are told what to teach and when.
- *Use prepared materials.

Materials

- *Real, unadapted literature.
- *Literature graded or leveled.
- *Anthology pieces abridged.
- *Include workbooks, units, activity

Literature

Assumptions

- *Literature is universal across grade levels.
- *Children at all levels need choice in what they read.
- *Children get different the same text.
- *Children have varied interests and

Learners

- *Have choices.
- *Control the materials.
- *Find meaning for themselves
- *Answer their own questions.
- *Write their own responses and stories.
- *Make decisions.

Teachers

- *Follow the lead of the children.
- *Decide with the children what to do and when to do it.
- *Allow the children to help select and produce materials.

Materials

- *Real, unadapted, and unabridged literature.

guides, summaries, comprehension questions.
(Freeman, 1989, p. 189)

Freeman provides a clear outline of literature-based instruction, but according to author Zarrillo consensus about the nature of literature-based reading instruction is not evident among classroom teachers. Zarrillo examined classrooms in which literature supplanted, not supplemented, the traditional basal. His study of classroom practices revealed,

There was considerable diversity among the teachers' philosophical stances toward reading. Most taught from the perspective that reading is a process that develops through use, that children learn to read by reading, that the language arts should be integrated in the elementary curriculum, and that literacy is more readily acquired when language is used to communicate messages. A second group of teachers, although substituting literature for textbooks, held the perspective that reading is a subject to be taught, that children learn to read by mastering a series of skills, that reading should occupy a separate time period from other language arts, and that literacy is most readily learned when language is presented to children in teachable components. A third group attempted to mix philosophies, and their teaching included a combination of sequential skills lessons and whole language activities (Zarrillo, 1989, p. 23).

A second group of educators, more moderate in nature than the "basal bashers," call for a basal reform. They may identify with the first group of teachers Zarrillo (1989) describes, and advocate literature-based instruction, but they believe this can be accomplished with the cooperation of basal publishers. These educators are concerned that the basal reader has not kept in line with current research about the teaching of reading, and are open to the idea of a literature-based textbook, which incorporates the new emphasis on authentic language, the decrease in emphasis on skillwork, and the increase in time spent for student reading. They agree with many of the ideals of the whole

language movement, but may not wish to see the idea of a basal package abandoned. As the manual serves as a teacher resource guide, and provides a consistent reading curriculum across grade levels, many would like to see the basal reformed to incorporate current research findings and modern attitudes about reading which emphasize the use of literature in the curriculum.

The moderate opinion is expressed by Fuhler, in her article, "Let's Move Toward Literature-based Reading Instruction" (1990). Fuhler states that the criticisms of basal readers have been well publicized, with researchers and educators agreeing traditional basals over-emphasize phonics, drill, and worksheets, and lack a holistic approach to reading. She feels, however, that publishers have been listening to the critics, as it is in their best interest to do so, and that as a member of a textbook selection committee Fuhler has seen, "freshly revised textbooks...(which) reflect a concerted effort to include recognized children's authors, a variety of literary genre, excerpts, and complete stories from award-winning books" (1990, p. 312). She also has noted an "increased emphasis on process writing, thought-provoking questions, and techniques to teach effective reading strategies as well as decreased emphasis on skills in the middle to upper grades" (1990, p. 312). Fulher calls upon teachers to abandon basal methods when using the literature-based materials. It is important to remember that basals are literature based, and along with reforming the basal emphasis, format, and adapted language, perhaps the change in need is a move toward literature centered classrooms.

Another author advocating basal reform, but not elimination, is McCallum (1988). In "Don't Throw the Basals out with the Bath Water," he argues that the basal program is an essential part of our curriculum, and that although

basal bashing is now a popular act, educators need to be aware that the limitations of basals are due to "our ever changing understanding of the reading process and the application of that understanding to teacher training and classroom practice" (1988, p. 204).

McCallum believes basals are of key importance for three reasons:

First, basal series play a critical role in reading instruction in part because of the difficulties associated with translating research findings and theory into practices which are sensitive to the pressures that teachers face. Second, basals have changed over time in light of public and pedagogical pressure, and in so doing have acted to translate research into practice. And third, in effect, basals have provided on the job training for reading teachers (McCallum, 1988, p. 204).

McCallum states that the demands teachers face each day do not allow them the time or energy to implement current theory into practice unless provided with the assistance and rationale the basal manual provides. He believes the importance of the management system for coordinating reading instruction found in basal readers can not be overlooked, as "good teachers are good managers of both the classroom environment and the reading lesson" (1988, p. 205).

McCallum acknowledges critics who believe the basal program dominates reading instruction and instructors, stating that the popularity of basals is in part due to the fact that basals provide on the job training for teachers which universities fail to provide in pre-service training for reading teachers. "... If we as a profession are concerned with the effective application of basal series, if we honestly desire to break the often irrational grip of basals

over teachers, then we need to take a long hard look at teacher training" (McCallum, 1988, p. 207).

The different views on incorporating literature into the classroom are contrasted by whole language advocate Charlotte S. Huck:

Presently there are three kinds of literature-based reading programs operating in our schools -only the last one described would be worthy of whole language teachers.... First, publishers eager to take advantage of the interest in literature-based programs have produced all kinds of little books, big books, and basal readers filled with stories and poems (but seldom a whole book). Since the texts are drawn from literature they are better written than the old Dick and Jane readers, but they still look like basal readers and have the same kinds of workbooks, teachers manuals, ditto sheets, and end of unit tests.... The emphasis is still on the skills of reading with the greatest amount of time given to filling in the blank exercises. Children are given no choice of what to read and little time to discuss their responses to the story.... Another kind of literature-based reading program uses "real trade books" but uses them as if they were basal readers.... The third kind of reading program uses books naturally and appropriately (Huck, 1991, p. 188).

Whether advocating basal reform or elimination, the use of literature as a means of teaching reading is the call for action. It is with this in mind that the district chose for this research study recently selected a reading program that looks like the traditional basal, but consists of abridged literature, and calls itself a literature-based reading program. Informal interviews with both a member of the textbook selection committee and the district representative of language arts curriculum revealed the rationale for choosing such a program. Both explained that the committee had examined a textbook which was more consistent with the

whole language philosophy, but did not choose this text fearing that the adjustment for teachers, currently using the traditional basal, would be too extreme. Instead they chose a reader they felt represented a compromise between the traditional basal and the whole language textbook. The stories in the chosen reader are taken from original literature and are abridged but not adapted. In terms of classroom practice, the student reading groups are to be fluid, rather than the static grouping used in previous years. This grouping should be done according to individual student need, changing with each new skill, thus abandoning the practice of maintaining one group of bluebirds for the entire year. Skillwork is to be de-emphasized, and the district opted not to purchase the workbooks in future years.

The movement towards using literature in both the basal format and with the use of trade books is well supported by recent research. However, the real issue is making literature the focus of instruction rather than simply using literature as the means to focus on skills instruction. This research study questions the students in an effort to understand the nature of the transition made in one school district, and to determine if students perceive reading, with a new literature-based basal as a skill and procedure oriented process, or one in which the literature itself is meaningful to the students.

II. Rationale for Literature in the Reading Curriculum

In 1985, the California State Department of Education launched a language, literacy, and literature campaign. The campaign was directed at California's five million students,

and the goal was to gift California's students with lifelong positive attitudes toward reading and writing (Goodman et al., 1991). Critics have been arguing the strengths and weaknesses of the basal reader for decades, and it appears that the traditional basal, with its emphasis upon skill work and controlled vocabulary is not considered, by leading educators, as being in alignment with the aim of promoting a love of reading. Why teach with literature? Will literature promote positive attitudes about reading, and will teaching with literature create literate students? This issue is addressed in California's Handbook for Planning An Effective Language Arts Program (1988).

Literature Promotes Cognitive Development

According to the California Handbook, literature promotes intellectual growth in several ways. To begin, literature is highly entertaining and so promotes positive attitudes about reading, and motivates students to want to read greater amounts. Increasing the amount students read will lead to improved reading and writing skills. According to the handbook, "children in grades 3-12 learn the meaning of roughly 3,000 new words a year, most of these as a result of reading books or other materials... and as students read good books they unconsciously assimilate the subtle variations of syntax, rhythm, and usage which stimulate and help refine their writing styles" (H.B., 1988, p. 7). Much of the research regarding achievement and literature emphasizes the factor of motivation. Students are more motivated to read real books than the basal stories, thus practice time increases when teaching with literature. As is true of anything, the greater the amount of practice, the greater the skill level.

The assimilation of language mastery is also supported by Cullinan's 1987 study which found that students who were exposed to literature developed rich language because communication was subsequently modeled on words and phrases assimilated from literature. Cullinan also found that children gained an understanding of story structure (cited in Huggins & Ross, 1990). Literature for the very young, for example pattern books, serves as a means of enhancing word recognition. "When used to teach beginning sight words, pattern books are more effective than basal pre-primers, which often lack plot or meaningful context" (Silvern, 1988, p. 238).

Eldredge and Butterfield conducted a 1986 study involving 1,149 second graders in an attempt to discover if alternative reading programs would produce positive effects in the areas of reading achievement and attitude toward reading. Their study compared the traditional basal approach to five other reading approaches, two of which used variations of a literature-based programs using trade books. Assessment of the results was made using three forms of evaluation: a phonics test which was designed by the researchers, the Gates-MacGinite Reading Test, and a Pictorial Self Concept Scale. The authors concluded that using literature to teach reading had a positive effect upon students' achievements and attitudes, much greater in fact than that of the traditional methods used in the study (cited in Huggins & Roos, 1990).

In response to the basal proponents call for controlled vocabulary as a necessity to student comprehension, Green and Olson's study demonstrated children's preference for authentic language over adapted, and that when tested using both types of material, there was no significant difference in the level of comprehension. Therefore, concluded the

authors, "The educational implication is that there is no educationally valid reason for adapting texts to meet demands of readability formulae" (1986, p. 2).

Huggins and Roos, in an attempt to collect research supporting the use of literature in the classroom, described a 1989 study by researchers Trachenburg and Ferruga. The study involved implementing a literature-based approach, and incorporating interactive, whole class techniques in a first grade classroom. Putting aside the basals, the book Corduroy by Don Freeman was read and reread to students. Then, student's renditions of picture reading were audio-taped, and a transcript of the child's picture reading was made. Pre and post-tests using the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills were administered and provided convincing evidence of the success of this strategy. It was concluded that the collaboration as authors of a shared book improved both children's ability to read and their concept of themselves as readers (Huggins & Roos, 1990).

Huggins and Roos' article described a second scenario in which literature was a better alternative, in terms of promoting reading ability, than was the basal program. In 1984 at Bell Gardens Elementary school, teachers were frustrated by low achievement scores and what they perceived to be the general ineffectiveness of the basal reading program. After considerable research, it was decided to implement a program using "Big Books," based upon the work of Don Holdaway, and trade books in place of the basal readers. Skill work was related to real stories, and introduced only after the children were familiar with the story. An informal evaluation of this program was made at the end of the first year. The results were the following: (a) Students using "Big Books" were enthusiastic about reading and were very eager to learn; (b) Former non-readers felt a sense of

accomplishment and had great pride in their ability to read the "Big Books"; (c) Students used picture clues more accurately than they did with basal reading stories; (d) Words of high interest were retained, although some were very difficult; (e) During sustained silent reading time the trade book copies of "Big Books" were picked most of the time" (Huggins & Roos, 1990, p. 11-12).

Huggins and Roos summarized their research by concluding that recent research had demonstrated the effectiveness of using a literature-based approach to teaching reading. The majority of studies which compared the literature-based approach to the basal reading method concluded that, "the literature-based approach produced higher reading achievement and fostered more positive attitudes toward reading. Literature-based classrooms were also found to create an environment that made skill learning easier and more natural for students." The authors also noted that children in literature-based programs "took a more active role in their learning" (1990, p. 13). This research refers to trade book literature, as literature-based basals are just now becoming available in schools.

Research shows that literature plays an important part in the early practice of reading. As stated in California's Handbook for Planning An Effective Literature Program (1988), the more closely a story fits an expected structure, the easier it is for students to understand. Most stories in primary basal textbooks do not tell a story with the familiar structure of character and plot development, motive and resolution and, due to inflexible vocabulary and sentence-length restrictions, are more difficult for students to digest than other children's stories because of the lack of familiarity.

In his discussion of the outcome of a series of seminars sponsored by the NCTE and IRA Goodman conveys how literature and language connect. The topic of the seminars was "the impact on school practice of modern research and theory relating to literacy development." Some of the concepts relevant to using literature in the classroom are as follows:

Language, including reading and writing, is learned most easily when it is whole, functional and meaningful....

Children develop functions and purposes for using language before they develop the forms. Form outside of functional use becomes abstraction....

Real texts, written or oral, are cohesive and coherent.
(Goodman, 1986, p. 359-361)

As well as encouraging greater language mastery, literature serves as a vehicle to encourage learning in other subject areas such as science, social studies, and fine arts (Handbook for Planning An Effective Literature Program, 1988, p. 7). For example, as a student reads the adventures of Laura Engles, he comes to understand more about American history as well as gaining a better understanding of how one's present reality has been shaped. Literature is a means of integrating content matter, as well as connecting content to student experience. As Huck so eloquently put it, "Literature is a kind of golden string that can place us in contact with the best minds in every period of history, the wisest, the tenderest, the bravest of all who have ever lived. And it can do this for children, if only we can help them to grasp hold of it" (Huck, 1982, p. 315).

Literature Promotes Social & Personal Growth

In addition to developing cognitive growth and language development literature serves an important social function and fosters an awareness of society (Handbook, 1988). Through literature children gain a sense of belonging and also an understanding of our past. Literature also encourages educational goals such as creating individuals capable of forming their own opinions, making informed judgments, and exercising their right of freedom of expression. Additionally, literature challenges each student to develop a personal sense of ethical responsibility. As the reader views life through the eyes of the main character, the reader makes ethical choices. At the same time literature helps to create in the reader a sense of empathy and shared human values (Handbook, 1988).

The social and personal function literature serves is discussed by Bishop (1989). She explains that "story is a way of knowing." In other words, narrative is a way of making meaning, a way of ordering the world. Bishop describes the way different groups use narrative, and she states, "The importance of this point in the context of literature for every child is that this universality of narrative, the telling of stories, is a way to connect to the lives of all children in our classrooms, no matter what social group they are a part of.... Sharing their stories is another way to help children learn to celebrate both the distinctiveness of each cultural group and the universality of human experience" (Bishop, 1989, p. 165).

The idea that literature enchances the imagination is undoubtedly one of the greatest arguments for the use of literature in the curriculum. Bishop describes the value of this for students in this way: "It is imagination that leads

us to invention and innovation. Neal Armstrong could not have walked on the moon had someone not been able to imagine that it could be done" (1989, p. 165). Children's authors, states Bishop, "produce images that pass for reality, that change our understanding of what is real, that push us past our initial perceptions into the world of imagination..... Good literature keeps alive the connections between wisdom and magic and imagination in ways no other medium can. It is that connection that underlies the power of literature to speak to every child" (1989, p. 165).

Well-known educator and author Charlotte S. Huck (1982) argues that literature has the power to make us more human, more humane. She notes that everything in school today has to do with facts, whereas literature is concerned with feelings, with the quality of life. It is through books, Huck maintains, that children can develop insights and understandings they never had before, gaining an appreciation of the personal side of historical happenings such as the Holocaust. Huck also makes a case for using literature as a way of helping children develop their imagination. Fairy tales are a great contrast to television, which she believes makes everything so explicit that children are not developing their own interior landscapes. Huck summarizes her feelings about literature in the following way:

Literature records the depths and heights of the human experience:

- It can develop compassion by educating the heart as well as the mind.
- It can help children entertain new ideas, develop insights they never had before.
- It can stretch the imagination, creating new experiences, enriching old ones.
- It can develop a sense of what is true and just and beautiful (Huck, 1982, p. 317).

Some educators, when discussing the rationale for using literature, point to not only the aesthetic and intellectual outcome of reading literature, but also state that literature is a more humanistic method of teaching reading. According to children's writer Thomas (1987), literature has uses that go beyond conveying information and stimulating thought and feeling to the reader, uses that cannot be measured but that are legitimate and invaluable to children. She feels strongly that literature must be used instead of stories created by readability formulas or stories broken apart with various skill-related activities. While Thomas acknowledges that children must be taught to decode, she feels educators need to care about what the process of using basals rather than literature does to the reader. She uses a famous quote by Mark Twain to express her feelings on the subject: "A cat that sits down on a hot stove lid...will never sit down on a hot stove lid again--and that is well; but also she will never sit down on a cold one any more" (cited in Thomas, 1987, p. 787). Her concern is that with the basal stories, we are teaching our children that reading is not enjoyable. Thomas feels strongly that it is with literature that teachers communicate a real love of reading, and this alone is one of the best means of teaching children to read. She expresses her anger at what she perceives to be a lack of respect for children by the editors of basal readers, stating that they ignore the fact that children find the basal stories to be boring, meaningless, and bland. Thomas advocates children read real works of literature, as she feels children's writers of the past twenty years have demonstrated an informed respect about what children want to read.

Literature Motivates Teachers

Everyone loves a good story, and teachers are no exception. When teachers become genuinely enthused about a good children's book, their enthusiasm is contagious. They then communicate a love of reading that cannot be communicated unless sincerely expressed. Teachers Kerekes and Burchett (1986) describe their personal motivation for transitioning from a basal to a literature-based reading program. The teachers discuss how they were anxious to use literature to help develop their student's ability to think critically, to respond more fully to their reading, and to relate their reading to other areas of the curriculum. They also confided they wanted a program that excited them, as well as one that better matched the children's interests than did the basal reader. Lastly, the teachers communicated their desire to stop spoon-feeding the lessons, and they believed using literature would help provide the opportunity to encourage the students to take charge of their own learning. The authors included in the article the hardships of transitioning to a literature-based reading program, such as the initial lack of parental and administrator support, and how few instructional guidelines were available; however they concluded that these problems were overcome during the course of the year, and the benefits of the literature program far outweighed the difficulties.

Classroom time is also an important factor for teachers, and research states that effective teachers allocate classroom time judiciously. Children's literature can be an important ally in maximizing academic learning time in the reading program. Teachers can avoid students wasting time when assignments are complete if students always have good literature on hand (Silvern, 1988). Moreover, time is spent

more wisely by having children read and respond to books rather than filling in workbook pages.

III. Student Perception of The Reading Process

A Question of Purpose

In a study of this nature, one involving student interviews to gain understanding, the topic of student perception as a research area needs to be explored. Metacognition, "the self-appraisal and self-management of cognition" (Olson, 1990, p. 160), is a current topic of research among educators, and research which utilizes interviews is one way to learn about the conceptions, learning attitudes, and strategies employed by students. Instruction may then be developed that is in sync with the style of learning that is taking place within the child. Educators such as Olson, advocate teachers using multiple assessment measures such as observations and interviews to broaden classroom reading evaluations to include students' perceptions (1990). Other research has focused on discovering student attitudes toward learning for the purpose of evaluating curriculum, or in some cases to examine how to go about changing student attitudes. For example, many studies have focused on contrasting how good and poor readers view the reading process. As researchers study the learning process, critique the curriculum, and strive for improved instruction, knowing what questions to ask students and listening as students express their attitudes and understanding of the reading process will lead to improved classroom experiences.

As stated in Chapter One, the purpose of this study is to examine student perception of the reading process in an attempt to identify if a mismatch exists between the aims of the reading program and what students perceive those goals to be. The research described in this section pertains to students' perceptions of the reading process. The following research studies involved elementary school children, specifically those which did not target any specific group, such as problem readers or advanced readers.

In a 1974 study, Johns posed the question, "What is reading?" to third and fourth grade students. He discovered that good and poor readers had significantly different conceptions of reading. Good readers more frequently defined reading in terms of recognizing words and understanding meaning. Poor readers more often did not have a response, offered a vague response, or connected reading with classroom activities (1974). In another study Johns and co-author Ellis investigated concepts of reading given by students in grades one through eight. The researchers interviewed over 1,600 students asking, "(1) What is reading?, (2) What do you do when you read?, and (3) If someone didn't know how to read, what would tell him/her that he/she would need to learn?" (1974, p. 115). After conducting the interviews the researchers concluded that the majority of students had little or no understanding of the reading process. The authors explained this conclusion by noting the students' views of reading were restricted and the students often described reading as an activity occurring in the classroom using a textbook, workbooks, or reading groups. Most of the meaningful student responses described or defined reading as a decoding process. The focus of the study was the issue of purpose. The authors felt that students were unaware of the reasons they were reading and performing reading related

activities. The article notes that research has supported this concern as early as 1958 Edwards concluded that many children were unaware that getting meaning is the purpose of reading (Johns & Ellis, 1976).

Canney and Winograd asked 24 elementary children the same question as did Johns: "What is reading?" (1980). They grouped the students' responses into three categories: object focus (meaning an emphasis on the reading materials), decoding focus, and meaning focus. They found that good readers were more likely to comment on meaning. They also discovered that older children were more likely to respond in the meaning focus category than younger children. All of the younger children involved in the study focused on the decoding aspect of reading (cited in Borko and Eisenhart, 1986).

Some researchers (Cairney, 1988) & (Canney and Winograd, 1980) have criticized the question, "What is reading?" used by Johns (1976) as being too abstract in nature. They cite the high number of students who were unable to respond to the question, or whose response was too vague to categorize, as evidence that the question is too abstract for young students. Another way to attempt to identify how students view the reading process is to ask, "Who is the best reader in your class? How do you know he/she is the best?" In responding to this question, students reveal the criteria they believe constitutes the reading process, and they also convey which elements of reading they believe are valued by teacher and/or curriculum makers. This question, taken from the Cairney study (1985), and used in this thesis study, was also used in another study. Filby and Barnett (1982) examined students' perceptions of which students are better readers and discovered that oral reading performance, and to a lesser extent, reading group membership were the criterion

by which children assessed their peers' reading performance. The authors found that the children tended to ignore performance on reading tasks such as worksheets, and more importantly, they did not consider the meaning that people get from what they read as an important criteria in judging others (cited in Borko and Eisenhart, 1986).

This research reveals that educators may be incorrectly assuming that students understand that the search for meaning or enlightenment is the purpose of reading. Rasinski notes that in many reading programs the teacher or textbook sets the purpose, rather than the reader, and that for many children the only purpose of reading a passage is to seek answers to comprehension questions (1988). Citing the early work of John Dewey, Rasinski reiterates the problem of having the teacher or textbook preempt the child's own choices and purposes for learning: "any attempt to divorce a learning task from the known and purposeful world of the child diminishes the task's pedagogical utility" (Rasinski, 1988, p. 396).

Rasinski uses his personal experience, involving his son Mikey, to illustrate that fluent readers read for their own purposes. As a kindergartner, Mikey's reading program consisted of the student's own language experience stories, and trade books the students selected for themselves. Mikey did well in kindergarten, and he was enthusiastic about reading various stories of his choosing, and writing his own books. In first grade, Mikey was in a more traditional reading program, using a basal reader. Although both kindergarten and first grade teachers were highly respected professionals, his excitement for reading in the first grade class diminished. While in kindergarten his purpose for reading was to find out about things, in first grade his purpose for reading became to "... get all the words

right.... In kindergarten Mikey saw himself as a reader, and told people so.... In 1st grade he acknowledged that he really could not read" (1988, p. 397). Rasinski notes that although the traditional basal sequencing may be a straighter course to the abstract objective of skilled reading, regrettably, in the name of instructional efficiency Mikey's conception of himself as a reader had been damaged. Mikey's purpose in first grade was to satisfy the requirements of the curriculum, rather than to read for personal understanding and enjoyment.

Researchers continued in the late 1980s to ask students to define reading, thus attempting to reveal what students perceive to be the purpose of classroom reading experiences. An extensive study by Borko and Eisenhart (1986) examined four second-grade classrooms of one elementary school in an attempt to answer the question, "What makes a difference in children's success at learning to read in school?" (1986, p. 589). The researchers focused on the understandings expressed by the students about the process of learning to read and on the reading group experiences.

Children's understandings of the process of learning to read are related to their approaches to the task of reading. For example, if a child believes the purpose of reading is to become a better decoder, then the strategies the child employs to improve in reading will be those related to decoding skills (Borko and Eisenhart, 1986). Research in the area of student perception of reading indicates that "there is an important connection between students' understanding of reading and the social organization of the schools and classrooms that children experience" (1986, p. 591). Borko and Eisenhart's study examined the possible connection between children's conceptions of reading and their reading group experiences, and on the implications of

such a connection for school success. The research is relevant to this study in that Borko and Eisenhart interviewed students to gain knowledge about student perception of the reading process.

They sought answers to four questions in their study, the first of which is relevant to this study: "What are the conceptions of reading held by children who are learning to read?" (1986, p. 592). This question was then translated into interview questions which required students to describe their interpretation of the daily reading routine, and asked which activities they enjoyed and why. They also asked the interview question used Filby and Barnett (1982) and Cairney (1985) to gain information on their topic, "Who do you think is the best reader in your reading group? What makes you think that person is the best reader?" (1986, p. 608).

Borko and Eisenhart's study resulted in the following conclusions. When describing their reading activities and the types of activities that might help children learn to read, approximately half of the students in top reading groups emphasized working on reading skills. Specifically, the children focused on practicing letters, syllables, or words. Twenty-seven percent of top readers commented about reading a lot of books, or interesting books, or in some way described reading as a holistic task. Lastly, 21% of the student responses focused on the materials and procedures that constitute reading instruction (1986, p. 597-598).

Responding to the same question, half (50%) of low-group readers focused on the materials and procedures typical of reading instruction. For example, the students' comments pertained to doing group work or boardwork, and some stated how the reading book would teach one how to read. Seventeen percent of these students focused on reading skills such as phonics. Only 10% of the responses reflected an

understanding of reading as a general or holistic task, and none of the low-group readers mentioned books (1986, p. 598-599).

When describing reading students place a strong emphasis on skill and procedure (Borko and Eisenhart, 1986). This finding is consistent with Cairney (1985), the study which motivated this thesis project. Borko and Eisenhart were interested in the contrasting opinions of high and low-group readers, and concluded that poor readers made more procedural and behavior responses than did good readers, while good readers made more of the skills oriented and holistic reading responses (1986).

In answer to the question, "Who do you think is the best reader in your class?" Borko and Eisenhart found high-group students focused upon word identification and reading fluency. As with the Cairney study, there exists the emphasis upon decoding as a means of evaluating others. This may be affected by the fact that oral reading is the most visible means of assessing others. The researchers concluded that "according to high-group students, poor readers have difficulty with such things as sounding out words and remembering easy words.... The second most common statement about poor readers was that they don't act right.... High-group students also noted that poor readers have limited general reading ability" (1986, p. 601)

Among low-group readers, the largest percentage of responses (37%) referred to aspects of classroom behavior. For example, a student is considered a good reader because he listens, or raises his hand. Low-group students mentioned inability to get words right as their second most frequent response (31%), and this focus on decoding was a result of listening to peers read aloud (1986, pp. 601-602).

An interesting and significant amount of Borko and Eisenhart's work focuses on the way classroom interaction and activities influence the perceptions of students. They found that there were significant differences between the experiences in the low and high reading groups. For example, low-group readers' ability to decode words was more frequently the focus of attention in their reading groups, was more often the basis for evaluation of reading skills, and was more likely to be linked to classroom behavior. Teacher feedback to low-group students focused on decoding, and the ability to decode was also related to appropriate behavior and to following specific procedures, such as sitting up straight and keeping eyes forward. Another difference was that low-group students had fewer opportunities than high-group students to demonstrate comprehension (Borko & Eisenhart, 1986).

Students placed in high reading groups had more frequent opportunities to read, and to extract meaning from the text. Moreover, they had more opportunities to discuss what they read. According to Borko and Eisenhart, although these students worked on skills, as did the low-group readers, the teachers rarely drew attention to these skills, instead focusing on the students' ability to draw inferences from the stories, to recall events in the stories, and to relate the stories to personal experiences. Procedure and behavior were not as often a focus of attention in the high reading group. The authors concluded that the perceptions of readers differ according to group placement, and are related to classroom reading experiences (Borko & Eisenhart, 1986).

Another study examines the attitudes of students who previously learned with a traditional basal and were then placed in a literature-based program. In the Fadar study a group of students were provided with hundreds of paperbacks,

plenty of time to read, and none of the usual book report or summary assignments. A similiar school was used as the control group. In both groups many of the students had experienced years of school failure in reading. At the end of the school year the experimental group, which had been exposed to the literature-based, Whole Language programs showed significant gains over the control group on measures of self esteem, literacy attitudes, and anxiety as well as verbal proficiency and reading comprehension (as cited in Tunnell, 1989).

Another study which compared the traditional basal program to literature-based program with a control and experimental group was by Rasinski and Deford. They examined the issue of purpose and student perception by asking students "What is reading?" and "What happens when you read?" and rating the responses as being either meaning-related or letter-sound related. After comparing three first grade classrooms, each with competent teachers using different approaches to teaching reading: content centered mastery learning, traditional basal, and literature-based, the results showed that children from the literature-based program conceived reading to be more of a meaning related activity than did the other children (Tunnell, 1989).

Before concluding this chapter with a description of the work of Cairney, whose work motivated this thesis, it is important to briefly contrast prior research to the Cairney study. Cairney's research sought answers to questions that relate to students working in traditional basal readers. As this thesis involved examining the student's transition from a traditional basal to a literature-based reader, Cairney's work provided a reference point. Cairney did not attempt to explain the complex relationship between experience and perception, as did Borko and Eisenhart (1896) or Durkin

(1984, 1987), but rather sought to identify perception as a means of determining if there existed a mismatch between the goals of educators and the perceptions of students. Cairney's conclusions are based on student response to interview questions. This paper will hold a similar aim, that of examining student perception of the new literature-based reading program. Before discussing Cairney's results, and in Chapter Three discussing the data this study generated, it is important first to describe a study noting student preference regarding reading materials.

When examining how students view the reading process, the preference of basal versus trade book needs to be addressed. Do students prefer basal stories or trade books? One 1989 study questioned how 110 children felt about reading long books with many chapters in place of their basal stories. In the study teachers put aside the basal from one to two weeks, and in place of basals the children read a novel. The children were surveyed and asked to rate the trade books as excellent, very good, fair, or poor; and to do the same with the basal series stories. The 110 children overwhelmingly preferred the novels (Kramer, 1989).

The Purpose of Basals -Children Focus on Skill and Procedure

In 1985, an Australian researcher and educator, Thomas Cairney, conducted a study in an effort to identify student's perceptions of the purpose of basal readers and basal reading activities. The study involved 178 primary school children selected from 15 different schools in the Central West of New South Wales, Australia. Cairney was motivated to study student perception of the reading process by an experience that occurred with his six year old daughter, Nicole. Nicole

frequently shared her school experiences with her father; however she never mentioned reading. As Nicole loved reading books at home, Cairney thought this unusual. When Cairney inquired about Nicole's lack of home use of her basal reader, Nicole replied, "Dad, you asked whether I'd read any stories. That's not a story, that's my reader" (Cairney, 1988, p. 420).

Cairney's observations as a teacher and researcher led him to hypothesize that children's views of reading are often not what most classroom teachers assume them to be. Reading real stories occurs at home, not with the basal reader. The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What do children perceive as the major purposes for classroom reading?
2. Do they perceive different purposes for different reading materials?
3. Are their views on reading the same as those they believe the teacher adheres to?
4. What criteria do they use for judging success in reading?
5. Do they have specific views concerning the legitimacy of the instructional materials we use in the classroom (Cairney, 1988, p. 421).

In an attempt to address these research questions, the students in Cairney's study were asked eight questions, which are listed in the beginning of Chapter Three of this thesis.

In answer to the question, "Why read basals?" Cairney discovered that many students felt the most important reason to read basals was to "learn how to read" (32%), in particular to improve decoding skills (26%). In contrast, only 6% of the students interviewed suggested that enjoyment or interest was an important reason for reading basals, and a mere 2% that gaining meaning or understanding was of major importance (1988, p. 422).

Cairney's interview questions directed students to examine what they perceive as important when making judgments about themselves and others as readers. The data Cairney collected suggests when judging self, children rely heavily upon assessment of their decoding and vocabulary skills, as well as the fluency and accuracy of their own reading (29%). Direct comparison with others (14%), the opinion of others (18%), and regularity of reading (18%) were also important factors. Cairney found that when students were asked to judge others, vocabulary and accuracy responses were still common (27%), but the most regularly cited criterion was regularity of reading (38%). Fluency, expression and speed were also seen as important (26%), suggesting a greater reliance upon judgment of oral reading (1988, p. 423).

As Cairney sought to examine the mismatch between the aims of educators and the perceptions of students, he asked students to identify the criteria teachers use to determine success. In other words, what specific actions, do students believe will earn the teacher's praise or high grades. Again, student responses indicated that good decoding and vocabulary skills as well as accuracy in oral reading were highly valued in the classroom (26%). There was also an emphasis upon fluency expression, and speed (33%). A surprising 41% of all students suggested teachers use nonreading criteria, such as neatness, good behavior, and completing sentences, to judge success (1988, p. 424).

When Cairney attempted to discover student perceptions of the purpose of basal-related materials, such as workbook pages, the responses his questions elicited were general in nature; and these responses indicated that many students had no real awareness of the specific purposes of worksheets.

Cairney recognized that there are many limitations of this type of research study. When interviewing students one

must consider factors such as the limited verbal ability and the willingness, or fear, involved in expressing opinions that may be in contrast to what students have been taught is correct. With these limitations in mind, Cairney concluded the following:

The results indicate...children have well developed knowledge of the purposes of reading materials and instructional procedures. The subtle differences between judgement of their own reading, judgement of peer reading, and their perception of the criteria teachers use provide strong support for this conclusion.

Unfortunately, it appears that many of these perceptions are based upon dysfunctional notions about literacy. They do not see meaning as important when reading basals, and they do not find basals intrinsically interesting. The finding that many children place great emphasis upon decoding, vocabulary, and accuracy supports (previous studies). As well, many subjects seemed to believe that basals are of educational value only, and in effect are ends in themselves (Cairney, 1988, p. 427).

It is difficult to ascertain whether teachers are communicating these understandings of reading (without being aware) or if it is the basal materials. Whichever the case, Cairney believes that at best his findings indicate that "the use of basal materials need to be improved. At worst, that the materials need to be revised or discarded, due to the dysfunctional views of literacy they communicate" (1988, p. 427).

Summary

The past decade has been dominated by a technical approach in the teaching of reading. The trust in technology

to teach reading has relied upon the scientifically designed basal as the means to promoting literacy. This trust is now being re-evaluated by many educators.

The movement toward literature-based instruction has support from current research and the California State Department of Education. Following the 1985 California Reading Initiative is the 1988 National Reading Initiative. The NRI is an expansion of the CRI in which the goal to promote reading includes bringing literature-based instruction of reading, writing, listening, and speaking to the nation's classrooms (Goodman et al, 1991).

It is now to be determined if the literacy goals of the State will be met by basal publishers. If so, a basal that encourages literature-based instruction is a likely result. However, if the ideals of literature-based instruction are found only in the basal's preface, and do not make their way to California classrooms, then basal usage will continue to present a contradiction between practice and current theory. Students interviewed for this study are using the newly adopted literature-based basal, which states it promotes ideals and practices similar to those stated in the California Framework. This thesis examines the thoughts of the students, and looks to see if the "dysfunctional notions" about literacy that Cairney noted apply equally to students using the updated basal.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This study will be of a descriptive nature, attempting to reveal current student attitudes regarding the reading process. The majority of the data will be provided by interviewing elementary school students in an attempt to discover what they perceive to be the purpose of the reading activities and materials they experience in the classroom. The interview questions consist of some created by this thesis writer and some by author and educator Cairney (1985). The findings of this study will be based upon the opinions expressed by the students, in the hope that educators will gain new understanding of children's thinking about reading. An informal survey, created by this researcher, was completed by classroom teachers and provides background information about the attitudes expressed by the students.

Description of the Study

This thesis is based upon the work of Cairney's 1985 research. His study involved interviewing 178 elementary students in an attempt to identify the student's perceptions about the purpose of basal reading materials and activities. Students interviewed by Cairney were using a basal reading series (with a controlled vocabulary and sequenced skill work) similar to those used in California prior to the newly adopted literature readers. His work is of interest to me because of personal concerns about teaching with the basal

readers, and my interest in the recently adopted literature-based reading textbooks being used in many California school districts. Cairney recognized the importance of gaining insight into student perception as a means of improving reading instruction. He also understood how ineffective reading instruction might be when there is a mismatch between the goals of the educator and the perceptions of the student regarding the purpose and aims of classroom reading experiences.

Cairney hoped to find the answers to four research questions. First, he attempted to find out what children perceive as the major purposes for classroom reading. Secondly, do children perceive different purposes for different reading materials? The third research question examined students' perceptions of the teachers' views. Cairney wished to discover if student views on reading were the same as those they believe the teacher adheres to. Lastly, what criteria do students use for judging success in reading? (Cairney, 1988). Cairney's findings have been discussed in Chapter 2. The focus of Chapter 3 will be to present the interview used by Cairney, and to discuss how and why his interview questions were modified to gain a better understanding of student perception regarding the new literature-based reader.

The interview questions used by T. H. Cairney were as follows:

1. How often do you read books at home?
2. How often do you read at school?
3. What is the most important reason for reading this type of book?
4. How good are you at reading this type of book? What makes you say this?
5. Why would your teacher want you to do worksheets like this?
6. What do you have to do to get a good

- mark (or stamp) for this worksheet?
7. Who is the best reader in your class?
How do you know?
 8. What do you have to do to get a good
mark (or stamp) for reading in your class?
(Cairney, 1988, p. 425).

For the purpose of this 1991 study, it was necessary to modify Cairney's interview questions. Questions 1 through 4 were left intact, as the researcher felt they were relevant to the study, and appropriate in light of the newly adopted textbooks and current teaching practices. Questions 5 and 6 were eliminated. The deletion of these two questions was necessary because the questions were about student workbooks, and it was assumed many of the students in this study would not be using workbooks. The assumption was made because the school district studied for this research has decided not to purchase workbooks to accompany the reading texts. The textbook publishers, however, did provide workbooks for the district, for the first year only, free of cost. As some teachers opted to use the free workbooks, while others chose to discontinue this practice, the student sample would be inconsistent in this regard. Questions 7 and 8 were used in this study, although the wording of Question 8 was modified to read, "What do you have to do to get a good grade in reading?"

Two question were added in this study. First, the students were asked about their perception of their own success as a reader in last year's reading class. This gave information about whether the student noted a difference between the two different reading series. Secondly, the students were asked if they were reading more this year or last. As one of the goals of a literature based reading text is to have children spend more time reading, as opposed to doing skill work, this question sought to determine if this

goal was being met, as perceived by the students. The student interviews were conducted with the questions in the following order:

* * * * *

1991 Student Interview Questions

1. How often do you read books at home?
2. How often do you read at school?
3. What is the most important reason for reading your reading book?
4. How good are you at reading this type of book? What makes you say this?
5. What do you have to do to get a good grade in reading?
6. Who is the best reader in your class? How do you know?
7. Do you remember what reading book you used last year?
Were you a good reader last year? Are you a better reader this year?
8. Are you reading more this year?

* * * * *

Method

The analysis of data involves a conversion of the simple data into response categories. The simple data consists of the students' statements. The response categories are described, in detail, throughout this chapter. Each student's response was interpreted and then grouped into one general response category. The data is discussed in essay form, and also presented in graph form, using percentages to note the number of students responding in each category. The

data generated from Questions 3-6 is also presented in graph format (Appendix) to allow for comparison among grade levels, and comparing opinions of male and female students.

Site and Sample

The study was conducted in a large city in Northern California. The city is heavily populated, and the background of the residents is multi-ethnic. The downtown, north side of the city is a working class area. Many of the students living in this area are first or second generation American, and language barriers are often an obstacle when first attending school. The south side of the city is predominantly white middle to upper-middle class citizens.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher interviewed students from the largest district in the city; a district that serves schools from both the north and south end of the city. The student population, in terms of socio-ethnic background, is quite diverse, and the district has been desegregated via court order. The district includes 27 elementary schools, serving approximately 15,000 students. Six elementary schools were picked at random to participate in this study.

The rationale for choosing the district was based on the transition in curriculum that occurred in the district in the year 1990-1991. Students in this school district, prior to 1990, have experienced reading instruction using the traditional basal reader with its controlled vocabulary and emphasis on sequenced skill learning. As of 1990, they are now being introduced to reading using a literature-based reading text. This district's diverse student population provides an interesting case sample; and the recent transition presents the opportunity to inquire about a

literature-based text, examining the ideas from students who have had recent experience with the traditional basal.

Collecting background information, specifically conducting a literature search, and presenting this information have been ongoing through-out 1991. Student interviews and teacher surveys took place from May, 1991 through June, 1991. The time frame for student interviews was important in that the researcher wanted to question students as they were just completing their first year in the new reading program; and yet still may recall their previous year's experiences.

As stated above, six elementary schools were randomly selected from the list of the district's 27 elementary schools. Before beginning student interviews, the researcher obtained written permission from the district office, the administrator of each school selected to participate, each classroom teacher asked to participate, and the parent of each student interviewed.

Once an administrator granted permission, classrooms were chosen by the administrator. As the study was to include students in grades first through fifth, the researcher asked for one classroom from each grade level to participate. Each participating teacher then received seven student permission slips. Students were chosen by counting off every 5th student on the teacher's attendance list. By distributing such a large number of student permission slips, the researcher accounted for absentee students or those who did not return permission slips, and was able to complete 102 student interviews.

The student population was made up of 45 males and 57 females. The chart below shows the number of students represented for each age, and for each grade level.

Student Population: 1991 Interviews

Total Sample: 102 Students

Grade Level		Age		Sex	
5th grade	17	11 years old	9	Males	45
4th grade	25	10 years old	23	Females	57
3rd grade	19	9 years old	22		_____
2nd grade	21	8 years old	20		102
1st grade	20	7 years old	18		
	-----	6 years old	10		
	102		-----		
			102		

Interviews were conducted in the morning hours of the school day. It was not always possible to complete all grade levels during the reading hour, so some students were discussing reading during language arts, spelling, or the math period. The researcher briefly explained to each student that they would be participating in a study about reading, and that they were to answer each question with their own opinion, based upon their personal experiences with reading. Students were reassured there was no right answer, and that their names would be omitted in the final transcript.

All interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed. An exact transcript of interviews is found in the Appendix of this thesis. The transcript is presented in unedited form, so that the student's choice of words, and means of expressing his/her opinions, are not altered in any way.

Teacher Survey

The purpose of the teacher survey was to provide further background information or insight into student's stated opinions. Teachers were asked to compare last year's instruction, using a traditional basal, with instruction in this year's literature-based basal. Areas for comparison included the amount of time spent reading, differences in skill-work assigned, amount of discussion time, as well as changes in student-grouping practices. Gathering information about teacher practice, or class-room activity during the reading hour also informs readers about the possible influences, other than curriculum material, on student attitude. Results of this survey are presented at the end of this chapter.

Presentation of Data-Student Interviews**Questions 1 & 2**

How Often Do You Read....

	<u>At Home</u>	<u>At School</u>
Often	49%	58%
Sometimes	15%	19%
Not Often	19%	10%
Never	1%	1%
Vague/	16%	12%
Non-sensical		

Figure 1: Results of Survey on Question 1

How Often Do You Read At Home?

Figure 2: Results of Survey on Question 2

Questions 1 & 2

The first two questions asked of the students were: "How often do you read books at home?" and "How often do you read at school?" The questions served the purpose of focusing the student's thinking on the area of their personal reading experiences, and providing the researcher with information about the student's general opinion of the quantity of their reading. As Cairney (1988) states, these first two questions are included only for context setting.

A statistical analysis of the results of these two questions is difficult, as the student responses were general; and as these two questions are not the emphasis of this study, the data will be presented in brief form. Common responses included, "a lot" or "not very often"; and did not provide specific information about the quantity of time spent reading. Many of the younger children, mainly first graders, did not understand the word "often" and/or lacked an understanding of time. A first grade child may answer "five minutes" but go on to communicate that his reading experiences were frequent and/or lengthy; while another first grade child would answer, "not a lot, only five minutes."

Data for these two questions was divided into the following categories: (1) often, (2) sometimes, (3) not often, (4) never, and (5) response vague or nonsensical.

Students who fell into the first category "often" either responded with this exact wording or were able to describe a frequent and often consistent amount of reading. For example, "every night for half an hour" or "a lot, because we read a chapter every day." Approximately 49%, or 50 of the 102 students responded that they read often at

home. Fifty-eight percent of the students responded that they read often at school.

Responses categorized as "sometimes" were those which used this exact wording, or the response described reading as frequent, but for short amounts of time, or the opposite - lengthy but infrequent. Approximately 15% of the students stated they sometimes read at home, and 19% sometimes read at school.

Students who replied "not often" totaled approximately 19% for at home reading, and 10% described school reading in this manner. One percent of the students responded with "never" to Question 1, and 1% stated "never" regarding reading at school.

Lastly, 17% of the responses to Question 1 were vague or nonsensical, as were 13% of the responses to Question 2. Many of these responses were supplied by younger children who did not understand the question. Examples of nonsensical replies to questions regarding how often students read were "good" or "two." If a young child was asked to explain a numerical answer they often appeared confused. For example, at times children were specifically asked, "do you mean two hours, or every two days?" and it was difficult to know if the child understood and replied accurately or if he or she simply chose a researcher supplied response.

The information these first two questions generated is not a focal point of this research study, as earlier stated, but did result in some important information. First, approximately half of the elementary school students questioned feel they do a lot of reading both at home and at school. Educators may not agree with student perception, but that is not the issue.

A second, and more important, result was revealed in student description of their reading time. Many of the

students, over 20%, believed the question "How often do you read at school?" to be about "free-time" or silent reading with a library book. In other words, 1/5 of the students associate the term "reading" with experiences other than their reading texts. This is an important revelation, and should be researched further. If educators are interested in making classroom reading experiences a more natural learning experience, then we must begin with the understanding that at present, our students do not associate the reading text and hourly instruction as real reading. Also, many believe that "real reading" with their library book is a reward--something one is allowed to do if they finish their school work. Real reading is also perceived as a time-filler, a quiet act after recess before instruction begins.

Question 3

What Is The Most Important Reason For Reading Your Reader?

<u>Task-Related</u>	<u>Utilitarian</u>	<u>Teacher Pleaser</u>	<u>Learning To Read</u>
61%	8%	0	25%

Task-related Responses:

Decoding:	18%
Reading To Learn:	20%
Pleasure/Interest:	12%
Learning About Content Specific To Reader:	6%
Completing Workbooks:	4%
Gaining Meaning/ Understanding:	1%
Total =	61%

*Responses that were vague, non-sensical, or when a student stated he/she did not know the answer constituted the remaining 6% of the population.

Figure 3: Results of Survey on Question 3

What Is The Most Important Reason For Reading Your Reader?

Task-related Responses (61%)

Question 3

Question 3 asked, "What is the most important reason for reading your reading book?" The intent of this question was to find out what children perceived to be the purpose of reading their reading book. Student responses were grouped into four major categories:

1. Task-related: Task-related, as defined by Cairney, implies that the "children recognized material played part in some specific aspect of reading" (1988, p. 422). This category was then subdivided into responses that emphasized: a) decoding, b) reading to learn, c) pleasure/interest, d) learning about content specific to the basal, e) completing workbooks or comprehension questions, and f) gaining meaning/understanding.

The majority of the student responses, 61%, fell into the task-related category. Within this broad category, most responses were characterized as reading to learn statements, which represented 20% of all responses. Students indicating the most important reason for reading the text was to learn often stated they were "getting smarter" or reading to "know more" about stories. In some cases the learning involved a better knowledge of story structure; in other cases the students indicated reading increased their knowledge level in general.

Another large group classified as task-related, were the students who defined the purpose of reading to be decoding. Eighteen percent of all students questioned cited decoding as being the most important reason to read the basal. Decoding, as defined by students, involved word identification and

vocabulary building. As one second grader put it, "We learn to read hard words." A fifth grade student explained the reason for reading the reader is, "So you learn new words for life."

Twelve percent of all students interviewed stated the most important reason to read the reader was for enjoyment or personal interest. This represents a greater percentage than did Cairney's study, in which only 6% of students cited pleasure as the purpose (1988, p. 422). One fourth grader expressed her feelings by stating, "Well, really the best point of reading is it brings your imagination to life so you could bring things to your mind, and you'll get excited about it." Others simply stated the reason to read is, "it's fun."

Learning about content that is specific to the reader was of most importance to 6% of all students interviewed. Most students noted the inclusion of general topics, such as learning a new math game. However, some students were quite specific when referring to content. For example, a third grader provided the following answer, "To help you learn more... things like how to don't cheat people out of other things. Like in one of our stories, The Shoemaker, the guards made them give them one third of everything they got if (and) the king got it. They would only let them pass if they gave them one third. And the meaning of the story said don't take things that don't belong to you."

Four percent of the students believed the purpose of basal reading to be to enable them to complete workbook pages or focus questions. In the words of one fourth grader, "It was like the comprehension and like all that stuff you have to do, because if you don't really like read the reading book you can't do the skillbooks."

Only 1% believed the most important reason to read the basal reader was related to the importance of increasing their personal understanding of the world through the medium of print. Students did not discuss the purpose of reading as relating to understanding the meaning of the story to any level beyond the skill work comprehension questions.

2. Utilitarian: Students whose responses fell into this category "recognized reading as fulfilling a function outside of itself" (Cairney, 1988, p. 422). Eight percent of all students interviewed felt the most important reason to read the basal was to meet some unrelated goal. An example of a utilitarian response, taken from this 1991 study, is "cause it (reading) helps you get to another class." Another example, provided by a first grade student was, "So when you grow up you can read the papers of what you have to do."

3. Teacher Pleaser: Students responding in this group believe "the purpose of the reading materials and activities is to allow the teacher to check, assess or monitor his or her reading ability" (Cairney, 1988, p. 422). Unlike Cairney's 1985 study, none of the students participating in this study cited pleasing the teacher as the purpose of reading the reading book.

4. Learning To Read: Cairney differentiates this from the task-related responses, by stating that the answers grouped in this category "lacked specificity and clarity of purpose" (1988, p. 422). Most of the students responding in this group phrased their answer, "to learn to read" or to get better or improve their reading ability. As in Cairney's study, in which 32% responded in this manner, a large number

of students reading the literature-based reader (25%) gave this general response as the most important reason to read the basal reader.

A small percentage of the students, approximately 6%, had difficulty answering this third interview question. Many of these students replied that they didn't know the purpose of reading the text. Others gave examples of activities they performed during the reading hour, but did not explain the significance of these activities.

The Age Factor

In answering the question, "What is the most important reason for reading your reader?" intermediate age children (grades 4-5) were more likely to state decoding than primary children. This is a surprising result since one would assume the focus upon phonics skills in the early grades would be evident. Although 13% of primary children stated decoding was the reason to read, 24% of the older children replied this way, emphasizing their perception of the basal's focus on increasing vocabulary. Another significant difference in the thinking of intermediate age children was their focus upon reading to learn. Twenty seven percent of the fourth and fifth graders explained reading their reader helped them learn about such things as character development, plot, conflict, or simply enhanced their intelligence. Sixteen percent of primary children stated they were reading to learn. Older children also stated they read for interest or pleasure more often than young children. While only 8% of primary children stated they read for pleasure, 18% of intermediate age children read for pleasure. This may be due to the fact that 38% of primary children stated the purpose

of their reader is to teach them to read. Learning to read, or specifically "to learn to read" was the most typical response of primary children.

Questions 4-7

Questions 4-7 all involved soliciting student opinion about criteria for judging the success of readers. What elements of reading do they think are important when evaluating themselves as readers? Do students believe their teachers use the same criteria to judge reading success or failure as students do? Do students use the same criteria to evaluate others as they apply to self-evaluation?

Responses elicited by question 4 were grouped into the 8 following categories:

1. Decoding: Students who attributed their personal success and/or failure or the success and/or failure of others to factors such as vocabulary skill, phonics, fluency, and speed in reading were grouped in this category.

This category was divided into two groups, a) responses that described phonic skills, vocabulary, or word accuracy, and b) responses that mentioned fluency, expression, or speed.

2. Comparison with Others: Responses in this category emphasized placement in a high or low reading group. Although teachers were encouraged to abandon the use of static, ability grouping, a few students made reference to their group level.

3. Opinion of Others: The researcher found most students that responded in this manner were referring to the opinion of the teacher. For example, a student stated he

knew he was a good reader because his teacher told him so. Another student knew she was a good reader because her teacher consistently asked her to read aloud to the class whenever the teacher had to leave the room.

4. Regularity of Reading: Frequency might be a better word. Students who believed that quantity of reading decides success were grouped in this category.

5. Non-Reading Criteria: Responses in this category stated reading success or failure is attributed to one of the following factors:

- a. effort
- b. neatness
- c. behavior
- d. mastery of associated materials

6. Interest/Attitude: In this category students explained they were good at reading because they liked to read.

7. Understanding/Meaning: Students who explained success depended upon their personal understanding of the meaning of the story, or who expressed how the author's meaning contributed to their understanding of their surrounding world. There is personal ownership of the meaning rather than simple reiteration of the facts in the story.

*8. Response was vague, irrelevant or student unable to explain self-evaluation.

Question 4

How Good Are You At Reading This Type of Book? What Makes You Say This?

<u>Response Category</u>	<u>Percentage of Responses</u>
Decoding	39%
phonics, word identification (30%)	
fluency, expression, speed (9%)	
Comparison With Others	3%
Opinion Of Others	7%
Regularity of Reading	17%
Non-Reading Criteria	4%
Interest/Attitude	5%
Understanding/Meaning	3%
Don't Know/Vague/Irrelevant	22%

Figure 4: Results of Survey on Question 4

How Good Are You At Reading This Type of Book? What Makes You Say This?

Question 4

Question 4 asks the students, "How good are you at reading this type of book? What makes you say this?" By having the students address the issue of criteria for success in reading, the students reveal information about what they believe to be the emphasis of the act of reading.

Thirty-nine percent of the students interviewed used decoding as the key criterion when providing the explanation of their reading performance. Of this group, 30% mentioned phonics, vocabulary knowledge, or accuracy. The remaining 9% concentrated upon fluency, expression, or speed. For example, a 2nd grade student in this first category answered, "I have a lot of problems reading sometimes. There is a lot of words we don't know in the book" (Appendix). Many students explained their success as being attributable to the fast speed with which they were able to read.

Regularity of reading was the next greatest response, with 17% of the students stating that they were either good or poor at reading due to the quantity of their reading. Also grouped in this category were students who cited the length of time in which they had been reading. Some, for example, stated they were good at reading because they had been reading since kindergarten.

Seven percent of the students explained their self-evaluation by citing the opinion of others. The teacher was usually the person to whom the student referred. In many examples the teacher either told the child he was doing well, or the child received good grades from the teacher.

Only 4% of the students used non-reading criteria to evaluate themselves, with the majority of these responses

referring to the successful completion of, or for some the failure to complete, workbook pages.

Comparing themselves with others was quite uncommon, consisting of only 3%, and this differed greatly from Cairney's study in which 14% of the students used this criterion to judge their own reading performance (1988, p. 423). In Cairney's study static grouping was common in the classroom. With the new literature-based series teachers have been encouraged to end static grouping in favor of flexible small groups and whole group instruction, and this may explain the difference between study results.

Five percent of the group, cited having an interest in the story, or enjoying the act of reading, as being the source of success or failure in reading. One fifth grader explained her mixed self-evaluation with this critique of the new reading series, "I don't like the stories very much they have in them, but they're more challenging than the other books" (Appendix). Some stated they were good at reading simply because they liked to read.

A small group, only 3% of the students, believed understanding the meaning of the story as important when evaluating self in reading. This is consistent with Cairney's study, in which none of the students cited meaning as a criterion.

Quite a large number of students could not explain the description they gave of themselves as readers. Most of the students were able to state a positive or negative one-word descriptor of themselves as readers, but 22% could not explain this self-evaluation.

Factors of Age and Gender

In answering the question about personal success in reading, there is a steady increase in the number of decoding responses, as grade level rises. In other words the older the child, the more likely he or she is to attribute success to decoding ability. Twenty percent of the first graders gave a decoding response with the percentage rising to 43% for fifth grade. This may be because older children are, and should be, more aware of the factors that constitute reading. They are capable of explaining the specific skills that contribute to reading success. However, if the aim of educators is to communicate that reading is the search for meaning, and therefore success lies in understanding the story, this perception is missing in both primary and intermediate level students. Another significant difference in the perceptions of primary and intermediate students is the focus upon frequency of reading. Younger children are more likely than older children to believe that practice, or the amount of time spent reading, is important. Twenty percent of the first graders attributed their success to the amount they read, whereas none of the fifth graders stated frequency as a factor. Perhaps this is due to the fact that it is easier to see the progress in young readers. Kindergartners know that books that are too difficult one month may be easily read the next. Growth is less obvious with intermediate readers. Lastly, older children are more likely to attribute personal success to interest and meaning than are younger children. While none of the first and second graders cited interest or meaning as a factor, 10% of the fifth graders stated that interest was important for

success, and 5% stated that understanding the meaning of the story was important.

Boys and girls often agree upon the means to personal success in reading, but differed in two ways. First, females were more likely than males to rely upon the opinion of others (usually the teacher) when evaluating their own success. Thirteen percent of the girls stated they knew they were good or poor readers because someone had told them so. None of the boys used the opinion of others as a criteria for self-evaluation. Secondly, males (24%) were more likely than females (11%) to believe that reading frequency determined success or failure in reading.

Question 5

What Do You Have To Do To Get A Good Grade In Reading?

<u>Response Category</u>	<u>Percentage of Responses</u>
Decoding	24%
phonics, word identification (19%)	
expression, fluency, speed (6%)	
Regularity of Reading	18%
Non-Reading Criteria	44%
effort (5%)	
behavior (19%)	
related materials (21%)	
Understanding The Meaning	5%
"I Don't Know"/Vague/Irrelevant	8%

Figure 5: Results of Survey on Question 5

What Do You Have To Do To Get A Good Grade In Reading?

Question 5

Question 5 asks the students, "What do you have to do to get a good grade in reading?" The point of this question, as with Question 4, is to discover student perception of the reading process, and what students believe is important to the teacher when evaluating success in reading. Students responded to this question with more confidence than they did to Question 4, with only 8% of the students stating they did not know or could not describe the grading criteria.

Student responses to Question 5 were grouped into these five groups: (1) Decoding, (2) Non-reading criteria, (3) Understanding/Meaning, (4) Regularity, and (5) Don't know/Vague/Irrelevant.

A great many students, almost half surveyed, believe that teachers use non-reading criteria to judge children's reading performance. Students who responded in this group emphasized completing workbook papers or answering focus questions as being an important factor in determining reading success; with 21% of the students stating success is determined by performance on reading related materials. As one fourth grader explained, "We get a paper, we write, it says a question and we have to write an answer down. And if we get it right, that's the grade we get" (Appendix). Another example is a fifth grader who provided this specific response, "Do all your work. There is a skillpack, and sometimes in the back there is a checkpoint; and that's it" (Appendix).

Behavior was another important factor that is unrelated to the act of reading, but important in a reading class. According to 19% of the students interviewed, actions such as listening to the teacher, paying attention, being good, helping the teacher, writing neatly, and being nice were

examples of the criteria used to determine reading grades. Completion of related materials was the most frequent example given. Five percent of the students stated that effort, or "trying hard" was of importance to teacher evaluation.

The second largest number of responses fell within the decoding category, amounting to 24% of all students interviewed. Word identification and speed, i.e. reading fast, were the most cited responses when students attempted to explain what they could do to earn a good grade. As one second grader explained, to get a good grade one should, "Know all the words, and sound good, and stop at the period" (Appendix). Although 24% is a considerable amount of decoding responses, it is far less than in Cairney's 1985 study, in which 59% of the students stated decoding determined reading grades (1988, p. 426).

Regularity, meaning the amount of reading or how often a child reads was also a common response to Question 5. To earn a good grade, 18% of the students felt one should "read a lot." This is a surprising contrast to Cairney's study in which none of the students interviewed cited reading regularity as a factor in determining a reading grade (1988, p. 426).

Understanding the meaning of the story was the way to earn a good grade, according to 5% of the students. As one fifth grader states, "I have to read the story and understand what I'm reading" (Appendix). In Cairney's study, none of the children mentioned reading for meaning or understanding as an important criterion for determining a grade for reading (1988, p. 28).

Grade and Gender Factor

There were several interesting revelations regarding the criteria primary and intermediate students perceived to be of importance in earning a good grade in reading. First, primary children are more likely than intermediate students to believe that good decoding skills earn good grades. Twenty-nine percent of all first graders gave a decoding response, whereas 16% of the fifth graders replied as such. Secondly and surprisingly, the non-reading criteria of student behavior was equally important in the primary and intermediate grades. Twenty-four percent of the first graders and 24% of the fifth graders stated behavior was an important criterion in earning a good grade in reading. Learning school rules is emphasized in the younger grades, as students are learning socialization skills for getting along with others. Listening well, waiting one's turn....it is easy to understand why young children would believe this is so important to success. However, one would expect a dramatic decrease in the intermediate grades, and there is no evidence of this occurring. Third, there is a significant difference in the way primary and intermediate children view the role of related materials in terms of achieving good grades. Only 5% of all first graders believe that success on related materials is the main criterion to earning a good grade. However, the number of students holding this view increases with each grade level, with 40% of all fifth graders discussing paperwork as the means to success in reading. Young children do believe, however, in the importance of practice. Nineteen percent of the first grade responses fell into the frequency category, with only 4% of the fifth graders answering this way. Finally, a consistent finding in this study is that meaning-related answers are

more common among older children than young, with none of the first or second graders giving meaning related answers, whereas 12% of the fourth graders and 8% of the fifth graders stated that understanding the story was an important criterion in earning a good grade.

Girls and boys tended to view the criteria for earning a good grade in much the same way, with only slight deviations. Twenty-one percent of the girls believed good decoding skills were important, whereas 15% of the boys provided a decoding response. Girls also put slightly more importance on related materials than boys; 23% of the girls and 18% of the boys attributed good grades to worksheets and comprehension questions. As with Question 4, boys put more importance on practice (22%) with 15% of the girls responding within the frequency category.

Question 6

Who Is The Best Reader In Your Class? How Do You Know?

<u>Response Category</u>	<u>Percentage of Responses</u>
Decoding	37%
word identification, phonics (21%)	
expression, fluency, speed (16%)	
Comparison With Others	9%
Opinion Of Others	5%
Regularity Of Reading	21%
Non-Reading Criteria	7%
behavior (3%)	
related materials (4%)	
Enjoyment/Attitude	1%
"I Don't Know/Vague/Irrelevant	19%

Figure 6: Results of Survey on Question 6

Who Is The Best Reader In Your Class? How Do You Know?

Question 6

Question 6 asks the students to decide, "Who is the best reader in your class?", and then to explain this choice. The purpose of this question is to ascertain what criteria students use to evaluate other students as readers. It can also be determined if students use the same criteria to judge their own effectiveness as they do to judge other readers.

Responses to Question 6 were grouped in the same eight categories used in Question 4. Again, the categories are: (1) Decoding; (2) Comparison with Others; (3) Opinion of Others; (4) Regularity of Reading; (5) Non-reading Criteria; (6) Interest/Attitude; (7) Understanding/Meaning; and (8) "I Don't Know"/Vague/Irrelevant.

Thirty-seven percent of the students used decoding skill to evaluate their peers in respect to reading. Many students commented upon their peers ability to read the words quickly and/ or to read the words without making errors. For example, one first grader, in describing a classmates reading success, explains "...she doesn't need to sound it out, she just knows it" (Appendix). Cairney also found a large number of responses (53%) related to decoding (1988, p. 423).

Regularity of reading was also important when judging peers. To read a lot, or to be seen reading frequently during class time convinced 21% of the students that a peer was a successful reader. As one second grader explained, she knew "Jane" was a good reader "Cause she reads a lot. She is always reading her chapter book and when she finishes one she gets another one and keeps on going" (Appendix). Cairney's study found similar results, with 38% of the students giving this response (1988, p. 423).

Non-reading criteria accounted for 7% of all responses, with students noting the highly graded skillpack pages of their peers, or such behavior as the willingness to volunteer to read. Only 9% of the students judged peers based upon comparison with others, and 5% used the opinion of others to explain a classmates reading success. In most cases it was the teacher's opinion that indicated a classmate was successful. For example, a fifth grader knew "Jane" was the best reader "Cause he (the teacher) always says 'very good' and he always picks her (to read)...." (Appendix).

Only 1% of all students felt that the best reader in the class was so successful at reading because he/she enjoyed reading.

Most of the students were able to pick one or two students who they felt were the best readers in the class; however, 19% of the students could not explain why they chose the student they did.

Factors of Age and Gender

When explaining the reading performance of peers, younger children tended to put greater emphasis upon decoding skills. Thirty-nine percent of the first graders asked explained that they knew a classmate was a good or poor reader due to decoding ability, whereas 21% of fifth graders gave a decoding response to Question 6. Older children stated that reading fluency was a factor more often than primary children, and it may be that this is a more sophisticated way of saying the same thing. Whatever the case, primary and intermediate students both agree that decoding and fluency signal good readers. Intermediate age students, more often than primary, stated that the opinion of others (usually the teacher) was the way they knew another student was a good reader. None of the first or second

graders gave the opinion of others response, but 16% of the fifth graders used this criterion. Older students also stated frequency of reading was the key to identifying the best reader, with 27% of both third and fifth graders, and 26% of fourth graders giving this response. The best reader was the best because he or she was always reading. Only 6% of first graders used frequency as an indicator.

Boys and girls were in great agreement about the criteria used to judge the best reader. For example 22% of the girls, and 22% of the boys provided a decoding response to Question 6. This is not a surprise, as in most classes the students agreed upon the name of the best reader, and then proceeded to explain how this student's superiority was obvious to everyone. The only slight deviation in opinion is that girls (22%) noted fluency more often than boys (14%).

Question 7-A

Were You a Good Reader Last Year?

<u>Good</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Not Good</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
75%	9%	13%	3%

What makes you (self-evaluate) say this?

Question 7-A (Trad.Basal) Cairney (Trad Basal) New Lit.Basal

Decoding:	37%	34%	39%
Comparison with others	16%	14%	3%
Opinion of others	21%	18%	7%
Regularity	7%	18%	17%
Non-reading criteria	2%	7%	4%
Meaning/ interest	7%	8%	8%

(Cairney, 1988, pp. 423-424).

*Remaining number of students stated "I don't know" or were in kindergarten last year, and stated they did not use a reader or know how to read.

**The data represented on this chart under the headline Question 7-A represents a small sample of students. Students

were only asked for a self-rating. A small percentage of students explained their self-evaluation (43 responses), and those responses were then grouped (in above chart) into the same categories used for Question 4.

Figure 7: Results of Survey on Question 7-A

Figure 8: Results of Survey on Question 7-B

Basis for Self-evaluation Using Last Years Traditional Basal

Figure 9: Results of Survey on Question 7-B

Basis for Self-evaluation (Cairney,1985, pp 423-424).

Figure 10: Results of Survey on Question 7-B

Basis for Self-evaluation using Literature-Based Basal (1991-Question 4)

Question 7

Question 7 asked students to recall last year's classroom reading textbook, and state whether or not he/she was a successful reader last year. Students were then asked if they were a more or less successful reader last year as compared to the present year.

Question 7-A

In response to the first part of the question, "Were you a good reader last year?", results are as follows. Of the 102 children interviewed, 75% stated that they were good readers last year. Nine percent stated they were average, while 13% stated that they were not good readers last year. Three percent of the children stated they did not know, or could not respond with an answer.

Examining the reasoning behind the student's feelings about last year was not consistently included in the interview, and should have been. However, many students, with or without prompting, provided an explanation about their success or lack of success in last year's reading program.

Of the students who provided an explanation, the responses were fairly consistent with the data generated by Cairney's 1985 basal study. In both cases, students were using the traditional basal series, and in both cases there is a heavy emphasis on decoding as the criterion that determined success or failure. Thirty-seven percent of the students interviewed in 1991 (and 29% in Cairney's 1985 study) felt word identification and fluency in oral reading were causes of last year's reading success (1988, p. 423).

For example, one third grader explained last year's difficulties in this way, "Well, I guess I was a little below average because I couldn't understand...I couldn't read that well cause I couldn't make out the sounds.....like the u, or i, or long vowels or short vowels. So that's why I wasn't a good reader" (Appendix).

The opinion of others -mainly the teacher was the criterion that 21% of the students interviewed used to judge last year's reading performance. After stating he was a good reader last year, one student explained, "Because every time we (read)...whenever she (teacher) called me up for reading she always told me to do something like read the first couple of pages or something" (Appendix). This is very close to Cairney's findings, in which 18% of the students used the opinion of others as a means of self-evaluation (1988, p. 423).

Lastly, 16% of the students evaluated their own reading by comparing themselves with others. One third grader, when asked if she was a good reader last year, responded, "Well, I was in the highest reading group" (Appendix). Again, this data closely resembles Cairney's study in which 14% of the students judged their reading performance by comparing themselves with classmates (1988, p. 423). In summary, the answers the students provided about last year's reading basal and their own performance were very similar to what Cairney's students felt when using the same type of traditional basal.

These results, however, differ greatly from the feelings students have about using the new literature-based basal in three ways: First, as evidenced by comparing student responses to Questions 4 and 7, students put much less emphasis, when judging themselves as readers, on the opinions of others. It also appears that, unlike with the traditional basal series, very few students are judging

there appears to be an increase in the number of students who believe the amount of reading they did has had an effect on their reading success.

Question 7-B

The students were next asked, "Are you a better reader this year?" Of the 102 replies, 89% of the students responded affirmatively. Only 7% stated they were not better readers this year, and 2% stated their present reading performance was equal, or the same, as last years. One student stated he did not know if he was better.

Question 7 has obvious flaws, which unfortunately were not apparent to this researcher until the study was well under way. First, the wording of this question most likely influenced children to give a yes or no answer without elaborating, and should have been constructed differently.

The second problem with this question was the use of the word "better" when asking students to compare this year's opinion regarding reading success with the previous year's reading performance. By using the word "better," the researcher most likely influenced children to consider the issue of improvement. Six of the students gave statements that referred to improving from the last year and it is probable that many students who did not explain their response would have also cited improvement.

Question 8

Are you reading more this year?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Reading The Same Amount</u>
82%	16%	2%

Figure 11: Results of Survey on Question 8

Question 8

One of the goals of the newly adopted literature program is to involve children in more real reading experiences, Question 8 sought to identify if children believed they were spending more time reading using the new reading series. As with any interview study, once one has the responses, it is likely a better way of asking the question will emerge. This researcher asked, "Are you reading more this year?" The question followed a question that pertained to the student's reading performance last year, so it is believed students would follow this line of thought. Many of the students quickly answered "yes" and this researcher was concerned about the amount of student thought being applied, and wondered if students were quick to supply what they perceived to be "the correct answer."

Of the 102 students interviewed, 82% stated "yes" they were reading more this year. Sixteen percent responded that they were not reading more than last year, and 2% indicated they were reading the same amount as last year.

For approximately half of the students, the researcher phrased the question, " Did you read more this year, or in 3rd grade?" (last year's grade). This forced children to choose between the two different reading experiences, rather than allowing for a quick yes or no answer. There was no significant difference between the group asked the original interview question, and those asked with the revised wording. Of the latter, 80% responded they were reading more now than in the previous year.

The focus of Chapter 3 is to present the data collected in this 1991 study. To this point, the author has presented

the information provided by the 102 students who participated in this research project. The exact wording of the students, as previously stated, can be found in the Appendix of this thesis. A summary and interpretation of this information will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Before closing this chapter, there is one final piece of information to be examined, the teacher survey. The purpose of the following survey was to provide background information about classroom reading activities and teacher attitudes which possibly effect student attitude.

Dear Classroom Teacher:

Please take a few minutes to circle a response to each of the following questions. It will be very helpful to me to have this background information in the attempt to interpret students' responses to the interview questions. This is a very informal survey, and you need not provide your name.

Survey of Classroom Practice

1. Do you spend (more, the same, or less) time reading aloud this year as compared to last?
2. Do your students spend (more, the same, less) time reading silently this year as compared to last?
3. Do you supplement your reading instruction with (more, the same, less) skill-related activities than you did using the basal reader and manual?
4. Do you spend (more, the same, less) time using student discussion as a means of teaching reading concepts?
5. Do you teach phonics? (yes, no) Is the quantity of time spent for phonics instruction the same as last

- year? (less, same, more) Do you teach phonics during the reading hour? (yes, no)
6. Do you use ability grouping during reading instruction?
(yes, no)
7. Is the reading pace set at a group rate or do your students move through the text at an individual pace? (group, individual)

A majority of the teachers reported they were spending a greater amount of time reading aloud than they did when using last year's reading series. Some teachers commented that because they were encouraged to abandon the practice of using static reading groups, they needed to read aloud to students to ensure all students would be exposed to the story. Suggested practices by the text authors also encouraged two readings of each story, one oral and one silent.

Almost half of the teachers reported that the frequency of silent reading remained the same this year as in the previous year. The rest of the group was split between those reporting more and those reporting less student time being spent reading silently.

Sixty percent of the teachers said the students were spending as much time doing skill work as they did in the traditional basal. Since this basal is packaged much like the basals of previous years, and since teachers were supplied with free skill-workbooks, this is not surprising.

Over three-fourths of the teachers surveyed felt they were using more time engaged in discussion with the students, as a means of teaching reading concepts. Only one teacher felt she spent less time using discussion than last year.

Sixty-five percent of the teachers reported they teach phonics, and typically it was the upper grade teachers who

stated they did not. More than half of the teachers stated they teach phonics as often as they did using last year's readers, and over eighty percent teach phonics during the reading hour.

Over seventy percent of the teachers wrote they do not use ability grouping. Some of these teachers were asked to elaborate upon this practice, and many expressed the difficulty of adapting to new grouping practices during the reading hour. Some stated they were concerned that children would not learn the different skills, especially beginning phonics skills, if each lesson was taught to the large group; or if each time a new skill was to be taught, small groups were to be reorganized. Most teachers were aware that groups were not to be static, and stated they had attempted to arrange and rearrange groups according to needed skill rather than use permanent placement. As one teacher wrote, grouping is not based upon "ability, but are skill groups that change with the skill lesson." A few stated that the practice of placing all students in the same grade in the same level reader helps, in her opinion, eliminate the stigma of reading groups. Lastly, all but one of the teachers instruct the reading class to move at a group, rather than individual rate of learning.

This data is the product of a small sample of teachers, as 17 of the 30 teachers returned a completed survey.

Results of the Teacher Survey: Total Group

1. Do you spend (more, the same, or less) time reading aloud this year as compared to last?

<u>More</u>	<u>The Same</u>	<u>Less</u>
65%	29%	6%

2. Do your students spend (more, the same, less) time reading silently this year as compared to last?

<u>More</u>	<u>The Same</u>	<u>Less</u>
29%	47%	24%

3. Do you supplement your reading instruction with (more, the same, less) skill-related activities than you did using the basal reader and manual?

<u>More</u>	<u>The Same</u>	<u>Less</u>
13%	60%	27%

4. Do you spend (more, the same, less) time using student discussion as a means of teaching reading concepts?

<u>More</u>	<u>The Same</u>	<u>Less</u>
76%	18%	6%

5. Do you teach phonics?
Is the quantity of time spent for phonics instruction the same as last year?

<u>More</u>	<u>The Same</u>	<u>Less</u>
8%	54%	38%

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
65%	35%

6. Do you use ability grouping during reading instruction?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
29%	71%

7. Is the reading pace set at a group rate or do your students move through the text at an individual pace?

<u>Group</u>	<u>Individual</u>
94%	6%

In conclusion, the transcribed student responses to the interview questions provide invaluable information about student perception of the reading process. Still questionable is whether the young students expressed their true thoughts, or if concern for being correct influenced the

information they provided. Another limitation is, of course, time. Cairney's interview questions produced a wealth of information and, given more time, this researcher would have liked to go back and speak to both students and teachers a second time. Lastly, as with any interview format, the value of the question is often determined after the answers are provided, and this researcher would have spent less time with Questions 1, 2, and possibly 8; and put a greater emphasis on the other five questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

Discussion of Results

Students learning with the new literature-based basal reader share many of the opinions expressed by traditional basal users. This study demonstrates that the emphasis students place on decoding and procedure is evident with the transition to a literature-based reading program. However, it is also true that the number of HBJ students who believe the purpose of reading is about enjoying reading is twice as many as found in the Cairney study, and that children using the literature-based series strongly believe that the amount of actual reading is important in terms of success in classroom reading. The research questions outlined in Chapter Two now provide the organizational format to review the results of this 1991 study.

I. What Do Children Perceive As The Major Purpose For Classroom Reading?

Students Lack Clarity of Purpose

The students expressed their beliefs regarding the purpose of the literature-based reader by responding to the third interview question, "What is the most important reason for reading your reader?" The response category "Learning to Read" was the greatest in both this study and the Cairney study. The student statements in this category were general and lacked clarity of purpose. Most of the students replied, "to learn to read." In giving this response, some would argue that the students view reading as a skill to be

acquired. That the role of the reading text, then, is to produce the ability to read, and this ability, in itself, fulfills the purpose of the text. In stating the acquisition of an ability as the most important reason to read the basal it might appear that many students see the value of the reader as associated with a learning task, rather than the pursuit of knowledge or enjoyment. Many of the students responding this way were in the primary grades (89%), and it may be that the simple "to learn to read" answer is more indicative of the children's verbal ability than of their feelings of true purpose.

What is clear is that too many elementary school children chose not to describe reading in a manner educators would wish. It is not too difficult for a first grade child to understand and communicate that the reason we read is for pleasure. To learn what the authors know or feel, or to understand the story, is another notion that young children could express, but which the majority did not. Popular expressions, such as "the search for meaning" may be beyond a first grader's verbal and intellectual abilities; however one may argue that stating the purpose of reading is to increase one's vocabulary is a sophisticated definition; and one that has been successfully incorporated into the thinking of many young children. So, although it may be jumping to conclusions to assume that the "to learn to read" response reveals a dysfunctional notion of reading, it is fair to state that the ideas of literacy educators aim to communicate are lacking in the perceptions of students.

Decoding

As in Cairney's study, a large group of students in this study stated that improving decoding skills,

specifically increasing vocabulary, was the main reason for reading the HBJ basal. Where Cairney's study revealed approximately one-fourth of the students focused on decoding skills, this 1991 study found a little less than one-fifth (18%) of the students providing the decoding response. Although this constitutes a significant decrease, quite a large group of students are focusing upon decoding skills. A surprising difference between Cairney's results and the results of this study involved the grade level comparison. Cairney found that the younger children were more likely to provide a decoding response. This is as one would expect, with the concentration of phonics instruction and oral reading occurring in the primary grades. However, this study found a consistent increase in the number of decoding responses from the 1st to 5th grade. While 13% of the primary grade students stated decoding was the main purpose of reading their reader, 24% of intermediate students responded in this manner. Increasing vocabulary in terms of quantity and level of sophistication was the frequent response of older children. This corresponds with the findings of the teacher survey, in which 65% of the teachers reported an increase in oral reading with the HBJ series.

Reading to Learn

A large number of students in this study, exactly one-fifth, stated that "reading to learn" was the most important reason for reading the reader. While some expressed this sentiment in general terms, for example, "I read to get smarter," others stated that reading taught about characters, plots, the past, different ideas, other books, and different writing styles. These responses were grouped in this "reading to learn" category (rather than in the

meaning/understanding category) to be in accordance with the guidelines provided by Cairney when classifying responses. As a large part of this research involves comparison, the same guidelines have been applied. However, it is the opinion of this author that there is a problem with the way some of these responses were grouped. Cairney states that only 2% of the students believe gaining meaning, or understanding the story is of primary importance; while 10% felt "reading to learn" was the main reason for reading the basal. Cairney, for example, classifies the student response, "Learn about the world" as a reading to learn response (1985, p. 47). This seems logical, however may be too fine a line, as young children possessing a limited ability to express abstract notions may state that they are reading to learn about the world, to gain information about the author's ideas, or to learn about other stories, and this may be representative of the idea of reading for meaning or understanding.

If one combines the students who expressed that the purpose for reading the reader is to gain knowledge, with those who explicitly communicated the purpose to be gaining meaning or understanding, then 12% of Cairney's students responded in total group, versus 21% of the students interviewed in 1991.

Perhaps Cairney would argue one should remove from this total group all students who answer with story structure type responses. For example, students who express they read to learn about plots or characters would be classified by Cairney as procedural in nature. The problem with this is as follows. When classroom teachers communicate that students can gain meaning or understanding from learning about the lives of different people described in stories, and when teachers encourage students to identify or understand the

story's main character, then we teach about characterization, and we label our knowledge. If educators attempt to communicate how to resolve problems, and use the conflicts and resolutions in literature as examples, we discuss plot, theme, climax, and conclusion. We use these terms as we teach the art of understanding, as well as the art of creating one's own stories. It may be impossible to ask students of elementary age to articulate the distinction of the tool or term from the understanding gained. Classifying a student who responds "I learn about different characters" one way, and a student who responds, "I learn to understand and think about other people" in a different category makes the study's categories and statistics more important than understanding student's perceptions of the reading process. The categories take on an importance and communicate a message that may or may not be truthful.

To summarize, we need students to understand that learning phonics or story structure is the means to a more important end, and if we as educators overemphasize the means, then this will be reflected in the perceptions of students. If we emphasize the parts, then the whole act of reading may not be clear to young readers. In the same light, this researcher cannot assume when students articulate the importance of "learning about characters" that this student associates reading with procedure or skill, or that this child's understanding is contradictory to gaining meaning from a story. The discouraging note of this finding is that only one-fifth of our students stated they are reading to learn.

Cairney's report, which stated that only 2% of students believe the purpose of reading is to gain meaning or understanding was disheartening (and as expressed above, may not be truly representative of the number of students who

read for meaning). Unfortunately, this study indicates that as with the students using the traditional basal reader, students reading the literature-based reader place heavy emphasis on decoding skills and furthermore, that many student are unable to describe any purpose for reading the new basal. It is also true that the aim of educators to communicate the joy of reading good literature, and that good readers understand what they read is not evident in the perceptions of the majority of elementary school children. However, many students using the literature-based reading series stated they are reading to learn; twice as many as found in Cairney's traditional basal study. The number of students that stated the purpose of reading is for pleasure also doubled from that of the Cairney study, with 12% of the students reading because it is fun.

II. What Criteria do Children Use for Judging Success in Reading?

After rating themselves as readers, students were asked how they made this determination. The self-rating was not pertinent to this study. The interest of this study was deciding what criteria students used to judge success. Also determined was the criteria by which the teacher judges reading success, according to student opinion, and the criteria by which students judge peers.

Self-evaluation: An Emphasis on Decoding

When judging self, the largest number of responses indicated that decoding skills were they key to success in reading class. As stated in Chapter 3, one-third of the

students explained that their individual success or failure in reading was due to reading accuracy, vocabulary knowledge, or phonics skill; and an additional 9% cited reading speed, expression, and fluency were of great importance in evaluating one's own performance. This emphasis on decoding was consistent with Cairney's study, and in fact a greater decoding focus was evident in the literature-based program, than in the traditional basal.

As one might expect, and consistent with Cairney's findings, responses focusing upon meaning and interest were more frequent in the intermediate grades, and less frequent in the primary grades. Unexpectedly, there is a consistent increase in the number of decoding responses as grade level rises. Twenty percent of the first graders gave a decoding response, with the percentiles consistently rising, finishing with 43% of the fifth graders describing reading success or failure as based upon decoding ability.

Teacher-evaluation: Non-Reading Factors, Decoding, & Frequency

According to students, teachers evaluate student reading performance using non-reading criteria such as behavior and success on related materials. Listening to directions and turning in workbook pages, along with trying hard and writing neatly combined to amount to 44% of the responses, closely aligned with Cairney's finding of 41% (1985). Much of this may be due to the fact that a written grade is most often seen by the students on a workbook page, and success on written work is often related to behaviors such as staying on task and paying attention while directions are explained. What is more complex, for students and teachers, is expressing positive feedback, in the form of a grade, for a

student's participation in choosing, enjoying, understanding, critiquing, and responding on an individual level to literature. As the literature-based reader encourages less skill and drill, and more "real reading," teachers will need to demonstrate to students that the evaluation process will be appropriately matched with the educational aims of the program. If discussing literature is encouraged, but only skill sheets graded, student perception will continue to reflect the contradiction of theory and practice. Lastly, and surprisingly, older children were just as likely to provide a "behavior-oriented" response as were younger children. Older children were more likely (eight fifth graders to every one first grader!) to state teachers evaluated reading success with the use of related materials.

Two other large response categories included decoding and frequency of reading. These findings significantly differ from the results of Cairney's study. It would appear that nearly one-fifth of the students using the literature-based reading program feel their teachers value the quantity of reading they do, whereas none of the students using the traditional basal offered this response. To "read a lot" is to earn a good grade, and this applies to reading trade books as well as the reader. Students using the updated basal series are often encouraged to find the trade books that are represented in an abridged version in their readers, and read the entire book. Interview Question 8 demonstrated that over 80% of the students feel they read more often with this year's reading series, than with last year's traditional basal.

Literature-based reading students responded that decoding skills were an important factor in teacher evaluation less often than students using the traditional basal. Less than one-fourth of the students interviewed

using the new series stated that reading accurately, fluently and with expression, or knowing the vocabulary words or being able to sound words out was the way to earn a good grade. This constitutes a significantly smaller amount than Cairney's 60% (1985).

It would appear that educators who wish to see students read more books are making this point known to at least one-fifth of the students interviewed in this study. Unfortunately, most of the students view worksheets and word attack skills as the means to earning a good grade from the teacher. Undoubtedly some of these written worksheets or sentence assignments help students learn important reading skills, and there is no doubt that phonics and increasing vocabulary is an essential tool for becoming a good reader. What is also apparent, however, is that student's feel these tools equal reading, and that classroom reading, and the criteria that make up this phenomena are quite different from the natural act of reading they engage in with a library book at home. In the area of teacher evaluation the students believe the focus remains upon assessing the parts, rather than the whole.

Evaluating Others: An Emphasis on Decoding and Frequency

The results indicate that when students evaluate peers, a large percentage of the students (37%) use decoding skills as the criteria of determining reading success. Again, this is fewer than the 53% in Cairney's traditional basal study (1985), however still constitutes a large group of students. Both primary and intermediate students were as likely to focus upon decoding.

As in the Cairney study, students judged others by how often they saw peers reading, or how many books they read

during the year. Good readers "always had their nose in a book." Although not stated, what is clearly implied is that students perceive good readers as being those who enjoy reading.

III. Are Children's Views about Reading Closely Matched with the Aims of the Reading Program?

To know the aims of the reading program one must examine beyond the stated goals, as consistency in theory and suggested lessons cannot be assumed. The children's views are compared with the HBJ's stated aims, as expressed by the authors, and as implied by the content and format of the basal itself.

Reading is the Search for Meaning

According to the authors of the HBJ reading series, the idea that reading is the search for meaning is communicated by the stories and activities found in the basal. As one author states, "We know that successful learners view reading as a meaningful process.... In the HBJ reading program these children are supported in their development by being given opportunities from the very beginning to use oral and written language purposefully -for playing, for solving problems, for reading and writing messages and for learning" (Cullinan et al., 1989, p. xx). Another example, "Both reading and writing involve constructing meaning for communication.... HBJ encourages students to use what they already know about a topic..... By realizing their role as readers who must make sense of what they read, students come to view reading as an active search for meaning" (1989, p. xxiii).

The idea of providing activities that relate to the story, and involve the student's personal ideas is more clearly illustrated in the HBJ series than in the traditional basal series. For example, last year it was not uncommon for students to be reading a story about violin making, and then assigned fill-in-the-blank worksheets teaching homophones and telephone skills. The corresponding comprehension questions involve the content of violin making, are mostly factual, and there is little input for the student's understandings or opinions. In the current literature-based HBJ series, a chapter of a popular Laura Ingells book is presented, with an essay assignment that relates to the story as well as a "Literature Study" lesson that provides factual information about biographies.

Although this format appears more logical and suitable in format and content, the question of meaningfulness can only be addressed by the students. And although it may have been too early in the program to ask the question, the answers provided by the students indicate that the systematic approach to teaching reading, focusing on skills and procedure, dominates the perceptions of students regardless of the intent, and logical arrangement, of the basal. Personal growth and deeper understandings, as attained through the search for meaning, are not the purpose of reading, according to today's students.

It may be true that before the materials influence the perceptions of students, they allow teachers the freedom of thought and action necessary for personal growth. The language in the teacher manual of HBJ indicates an awareness of this thinking, in that lessons or activities are not scripted, but rather are offered as "time saving resources," ideas that may be used if the teacher deems appropriate. Eliminating procedural thinking in students will perhaps be

possible if teachers do not view teaching reading as a text-driven procedure.

Reading As a Whole: A Top-Down Model of Thinking

The HBJ authors state, "Students learn to reading by reading" (1989, p. xxv). This simple statement contradicts the basic ideology of the traditional basals, which promotes a learning process that focuses on the teaching of the individual components and skills of reading. In the HBJ basal the authors stress the value of reading literature as both the means and the end. The short chapters that are provided in the text are to be read, and then studied. Once done, these stories provide motivation for students to enjoy the entire novel. This emphasis on actual reading is evident in the material. However, also available are the skill-oriented workbooks, suggested vocabulary lessons, and other "related activities." Many of the suggested lessons are of excellent quality, and in the HBJ series the responsibility of balancing skill and procedure with actual reading experiences belongs with the classroom teacher.

To summarize, there is no significant difference in the number of student responses provided from Cairney's study and this literature-based study that emphasized non-reading criteria as a measure of success or purpose in the area of reading. Mastering related materials, writing neatly, and following directions were of equal importance to students using the new literature-based series. Reading greater amounts mattered more in a literature-based program, but only to earn a higher grade. The effect frequent reading had on personal reading success and the success of peers was viewed in roughly the same manner as with those students using traditional basal series. Decoding skills were much less important, when earning a good grade in the literature-based

series, but were as great an emphasis, as in the traditional basal, when discussing reading purpose and personal success in reading.

Learning is a Student-Centered Activity.

According to the HBJ manual, the basal offers a "student-centered instructional plan" in which students are taught to:

- integrate their knowledge and experience with the text;
- think about the text as they are reading;
- think with the text as they are reading;
- work collaboratively to share their ideas about the text;
- react and respond to the text through writing (1989, p. x).

No specific interview question in this study addressed the issue of student versus teacher (or text) centered instruction. According to the HBJ authors, teaching students to use their background knowledge, to critique the readings, and discuss new understandings is an important aim of the literature-based series. It is not the belief of the students interviewed for this study that these acts are used to evaluate reading performance. When asked to explain how teachers evaluate reading performance, only 5% of the students responded that understanding the meaning of the story was important. Instead 44% of the students expressed that they were being judged on non-reading criteria, such as proficiency in workbooks and following directions. Procedure, rather than critical thinking, continues to be a theme in the perception of students.

Literature Broadens Experiences, Increases Appreciation for Reading, and is the Most Natural Way to Integrate Learning Language.

Many educators advocate using literature in the classroom, using the rationale stated above. The use of original works of literature, rather than stories created for the purpose of teaching reading skills, is in accordance with current research describing a holistic approach to teaching reading. Researchers and educators aside, the issue in this study is the effect of a literature-based text on the perceptions of students. Does literature increase the appreciation of reading? In this study, 12% of the students stated the purpose of reading the literature-based text is for enjoyment, or interest, twice as many as the 6% who cited enjoyment as a reason to read in Cairney's traditional basal study (1985). It would be interesting to ask this questions again in two or three years and compare students who are then completely familiar with the literature series to students still learning with the traditional basal. Would the number of students noting an appreciation of literature continue to increase, or is the difference noted in this study one influenced by other factors, such as classroom teachers enthused about a new program? Another way to examine the issue of literature appreciation, from a student's perspective, is looking at students' explanation for success and failure in reading. Only 5% of the students using the HBJ text stated that pleasure or interest in reading was the reason they performed as they did. This represents a slightly smaller group than found in Cairney's traditional basal study. It is apparent that in both reading programs, students do not believe personal interests impact reading

success, a notion contrary to what current research tells us about learning.

IV. Has A Change in Instructional Practice Accompanied a Change in Reading Curriculum?

One reason the district in this study did not adopt a "pure" whole language reading program was that, according to the district, the change in practice would be too extreme for many of the district's teachers, most of whom have been teaching with the traditional basal program throughout their careers. The HBJ reader, representing a compromise between whole language and traditional basal, encouraged practitioners to move away from the skill and drill of traditional basals. It also encouraged the end of static ability groups and scripted interaction. The HBJ manual, the district representatives, and California Reading Initiative all encourage more time spent on actual reading, with the use of literature.

The classroom teacher's use of the reader is more important than the written aims of the reading program. The amount of time spent interviewing students allowed for little observation, but a brief, informal survey completed by the classroom teachers participating in the study gives some insight regarding what changes are occurring, and what practices, do teachers feel, did or should remain unchanged.

Reading More with Lots of Talk & Less Grouping

The majority of teachers feel they, as a class, are spending more time reading using the HBJ text than when using the traditional basal reader, and over three-fourths of teachers have increased the amount of class discussion during the reading hour. Perhaps these changes would have occurred

without a change in material, as increased reading and discussion are currently the call for action; but what is important to note is that the material is conducive to these changes. In a time where standardized testing and quantifying knowledge is typical, and the humanities are being eliminated with budget cuts, a large district has adopted a series that encourages students to spend time silently reading and talking about their reaction and understandings of the reading. The written work that accompanies the lessons is more often open-ended writing assignments than found in last year's basal. The teachers are free to sequence the lessons as they deem appropriate to their students' needs, and the literature that many have been unable, due to time pressures, to include in their reading hour is now a part of the reading program.

Over 70% of the teachers surveyed are not using ability grouping. This represents a great change, in that in this district, using last year's traditional basals, almost all teachers used ability grouping when teaching reading. In fact, in many schools, part of the procedure when promoting students to the next grade level is providing reading rank, by group level, for next year's teacher. In a typical 3rd grade classroom, for example, it would be normal to see one-third of the class working in the 4th grade reader, one-third using the 3rd grade reader, and another using the 2nd level reader. Students were usually aware of the "smart group" and conversely, the slow group. Even when alternative basal readers are used in an effort to eliminate the stigma of being a year behind, intermediate grade students have been grouped for so many years in a row that they are aware of the group's level simply by noting the other students in their group. This year, all students work in the same reader. According to teachers there is a great decline in the use of

ability grouping, and when students are grouped, some teachers noted, the groups are temporary, for the purpose of teaching or re-teaching a particular concept, and are then disbanded.

Continued Emphasis on Skill Work & Whole Class Instruction

Somewhat surprising is the sixty percent of the teachers that state they use the same amount (and an additional 13% using more) of supplemental skill work as they did in previous years. This is surprising for two reasons. First, teachers are aware that the district has opted not to purchase the workbooks from HBJ publishers, therefore they can be assured there is no expectation of usage. Second, if classroom teachers state they are spending more time reading and discussing the text, a reasonable assumption would be that workbook usage would need to decrease. In almost three-fourths of the classrooms this is not the case, and a researcher would need to observe classroom reading hours to better understand how time is being divided.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

A Summary of the Research

Basals are the dominant form of reading instruction in America (Goodman et al., 1988). Basal publishers are anxious to accommodate customers who are familiar and content with the technical approach of previous decades, while at the same time demonstrate to critics that the basals incorporate current theory about the reading process. While some educators argue that basals do not reflect current understanding of the reading process (Goodman et al., 1988) others believe basals have successfully kept abreast modern theory (Fuller, 1990., McCallum, 1988). New basal series such as HBJ attempt to satisfy followers of contrasting theories by marketing a basal which contains ideas compatible with the whole language approach, such as the inclusion of classic literature, as well as retaining the familiar package and many activities indicative of the technical approach.

The transition from scientifically designed stories to authentic literature reflects current research in the area of reading. Literature promotes intellectual growth and positive attitudes toward reading (Handbook for Planning an Effective Literature Program, 1988., Cullinan, 1987., Eldredge & Butterfield, 1986., Huggins & Roos, 1990., Silvern, 1988., Tunnell, 1989). Called to action by California's English Language Art Framework (1987) basal publishers, specifically HBJ, have been quick to market literature-based basals. Educators are quick to discern,

however, that textbooks incorporating original works of literature will not necessarily lead to literature-based reading instruction. Many educators have expressed concerns about the occurrence of the basalization of literature, rather than a transition to literature-based instruction (Freeman, 1989., Goodman et al., 1988., Huck, 1991., Thomas, 1987). Pure whole language advocates find HBJ inconsistent with a holistic approach citing HBJ's organization of literature by grade level, lack of student choice of reading selections, and the abridged format with basal type activities (Freeman, 1989). Finally, research shows that teachers do not share a common definition of the phrase literature-based (Zarrillo, 1989).

The authors of the HBJ series preface the series stating that "successful learners view reading as a meaningful process" (Cullinan, B. E. et al, 1989, p. xx). The intent of this thesis was to determine student perception of the purpose of the literature-based reading program. Do the students find the purpose of reading as being a search for meaning? Is the reading of interest to students? Past research indicates that students are unaware that getting meaning is the purpose of reading (Borko & Eisenhart, 1986., Cairney, 1985., John & Ellis, 1976). The findings of this study are consistent with the research. Research also demonstrates that few students read for enjoyment, and there is instead a focus upon materials and procedure (Cairney, 1985., John & Ellis, 1976). This study found this to be true when applied to a literature-based reader, although the number of students reading for pleasure was greater than studies involving traditional basals. Finally, research demonstrates a connection between classroom reading group activities and students' perception of the reading process (Borko & Eisenhart, 1986).

Finally, there is one final issue regarding the research cited in this thesis that needs to be examined. Much of the recent research demonstrates the weaknesses of the traditional basal program, and advocates using literature to teach reading. Furthermore, research used as a basis for this study (Cairney, 1985) states that the traditional basal reader promotes a student focus on skill and procedure rather than meaning. However, in the interest of fairness it is not clear that students in a whole language program would not focus on the observable behaviors -such as the decoding skills that students observe during oral reading, or the grades earned on completed assignments. Student perception of the purpose of reading needs to be examined in classrooms that do not use a basal, traditional or literature-based.

A Summary of the Study's Findings & Recommendations for Further Research

The students in this 1991 study stated that they read often, especially at school. However, this study found that one-fifth of the students describe reading at school in a manner that indicated the word "reading" meant trade book reading. To many students, the basal was viewed as work, whereas trade books are fun. It appears that many students are aware of the concept of purposeful or interesting reading, but simply do not associate it with the literature-based textbook. This is an area to be researched further.

Regarding the issue of purpose, the students focused on decoding skills and reading to learn. This finding demonstrates that there is little consensus between the research supporting the use of literature in the classroom and students perceptions of reading when using a literature-based basal. Students using the new basal answered questions

about purpose much like students in Cairney's (1985) traditional basal study. Also consistent with traditional basal studies was the lack of emphasis students placed upon meaning. The idea that the purpose of reading is to understand is stated in the HBJ series, but it was not evident in the perceptions of students. An area for further research might include examining students' comments which focused upon reading to learn and ambiguous comments which focused upon learning to read. Also important would be examining beliefs teachers hold regarding the purpose of reading the literature-based text, and comparing the way different teachers interpret literature-based instruction in their daily lessons.

Decoding is again emphasized when students judge their own reading performance, and the performance of peers. The idea that understanding the story relates to success or failure was almost non-existent in the perceptions of the students. Students believe teachers share this focus on decoding and use students' decoding ability, along with the amount students read, to determine a student's grade. However, according to the students, what is more important to teachers than both decoding and frequency, are non-reading factors, such as good behavior and work page completion. In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that there remains a strong emphasis on decoding, behavior, and related materials, and little focus upon meaning or interest.

There has, however, been some changes in student perception with the use of the new basal. Students using the literature-based basal rely less upon the opinion of others and comparison with others when evaluating themselves as readers. Removing the negative stigma that ability grouping can create for students is an important development in reading instruction, and a direct result of the guidelines

suggested for using the HBJ literature series. Secondly, the number of students who read for enjoyment, while remaining quite small, has doubled. It would be interesting to test this again after another year the series has been in use to see if the number of students who read because it is fun continues to increase. Next, the language students use to describe their reading experiences has changed. One example of this is that many students, when describing their new basal used the term chapter, rather than story, and a few explained that the chapters were taken from children's books. Others mentioned writing summaries at the end of the chapter, whereas the traditional basal story is usually followed by the "focus questions." The language of some students is less "basal-specific." Instead some students described reading with terms that are usually applied to original works of literature -chapters, novels, and plots, etc.

The perceptions of the students correlate with many of the responses provided by classroom teachers. The majority of teachers stated that the emphasis on skill work and silent reading time with the use of the literature-based basal was unchanged from previous years, and that reading instruction continues to be paced as the group requires, rather than being based upon individual needs. Finally, the majority of teachers discontinued static ability grouping, which most likely contributed to students placing less emphasis on comparison with others.

Conclusion

As is typical of a research project of this nature, better questions would have been asked if the students' answers were available before one started! After reviewing the responses, there is a need to return to the same group,

at the same moment in time, and ask for elaboration upon one question, or reword another to encourage better discussion. Since this is not possible, it is necessary to examine as objectively as possible, what this study has accomplished.

First, the study demonstrates that the state of California, the basal publishers, and classroom teachers are working quickly with the agenda to incorporate literature into the curriculum. It is also evident the consensus to use literature does not equate to consensus regarding the nature or intent of reading with literature. The debate between those subscribing to a technical approach to reading instruction, and those interested in a holistic approach continues, with the term "basalization" signifying both the tendency to preserve the technical status quo, and the desire of others to promote literature without a basal-like format or activities. Authentic literature has replaced scientifically designed stories, but classroom implementation will determine whether the literature will serve the technical or a holistic purpose.

There is evidence of both approaches in the new basal, as well as in the practice of classroom teachers. The study demonstrates a transition in material encourages change in practice, but conversely, the material can be "basalized" or plugged into last year's lesson plan. Important to a transition in curriculum is informing teachers of the research and ideologies which directed the transition to literature. Equally important is recognizing teachers hold diverse opinions regarding the nature of reading instruction.

The students using the literature-based basal expressed attitudes about the reading process that are very similar to those held by students working in traditional basals. The emphasis upon skill and procedure far outweighs attention to meaning or pleasure. Further research will indicate if the

basal format, teacher practice, student memory of traditional basal usage or a combination of these factors contributed to the perceptions demonstrated by students in this study.

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Appendix A

May 30, 1991

Dear Parent:

I am a San Jose State University graduate student, and an elementary teacher, and am currently working to earn a Masters Degree in Education. My interest is in (the districts) transition from a basal to a literature-based reading program, and will be writing about students' perceptions of this transition in my thesis.

My study is to be based on the work of Trevor H. Cairney (1985). Cairney found that student's perceptions of the purpose of basal reading activities indicated a focus on materials and procedure rather than on meaning. I will be interviewing approximately 150 children, from 7 different schools, in an attempt to determine if the literature-based inspires more of a focus on interest and meaning.

The specific questions I will be asking students are:

1. How often do you read books at home?
2. How often do you read at school?
3. What is the most important reason for reading this type of book? (show reading text)
4. How good are you at reading this type of book? What makes you say this?
5. What do you have to do to get a good grade in reading?
6. Who is the best reader in your class? How do you know?
7. Do you remember what reading book you used last year? Were you a good reader last year? Are you a better reader this year?
8. Are you reading more this year?

I am working under the advisement of Dr. Owen Boyle at SJSU, and with the permission of the district office. All interviews will take place during class time, with the permission of each classroom teacher. As is proper, the name of the district, school, teacher, and student interviewed will not be stated in the study.

Thank you,

Suzanne Nunes

 I give permission for my child _____ to be
 interviewed by
 Suzanne Nunes for the purpose of this research study.

 Parent's signature

Dear Classroom teacher:

Please read the student permission slips I have enclosed in this envelope. I have obtained permission from district office and your administrator to conduct my study, and my goal is to be as unobtrusive in your busy day as possible. As a former elementary teacher I know you are wrapping up the school year and one more distraction is the last thing you need!

I will be at your school _____, to interview students who return the permission slip I am providing. I am also providing a bribe (feel free to clarify to students the researcher, not the teacher, is doing the bribing). I would like to interview five children from each grade level. **Using your class list, please send home permission slips with the 1st, 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th, 25th, and 30th student on your list.** It is expected that a few will not return with signed permission slips.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. I have only asked one teacher per grade level from each school to participate, so please help me complete my study and send these notes home today.

Sincerely,
 Suzanne Nunes

May 30, 1991

Dear Principal:

I am a San Jose State University graduate student, currently working to earn a Masters Degree in Education. My interest is in your district's transition from a basal to a literature-based reading program, and will be writing about students' perceptions of this transition in my thesis.

My study is to be based on the work of Trevor H. Cairney (1985). Cairney found that children's perceptions of the purpose of basal reading activities indicated a focus on materials and procedures rather than on meaning. I will interview approximately 150 children, from 7 different schools, and attempt to determine if the literature-based program inspires more of a focus on interest and meaning.

The specific questions I will ask are:

1. How often do you read books at home?
2. How often do you read at school?
3. What is the most important reason for reading this type of book? (show reading text)
4. How good are you at reading this type of book?
What makes you say this?
5. What do you have to do to get a good grade in reading?
6. Who is the best reader in your class? How do you know?
7. Do you remember what reading book you used last year?
Were you a good reader last year? What makes you say this? Are you a better reader this year?
8. Are you reading more this year?

I will be working under the advisement of Dr. Owen Boyle, from SJSU. I also have permission to conduct my study from district office and will seek permission from the parent of any child randomly chosen to be interviewed. As is proper, the name of the district, school, and any teacher or child involved in the study will not be used.

* * * * *

I give permission for Suzanne Nunes to interview approximately 25

_____ students for the purpose of conducting a
research study (school name) on student's perceptions of
the purpose of a literature-based reading program.

(principal)

Appendix B

Table 1: Response categories and representative responses for Question 3: What is the most important reason for reading your reading book? (Issue of purpose).

<u>Response categories</u>	<u>Examples of representative responses</u>
1.1 Decoding emphasis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "So you can pronounce words better" * "So you can learn new words for life." * "You get a bigger vocabulary."
1.2 Reading to learn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "You can learn about other stuff like what a plot and a conclusion is." * "Probably to find out what different kinds of books there are." * "You could find out what the idea is, the main idea and the characters." * "To get knowledge."
1.3 Pleasure/interest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "I think because I enjoy reading so much." * "So you can read all exciting stories and it will be fun." * "The best point of reading is it brings your imagination to life so you could, like bring things to your mind and you'll get excited about it."
1.4 Learning about content specific to reader.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "It teaches you stories from around the the world about the pioneer ages and Indians." * "Like how to play dominos."
1.5 Success with related materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "To get the answers out of the back." * "If you don't read the reading book you can't do the skillpack." * "Learning how to answer questions and remember the details."
1.6 Meaning/understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "It teaches you about things that happen to other people and that could happen to you."
2. Utilitarian.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "It helps you get to another class." * "....To get a job." * "When you're grown up you can read your bills."

3. Learning to read.

* "So you can learn how to read real
good."

Table 2: Response categories and representative responses for Question 4: How good are you at reading your reader? What makes you say this? (Issue: criteria for self-evaluation).

<u>Response categories</u>	<u>Examples of representative responses</u>
1. Decoding/fluency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Sometimes I don't know how to pronounce words." * "I read fast." * "I read clearly."
2. Comparison with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "I was in the highest reading group."
3. Opinion of others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Because the teacher told me that I'm good at reading." * "Because the teacher picks me to read when she walks out of the classroom."
4. Regular reading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Cause I read a lot." * "I don't read very often."
5. Non-reading criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "I try to do my best and try to make super star." * "On my book reports I always get a smiley face."
6. Interest/Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "I don't like the stories very much." * "It's boring." * "I like reading."
7. Meaning/understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "I understand the stories." * "Well, sometimes when I read it I don't understand what I'm saying. I can say it, but I don't understand what I'm reading... but I can read it."

Table 3: Response categories and representative responses for Question 5: What do you have to do to get a good grade in reading? (Issue: evaluating student perception of teacher's criteria for success).

<u>Response categories</u>	<u>Examples of representative responses</u>
1. Decoding/fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Get the words right." * "Read clearly." * "Sound good and stop at periods."
2. Non-reading criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Try your best." * "Pay attention" * "I have to do my skillpack." * "Try to get the right answers and go to the back to look in your book and see if you have the right answer."
3. Understanding/meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Well, you have to understand what you're reading." * "You have to understand the story."
4. Regular reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Practice." * "Read a lot."

Table 4: Response categories and representative responses for Question 6: Who is the best reader in your class, and how do you know he/she is? (Issue: student criteria when judging peers' reading success).

<u>Response categories</u>	<u>Examples of representative response</u>
1. Decoding/fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Because he knows all the words." * "She can read a bunch of letters." * "He reads fast." * "She speaks loud and she talks with expression when she is reading."
2. Comparison with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "She is in the best reading group." * "He is the best reader in the class."
3. Opinion of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Sometimes people compliment me for reading aloud." * "Cause he (teacher) always says very good and he always picks her (to read).
4. Regular reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "She reads a lot at home." * "Cause she is always reading."
5. Non-reading criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "She does her work really neat." * "He usually gets A pluses and 100% on skillpack."
6. Interest/Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Because they read with more imagination...and they like reading."

Table 5: Response categories and representative responses for Question 7: Were you a good reader last year? Why or why not?

<u>Response categories</u>	<u>Examples of representative responses</u>
1. Decoding/fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Because last year I sort of couldn't read clearly. I got blurry." * "I knew the words because they were easy for me."
2. Comparison with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Well, that was (last year) the highest reading book." * "Well, I was in the highest reading group." * "I was the best in the class."
3. Opinion of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Most of the time I got picked to read." * "The teacher called on me a lot."
4. Regular reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Because I read a lot, every day." * "Cause I read more."
5. Non-reading criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Well, (last year) most of the time we played." * "Cause I was only 4 years old."
6. Meaning/interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "I liked to read." * "Cause I understood the book then, too."

Appendix C**Graph 1: Grade Level Comparison**

Question 3: What is the most important reason for reading your reader?

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>	<u>5th</u>
R-1					
<u>A (Decoding)</u>	10%	13%	15%	21%	29%
<u>B (Reading To Learn)</u>	5%	25%	15%	25%	29%
<u>C (Interest)</u>	0	17%	5%	14%	24%
<u>D (Learning Content)</u>	5%	8%	10%	4%	5%
<u>E (Related Materials)</u>	0	4%	10%	4%	0
<u>F. (Meaning)</u>	0	0	0	4%	0
<u>R-2: Utilitarian</u>	30%	0	0	4%	10%
<u>R-3: Teacher Pleaser</u>	0	0	0	0	0
<u>R-4: Learning To Read</u>	50%	29%	35%	14%	0
<u>R-5: Vague</u>	0	4%	10%	11%	5%

Graph 2: Comparing the Opinions Of Boys and Girls

Question 3: What is the most important reason for reading your reader? Comparing the opinions of boys and girls.

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
R-1		
A. Decoding	18%	17%
B. Reading to Learn	23%	17%
C. Interest	12%	13%
D. Learning Content	3%	11%
E. Related Materials	6%	0
F. Gaining Meaning	2%	0
R-2: Utilitarian	5%	13%
R-3: Teacher Pleaser	0	0
R-4: Learning to Read	24%	26%
R-5: Vague	8%	4%

Graph 3: A Grade Level Comparison

Question 4: How good are you at reading your reader? What makes you say this?

	<u>First</u>	<u>Second</u>	<u>Third</u>	<u>Fourth</u>	<u>Fifth</u>
R-1					
<u>A. Decoding</u>	20%	23%	35%	31%	43%
<u>B. Fluency</u>	0	9%	9%	19%	14%
<u>R-2 Comparison with others</u>	0	0	9%	8%	5%
<u>R-3 Opinion of others</u>	10%	9%	0	8%	10%
<u>R-4 Regularity</u>	20%	23%	26%	15%	0
<u>R-5 Non-Read/ Criteria</u>	10%	0	0	8%	0
<u>R-6 Interest</u>	0	0	13%	4%	10%
<u>R-7 "Don't Know/Vague</u>	40%	36%	13%	3%	14%
<u>R-8 Meaning/ Understanding</u>	0	0	4%	4%	5%

Graph 4: Comparing the Opinions of Boys and Girls

Question 4: How good are you at reading your reader? What makes you say this?

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
R-1		
A. Decoding	29%	32%
B. Fluency	13%	4%
R-2 Comparison with Others	3%	2%
R-3 Opinion of Others	13%	0
R-4 Regularity	11%	24%
R-5 Non-read/ criteria	2%	6%
R-6 Interest	5%	6%
R-7 Vague/Don't know	21%	24%
R-8 Meaning	3%	2%

Graph 5: A Grade Level Comparison

Question 5: What do you have to do to get a good grade in reading?

	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>	<u>5th</u>
<u>Decoding</u>					
A	29%	11%	21%	18%	16%
B	0	11%	4%	12%	0

Non-reading Criteria

A (effort)	5%	15%	0	3%	4%
B (behavior)	24%	22%	18%	9%	24%
C (success on related materials)	5%	7%	21%	27%	40%

Gaining Meaning

R-3	0	0	4%	12%	8%
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Regular Reading

R-4	19%	22%	25%	18%	4%
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(Don't know)

R-5	19%	11%	7%	3%	4%
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Graph 6: Comparing the Opinions of Boys and Girls

Question 5: What do you have to do to get a good grade in reading?

	Female	Male
R-1/A (Decoding)	21%	15%
R-1/B (Fluency)	8%	4%
R-2/A (Effort)	5%	6%
R-2/B (Behavior)	18%	20%
R-2/C (Success/Materials)	23%	18%
R-3 (Meaning)	6%	4%
R-4 (Regular Reading)	15%	22%
R-5 (Don't know)	5%	13%

Graph 7: A Grade Level Comparison

Question 6: Who is the best reader in your class? How do you know?

	<u>First</u>	<u>Second</u>	<u>Third</u>	<u>Fourth</u>	<u>Fifth</u>
R-1					
<u>A. Decoding</u>	39%	26%	14%	13%	21%
<u>B. Fluency</u>	6%	13%	18%	27%	11%
<u>R-2 Comparison with others</u>	11%	22%	0	7%	11%
<u>R-3 Opinion of others</u>	0	0	9%	3%	16%
<u>R-4 Regularity</u>	6%	17%	27%	27%	26%
<u>R-5 Non-Read/ Criteria</u>	0	4%	14%	7%	5%
<u>R-6 Interest</u>	0	0	0	3%	0
<u>R-7 "Don't Know/Vague"</u>	39%	17%	18%	13%	11%
<u>R-8 Meaning/ Understanding</u>	0	0	0	0	0

Graph 8: Comparing the Opinions of Boys and Girls

Question 6: Who is the best reader in your class? How do you know?

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
R-1		
A. Decoding	22%	22%
B. Fluency	22%	14%
R-2 Comparison with others	8%	11%
R-3 Opinion of Others	4%	8%
R-4 Regularity	22%	25%
R-5 Non-read/ criteria	4%	3%
R-6 Interest	2%	0
R-7 Vague/Don't know)	18%	17%
R-8 Meaning	0	0