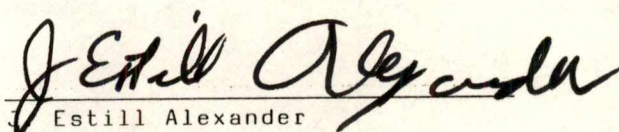


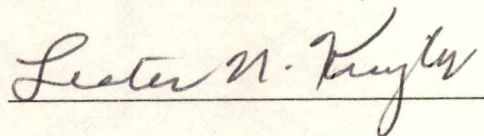
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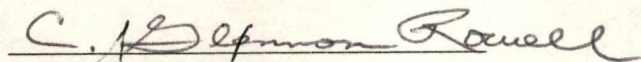
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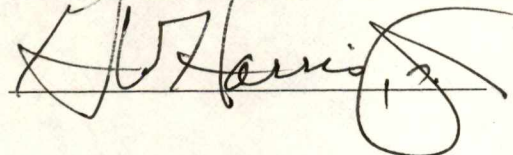


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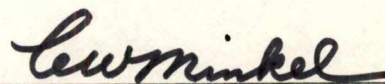
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CLASSROOM TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF A STATEWIDE WHOLE-LANGUAGE
APPROACH TO LITERACY

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Education
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Teresa D. Willett

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This work is dedicated to my children, Kerry, Hugh, David and Patricia who have encouraged me throughout my academic pursuits.

ABSTRACT

With the launching of the California Reading Initiative in 1986, California was one of the first states to enact statewide curriculum reform in response to recommendations outlined in the report by the Commission on Reading (1985). The California Reading Initiative; based on whole-language philosophy, is a holistic and integrated approach to the language arts, using a literature-based curriculum and stressing the reading/writing connection.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of a statewide whole-language approach to literacy as perceived by reading/language arts teachers from one large school district in California. Teachers from ten elementary and four middle schools were selected for the sample. A Likert-type questionnaire was used to gather data for this study.

The research questions dealt with teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of the California Reading Initiative in providing for:

- (1) A balanced literature program that provided students opportunities to use higher-order thinking skills while exploring literature from all genre.
- (2) A literature program that motivated students to read independently.
- (3) A literature program that met the needs of all students in our culturally diverse society.
- (4) A developmental writing program that attended to all stages of the writing process and extended across all curricular areas.
- (5) Assessment programs that met the needs of a whole-language curriculum.

An analysis of the responses provided the following findings:

- (1) Teachers were positive about the effectiveness of the California Reading Initiative in providing for a balanced literature program that met the needs of all their students and motivated them to read freely.
- (2) Teachers felt that their developmental writing program was successful in attending to all stages of the writing process while extending across all curricular areas.
- (3) Teachers voiced concern about the extent of classroom time devoted to assessment and in complying with formal state assessment requirements.

An analysis of the findings produced the following major conclusions:

- (1) Teachers see a literature-based reading curriculum as a positive alternative to the skills-based curriculum.
- (2) The reading/writing connection is a positive component of the California Language Arts Framework.
- (3) Assessment and evaluation in their whole-language classrooms is an area of concern to these teachers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION.....	i
Statement of the Problem.....	4
The Purpose.....	9
Significance of the Study.....	10
Assumptions.....	15
Design and Procedure.....	15
Analysis of the Data.....	16
Limitations and Delimitations.....	17
Definitions.....	17
Organization of the Study.....	19
II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	20
Introduction.....	20
California Reading Initiative.....	21
Whole Language: What Research Reveals.....	25
Summary.....	50
III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES.....	54
Introduction.....	54
Source of Data.....	54
Techniques for Data Collection.....	55
Techniques for Data Analysis.....	66
Summary.....	68
IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA.....	69
Introduction.....	69
Research Question 1.....	71
Research Question 2.....	72
Research Question 3.....	78
Research Question 4.....	79
Research Question 5.....	83
V. SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	90
Introduction.....	90
The Purpose.....	91
Procedures.....	92
Findings.....	93
Conclusions.....	97
Discussion.....	98
Recommendations for Future Research.....	100

CHAPTER	PAGE
LIST OF REFERENCES.....	101
APPENDIXES.....	113
A. Questionnaire.....	114
B. Pilot Study Data and Reliability.....	120
C. Main Study Data and Reliability.....	125
D. Correspondence with San Jose Unified School District.....	137
VITA.....	142

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
1.	Frequency Percentages of Positive and Negative Attitudes Among 69 California Language Arts Teachers in Response to Questions on Research Problem 1: How do Teachers Perceive the Effectiveness of the California Reading Initiative (CRI) in Motivating Their Students to Engage in Independent Reading (Outside of Classroom Assignments)?.....	73
2.	Frequency Percentages of Positive and Negative Attitudes Among 69 California Language Arts Teachers in Response to Questions on Research Problem 2: How Effective Has the California Research Initiative (CRI) Been in Providing a Balanced Classroom Literature Program that Focuses on Higher-Order Thinking Skills?.....	76
3.	Frequency Percentages of Positive and Negative Attitudes Among 69 California Language Arts Teachers in Response to Questions on Research Problem 3: How Effective has the Whole-Language Approach of the <u>English Language Arts Framework</u> Been in Providing for a School-wide Developmental Writing Program Across the Curriculum?.....	80
4.	Frequency Percentages of Positive and Negative Attitudes Among 69 California Language Arts Teachers in Response to Questions on Research Problem 4: How Does a Whole-Language School Environment Meet the Needs of All Students (Average, Gifted, Minority, etc.)?.....	84
5.	Frequency Percentages of Positive and Negative Attitudes Among 69 California Language Arts Teachers in Response to Questions on Research Problem 5: What is the Role and Form of Evaluation in a Whole-Language Curriculum?.....	88
6.	Pilot Study Data.....	121
7.	Demographic Information on Eight Language Arts Teachers Responding to 30 Questions on the Pilot Study Questionnaire.....	123
8.	Calculating the Split-half Reliability of Each Respondent With Pilot Study Data from Eight Respondents (Gay, 1976, p. 94; Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 284).....	124

TABLE		PAGE
9.	Main Study Data.....	126
10.	Demographic Characteristics of Main Study Respondents...	132
11.	Calculating the Split-half Reliability of Each Respondent With Main Study Data from 69 Respondents (Gay, 1976, p. 94; Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 284).....	134

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE		PAGE
1.	Frequency Percentage as a Function of Likert Number Among 69 California Language Arts Teachers Responding to Questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 (Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4) on Research Problem 1: How do Teachers Perceive the Effectiveness of the <u>California Reading Initiative</u> (CRI) in Motivating Their Students to Engage in Independent Reading (Outside of Classroom Assignments)?.....	74
2.	Frequency Percentage as a Function of Likert Number Among 69 California Language Arts Teachers Responding to Questions 5 through 11 (Q5 through Q11) on Research Problem 2: How Effective has the <u>California Reading Initiative</u> (CRI) Been in Providing a Balanced Classroom Literature Program that Focuses on Higher-Order Thinking Skills?.....	77
3.	Frequency Percentage as a Function of Likert Number Among 69 California Language Arts Teachers Responding to Questions 12 through 17 (Q12 through Q17) on Research Problem 3: How Effective has the Whole-Language Approach of the <u>English Language Arts Framework</u> Been in Providing for a School-wide Developmental Writing Program Across the Curriculum?.....	81
4.	Frequency Percentage as a Function of Likert Number Among 69 California Language Arts Teachers Responding to Questions 18 through 23 (Q18 through Q23) on Research Problem 4: How Does a Whole-Language School Environment Meet the Needs of All Students (Average, Gifted, Minority, etc.)?.....	85
5.	Frequency Percentage as a Function of Likert Number Among 69 California Language Arts Teachers Responding to Questions 24 through 30 (Q24 through Q30) on Research Problem 5: What is the Role and Form of Evaluation in a Whole-Language Curriculum?.....	89

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The problem of illiteracy among adult Americans has been the focus of growing concern among leaders in industry, business, government, the armed forces and education. In his book Illiterate America, Jonathan Kozol claims that 60 million adult Americans are functionally illiterate. "Functionally illiterate" may be defined as "lacking specific skills in reading and writing to function effectively in our technological society." A recent report claims that of 159 members of the United Nations, the U.S. ranks 49th in its level of literacy. This incidence of illiteracy in the U.S. is rising with an estimated 2.3 million adults annually joining the ranks of functionally illiterate (Larrick, 1987). Although conflicting reports over these estimates have evolved, depending on the data used, nevertheless government and the business sector have concluded that adult illiteracy is a costly problem to our nation (Stedman, 1987).

At a joint House/Senate Education Subcommittee in 1985 on the topic of adult illiteracy, William Woodside, chief executive officer of American Can Company reported to the committee that corporations are spending hundreds of millions of dollars annually for in-house basic skills and literacy programs (Micklos, 1985). Evidently the job literacy measures have detected substantial mismatches between many workers' literacy skills and the reading demands of their jobs. The standard of literacy required by modern society has been rising throughout the developed world, but American literacy rates have not risen to meet this standard. The rapid advancement in technological

research requires a sophisticated population with a high level of literacy. Much of Japan's industrial efficiency has been credited to its almost universally high levels of literacy. However, in the United States even among the two-thirds of our citizens who are literate, the average level of literacy is too low and should be raised (Hirsch, 1987). The Wall Street Journal offered a business perspective on another aspect of functional literacy--the cost of correcting workers' literacy mistakes. William Barnes, vice president of finance of JLG Industries, claimed that poorly educated workers are the main factor slowing that company's growth--the number one problem. The same report covered a claim by Mutual Insurance Co. of New York that 70% of the insurance firm's correspondence must be corrected and retyped at least once (Hymovitz, 1981).

Safety concerns over workers not being able to read warnings and follow written directions have been issues in court cases and have led to several firings at Westinghouse Electric Corporation's defense-gear plant in Sunnyvale, California. U.S. auto industries are replacing unskilled workers with robots following the Japanese lead (Mikulecky, 1982). The U.S. military sees the illiteracy crisis as posing a direct threat to the U.S.'s national security. According to one report 30% of naval recruits were recently termed a danger to themselves and to costly naval equipment because of inability to read and understand directions (Kozol, 1985). Six years ago the National Commission on Excellence in Education warned that the present literacy crisis and collapse in standards at the secondary and college levels of our educational institutions put "our nation at risk" (Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

Recognizing the problem of adult illiteracy has resulted in a concentrated effort by the federal government and business sectors to address the problem nationally through such organizations as Adult Basic Education programs, although to date these programs only reach a small percentage of adult illiterates (Micklos, 1985).

Having documented the fact that illiteracy has gained prominent recognition as a national problem, focus now needs to be directed to another aspect of literacy--aliteracy, a term describing people who can read but choose not to--a virtually unrecognized but insidious problem in this country. In fact some noted authorities claim that illiteracy is an outgrowth of aliteracy. Many people have learned the skill of reading and writing but have used them so seldomly that they have never become proficient readers. These people eventually become poor readers and consequently become classified with the functionally illiterate in today's advanced technological society (Wilson, R. M., 1981). During a televised five-hour conference on public television by The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research in 1985, participants at the conference (noted researchers in the field of reading, editors of newspapers and magazines, etc.) claimed that aliteracy had actually replaced illiteracy as a threat to our society. According to these noted authorities "illiteracy tended to be a problem predominantly of the lower class, but aliteracy affects all socioeconomic and educational levels" (Decker, 1986, p. 55). William Baroody, junior president of American Enterprise Institute, sees aliteracy as a reflection of a change in cultural values and loss of skills both of which threaten our democratic society by creating a two-tiered society--"the knowledgeable elite and the masses".

Research of the literature illustrating current reading habits among adult Americans would appear to justify Baroody's concern (Mikulecky, 1982; Hansen, H. S., 1969; Sharon, 1973; Thimmesch, 1982; Wilson, R. M., 1984).

Although to date the literature has been inundated with articles, reports, studies and surveys addressing the matter of adult literacy in the U.S., not so much has been said about juvenile literacy. However, if adult literacy is not to remain a permanent problem, we need to take an aggressive approach to preventing the problem at the elementary and high school level. In short, solutions to the problem of adult illiteracy must be tied to programs for the improvement of literacy among our youth which brings us to the problem of this study. Becoming A Nation of Readers, the report of the Commission on Reading (1985) addressed the problems of illiteracy and aliteracy among our youth and precipitated a nationwide awareness that a problem did exist causing educators to re-evaluate our approach to literacy at the grass roots level--among our nation's school children.

Statement of the Problem

American students are lacking the necessary literacy skills to compete in a sophisticated technological world and attain its leadership role among industrial nations in this nuclear age. The 1985 report of the Commission of Reading cites much evidence to this effect (Anderson, Osborn & Tierney, 1985). A survey of reading performance in fifteen countries showed that American students scored consistently at or below the international average

(Thorndike, 1973). For a country that prides itself as a super power among developed nations, this does not bode well for future generations responsible for maintaining our role as a world leader in this technological age.

A more recent report comparing reading achievement in Japan, Taiwan and the United States showed a much wider spread of achievement among American students throughout the United States than in the other two countries in this study (Stevenson, 1984). SAT scores for prospective college freshmen have declined during the past 20 years (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson, 1985). Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress reports a wide discrepancy between reading comprehension scores of nine year olds and 13-17 year olds, with the scores of nine year olds being higher than the scores of the 13-17 year olds. Conclusions drawn by educators for this discrepancy higher order thinking processes placed on students in the 13-17 year age groups in test items requiring inferential and interpretive comprehension (Pearson, 1985). Since historical research shows a steady increase in the standards of literacy required to meet changing social needs and conditions, immediate action is needed to improve the standards of literacy among our youth. Marsha Levine, speaking at the Conference of the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, cites her own views on this dilemma when she notes that teaching someone to read is imparting a skill, while encouraging and stimulating the pleasure of reading and teaching the importance of reading imparts a value. Evidently we are teaching the skill, but are not teaching the value and so the problem of juvenile aliteracy.

Many changes in our society have been credited to the phenomenon of aliteracy among our youth. Recent reports indicate that American children

(ages 6-11) spend an average of 23 hours and 19 minutes per week in front of the television set (1987 Nielson Report). Television has a negative influence on reading comprehension, especially for disadvantaged children. Since a child learns to read by reading (Goodman, K. S., 1975), exposure to the printed word must occur often in order to reinforce reading and writing vocabulary (Wilson, M., 1981). Research has documented the vital connection between vocabulary development and overall reading comprehension (Pearson & Johnson, 1978; Pearson, 1985); however, television programming tends to have a stagnating effect on reading vocabulary growth (Liebermann, 1983).

The changing structure of the American family has been a major contributing factor to juvenile illiteracy. Hanson, H. S. (1969) in a study of variables related to success in learning to read, found parental modeling of reading with their children to be more significant in reading success than any other factor. In this nuclear age society with both parents employed outside the home, parents are not as accessible to model or monitor good recreational reading habits. Subsequently a generation of adults who don't engage in reading themselves has developed, creating children who don't read and don't choose to read.

Prominent reading theorists have indicated that a major contributing factor to illiteracy/aliteracy among our youth is the heavy emphasis on the fragmented approach to reading and language arts, with almost total neglect of writing in the curriculum (Meckel, 1963; Stotsky, 1983; Chomsky, 1971; Wilson, M., 1981). Writing, the second major component of literacy has become an almost extinct art among our society, especially

our youth. State legislators in an effort to providing a solution to declining test scores have imposed a measure of accountability on their schools in the form of skills proficiency tests (Pliska & Sterns, 1985). Out of this massive effort at reform evolved the skills-based reading curriculum and the SMS--skills management system (Johnson & Pearson, 1975). Thirty-nine states require tests to prove that students are mastering minimum skills before they are promoted to the next grade. However, reading instruction based on producing students who can pass minimum skills tests does not guarantee a literate individual at the end of 12 years of schooling and does very little to encourage children's love of reading (Larrick, 1987; Wilson, M., 1981; Hirsch, 1987; Kozol, 1985). What it does produce is a fragmented skill-based curriculum that concentrates on mastering isolated reading skills in a sequential manner through vocabulary controlled readers, ditto sheets, skills drills and workbooks, leaving little time for actual reading (Manning, 1985; Smith, 1986; Goodman, 1986; Anderson, Osborn & Tierney, 1984; Cloud-Silva & Sadoski, 1987; Shannon, 1983; Tulley & Farr, 1985; Squire, 1983; Chall, 1983).

Educators are finally beginning to realize what researchers and reading theorists have known for the past 20 years: reading is a psycholinguistic process (Goodman, 1967; Smith, 1986; Hirsch, 1987)--a truly interactive process more conducive to a whole-language based approach than a fragmented skill-based approach currently in use in most American classrooms to comply with State-mandated basic skills testing.

Whole language is a philosophy based on the belief that young children best learn to read and write with an integrated meaning-oriented curriculum in a child-

centered environment. The child is seen as the focus of his own learning while the teacher's role is that of a mediator facilitating the learner's transaction with the world.

The publication of Becoming A Nation of Readers by the Commission on Reading (Anderson, Osborn & Tierney, 1985) sought to stimulate public awareness of the problem of illiteracy/aliteracy among our school children. Eliciting response from educators for statewide curriculum reform, the Commission illustrated a blueprint of the necessary reforms needed to creating a literate environment both in the classroom, the home and in the community as a whole. Individual classroom teachers across the country have incorporated some of the recommendations into their classrooms. Textbook companies have made an effort to comply with some of the recommendations outlined in the Commission's report (Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1989; Manning, 1989). However, as Jonathan Kozol notes in Illiterate America, it will take more than isolated reform efforts to transform the American public into a "nation of readers". A national campaign in the form of statewide mandated initiatives is needed to address the recommendations outlined in the Commission's report. This would involve curriculum reform from traditional skills-based reading programs to an integrated whole-language program with "writing" as the other main component of literacy, given its rightful priority. Motivating children to read by exposing them to fine literature and providing ample time for independent reading may be the main solution to aliteracy. A more comprehensive approach to assessment and evaluation of reading and writing fluency should replace standardized testing. A concentrated effort for parental and community involvement

should be an integral part of any reform (Anderson, Osborn & Tierney, 1985; Goodman, 1983).

California was the first state to embark on this statewide comprehensive reform effort. In 1986, Bill Honig, State Superintendent of Public Instruction in California, launched the California Reading Initiative to address the concerns of illiteracy/aliteracy in our nation and our schools' failure to "turn children on to books".

The investigator in this study researched the impact of one state's comprehensive reform efforts, four years after its declaration. Since it has been documented in research that the single most important variable in any educational reform effort is "the teacher" (Anderson, Evertson & Brophy, 1979; Duffy, 1987; Artley, 1969), the study will be directed at California teachers' perception of the impact of the California Reading Initiative in their classrooms and on their students three years after its inception.

The Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of a statewide whole-language based approach to literacy as perceived by classroom Reading/Language Arts teachers as it relates to teachers' attitudes and student performance in their classrooms. The central questions of this study were:

1. How do teachers perceive the effectiveness of the California Reading Initiative in motivating their students to engage in independent reading (Outside of classroom assignments)?

2. How effective has the California Reading Initiative been in providing for a balanced classroom literature program that focuses on higher order thinking skills?

3. How effective has the whole language approach of the English Language Arts Framework been in providing for a schoolwide developmental writing program across the curriculum?

4. How does a whole language school environment meet the needs of all students (average, gifted, minority, etc.)?

5. What is the role and form of evaluation in a whole language curriculum?

Significance of the Study

Educators nationwide are looking towards California's Reading Initiative program as a possible move to improve students' reading ability and motivation to read (Larrick, 1987; Cullinan, 1986). The program initiated by State Superintendent Bill Honig, came in response to the publication of the Commission on Reading in 1985 and to Honig's concern for the growing rate of illiteracy/aliteracy in the nation. This concern is well documented in the research literature (Larrick, 1987; Hirsch, 1987; Kozol, 1985; Stedman, 1987; Micklos, 1985; Mikulecky, 1982).

Central to this reform effort is the creation of the English-Language Arts Framework which mandates the form and direction of the reading and language arts instruction, and provides a rationale for the integrated

teaching of the language processes through the reading of quality literature. In effect, California has taken the initiative to incorporate the research of psycholinguists like Goodman, Smith and Rumelhart who have long advocated a switch from the skill-based approach to reading--a bottoms-up process, to a top-down interactive process. Rumelhart (1985) and Tierney and Pearson (1983) have advocated that teachers incorporate a child's schema or prior knowledge into comprehension instruction. On translation into classroom practice, teachers are encouraged to engage students in oral discussion of a literature selection prior, during and after the reading, thereby extending students' overall language competency. Most of these theories, however, have not found their way into the average classroom where skill-based instruction predominates.

The skill-based theories of the 70's still mandate the direction of reading and language arts instruction in the average American classroom. This practice trivializes reading into fragmented segments that kill children's enjoyment of reading and produces a fresh crop of aliterates every year (Larrick, 1987). Many teachers across the country have recognized this problem and have integrated literature into their reading programs with moderate success. However, the politics of textbook adoption committees and legislated skill-management systems of accountability have impeded any wholesale and effective reform efforts by educators at the state or local level. California's literature-based holistic approach to reading instruction is a model for other states to study, and compare to the traditional skills model.

Writing, the other basic component of literacy has been neglected. The California English-Language Arts Framework recognizes the critical role of writing in any literacy campaign and has incorporated this basic component into its reform. California has been a pioneer in revitalizing writing in the language arts curriculum. The Bay Area Writing Project, developed by the University of California, Berkeley in 1974, has been expanded in the last few years as part of Honig's massive reform effort. It is currently recognized as the best large scale effort to improve composition instruction in the whole country (Scriven, 1986).

Even though whole-language proponents like Goodman (1986) and Smith (1986) as well as prominent researchers like Chomsky (1971), Graves (1983), Wilson, M. (1981) and Stotsky (1983), have rationalized and advocated the integration of reading/writing in the curriculum, very little research has filtered down into the classroom. These components of the language arts are still given separate instructional periods in most school systems across the country. The average classroom teacher feels ill prepared to put the theoretical concepts of the research into practice on their own with little support from curriculum planners. The English-Language Arts Framework calls for continuous inservice training to assist classroom teachers in implementing a whole-language program as part of the major reform.

Standardized testing in reading has been a controversial issue and the subject of various reports and debates as to its purpose. The Report of the Commission on Reading has criticized the current assessment practices and recommends that a more comprehensive assessment of reading and writing is needed. Noting the total reliance by school systems on standardized

tests, the Commission maintains that such tests fail to provide a deep assessment of reading comprehension. Supplementary methods of assessment recommended by the Commission included: observation of reading fluency and extent of student independent reading and writing; and the assessment of students' ability for critical analysis of lengthy passages (Anderson, Osborn & Tierney, 1985). However, schools across the country still adhere to the practice of standardized testing to comply with mandated skills management systems (SMS) that legislators have enacted.

California, as part of its reform efforts, has broken with the traditional standardized testing policy and mandated a comprehensive assessment program on the local, district and state levels incorporating both informal and formal assessment procedures. Included in this assessment reform are provisions for assessing students' competency in writing, both formal and informal--a neglected area of assessment in the traditional skills management system. California teachers' perceptions of the role and form of whole language assessment in their classroom is a pertinent issue in this study. Educators and especially classroom teachers, will be interested to note how teachers perceive the feasibility and reliability of this alternative to the current standardized testing and skills management system.

Central to any educational reform effort is a curriculum that caters to the individual needs of all students. A major concern to all educators across the United States is the changing ethnic and cultural shape of the American public school population brought about, primarily but not entirely, by the significant influx of immigrants during the past 17 years, to join our indigenous Blacks, Anglos, Latinos, Asians and Native Americans to

form one of the most ethnically diverse societies in history (Olson, 1988). "One of the most common access issues facing minority students who may have a limited command of English is the problem of securing equal educational opportunity" (First, 1988). According to recent estimates the number of students with limited proficiency in English who are enrolled in U.S. public schools range from 3.5 million to 5.5 million (First, 1988).

Faced with a curriculum that in the traditional school is designed primarily for English-speaking students, both in language and culturally, the minority student's chance of succeeding in school is tragically undercut.

The California Reading Initiative has focused prominently on providing a language arts framework that addresses these issues. High quality multicultural literature teaches students to respect and understand diversity. Minority students can experience their native culture and heritage with pride through inclusion of literary selections from racial and ethnic minority groups. The literature programs provide for all students to extend their literacy awareness beyond the core program. Writing skills for all students form an integral component of the English Language Arts Framework with particular emphasis on extending these skills beyond the classroom. How California teachers perceive the effectiveness of the California Reading Initiative in meeting the needs of all students is a pertinent feature of this study.

With the current push for whole-language reform in this country as a proposed solution for addressing our nation's growing illiteracy/aliteracy rate, this study will address questions and concerns that classroom teachers

and other interested educators may have regarding the impact of a statewide mandated reform effort on students and teachers four years after its inception.

Assumptions

This study was based on the following assumptions:

1. Teachers, based upon their knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs at the time of the survey, responded truthfully to the items on the questionnaire.
2. An instrument in the form of a structured questionnaire can be developed which will provide the data necessary for this study.
3. Responses provided through the questionnaire instrument were representative of California teachers from the San Jose Unified School District (Grades K-8).

Design and Procedure

A descriptive approach using a two-part questionnaire was used for this study. Language arts teachers from a large school district in California (San Jose Unified School District), were selected to form a cluster sample. The participating schools represented a diverse range of demographic features relating to the ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic status of the student population of California's public schools. Twenty-five elementary schools and seven middle schools comprised this school district. Ten elementary and four middle schools were selected based on the fact that their student

composition was similar in its diversity. Ninety-seven reading/language arts teachers from the targeted schools were chosen as the cluster sample in this survey. Sixty-nine teachers responded to the survey.

A two-part structured questionnaire was used for this study. The first section of the questionnaire concerned demographic characteristics of the respondents. The second section of the questionnaire was patterned after one of the basic types of attitude scales--a Likert scale to gather teacher's perceptions of the effectiveness of a statewide whole-language-based approach to literacy four years after the declaration of the California Reading Initiative. The questionnaire was pilot-tested and the subjects were encouraged to comment on the content and design of the questionnaire, and to offer suggestions for modification, if any. Responses from the pilot study were analyzed for frequency percentages, and individual questions tested for internal consistency and reliability using the "split-half" technique. Feedback from the pilot study was used to make minor changes in the questionnaire, although no questions were added or deleted. The revised questionnaire was used to interview teachers in the San Jose School District in California.

Analysis of the Data

Responses from the questionnaires were analyzed and tabulated for frequency and percentages. Responses were also analyzed according to the demographic variables (i.e., age of teacher, total years of full time teaching, grades taught, and ethnic make-up of students in class).

Limitations and Delimitations

In view of the nature and scope of this study--time factor and cost involved, this study was limited to the perceptions of classroom teachers from one large school district in California (San Jose Unified School District). As reported by California educational officials, this school district is demographically representative of the diverse cultural and socioeconomic status of the student population in California's public schools. The study was delimited to reading and language arts teachers in K-8.

Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were used.

1. Aliteracy: Refers to people who can read but choose not to.
2. Assessment: "The gathering of data usually quantitative in nature and based on testing, that provides information for evaluation to take place." (Harp, 1991, p. 17).
3. Cluster Sampling: Using groups of population elements with particular characteristics as sampling units as opposed to using individuals with random characteristics.

4. **Functionally Illiterate:** Those lacking specific skills in reading and writing to function effectively in our technological society.
5. **Objective Evaluation:** The measurement of student knowledge or performance usually accomplished by quantifying some aspect of student output through testing and separating students into categories based on scores--common to skill-based curriculums.
6. **Subjective Evaluation:** "The process where a teacher collects, analyzes, and interprets data to determine the extent to which students are achieving instructional objectives." (Harp, 1991, p. 17). Subjective evaluation is common to whole-language curriculums.
7. **Skill-Based Curriculum:** A reading curriculum that concentrates on the mastery of isolated sequential skills through vocabulary-controlled readers and workbooks, which are generally taught separately from other language arts.
8. **Whole-Language-Based Programs:** Programs that integrate all of the language arts and specifically promote the reading/writing connection. They are based on the philosophical framework which emphasizes

a child-centered, holistic learning environment where the child takes ownership over his own learning.

Organization of the Study

In this chapter the following have been presented: the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the specific questions to be answered, the significance of the study, the assumptions, the research design and analysis procedures, the limitations and delimitations of the study, and the definitions of terms to be used. Chapter II includes a review of the related literature which provides the basis for this study. The data collection methodology and analysis procedures are described in Chapter III. Chapter IV includes the presentation and analysis of data. Chapter V contains a summary of the study, the findings and conclusions of the research, discussion and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
Introduction

As stated in Chapter I illiteracy is a growing problem among adult Americans with 2.3 million adults annually joining the ranks of functionally illiterate. This rapid growth in adult illiteracy has been the focus of concern among many segments of our society--industry, business, government, the armed forces and education, who fear major problems in securing skilled workers with a high level of literacy needed to keep pace with the rapid technological advancement of this nuclear age (Larrick, 1987; Stedman, 1987). Another aspect of literacy--aliteracy, a term describing people who can read but choose not to, is fast becoming an insidious problem in this country. Some authorities claim that illiteracy is an outgrowth of aliteracy brought about by a segment of the population who having learned the skills of reading and writing have used them so seldomly that they have never succeeded in becoming proficient readers or writers (Wilson, R. M., 1981).

While there have been several reports, articles and surveys addressing the problems of adult literacy, little attention has been directed toward juvenile literacy. However, if adult literacy is not to remain a permanent problem in our society, measures need to be taken at the elementary and high school level to prevent this problem arising.

The Commission on Reading published a report in 1985 (Becoming a Nation of Readers) addressing the problems of illiteracy and aliteracy

among our youth. In its report, the Commission called on educators to enact major curriculum reform in their schools to insure a population who read with a high level of skill.

California was one of the first states to address this problem on a statewide basis with an initiative for comprehensive curriculum reform. In 1986, Bill Honig, State Superintendent of Public Instruction in California launched the California Reading Initiative to address the concerns of illiteracy/aliteracy in our nation, and to insure that the recommendations for reform outlined in the Commission's report were incorporated into classroom practice (Cullinan, 1986).

California Reading Initiative

The California Reading Initiative, a major new thrust of one state's reform effort was developed to address serious concerns about students' reading abilities and practices. Since California was one of the first states to mandate this revolutionary reform effort for combating illiteracy/aliteracy among our youth, limited research is available in the literature as to the effectiveness of such a mandate. Mary Ellen Vogt, Vice President of the California Reading Association and a teacher at California State University, describes the California Reading Initiative as a master plan that advocates the use of quality literature as the foundation of the K-12 reading program to improve students' reading ability and reading habits. An important part of the strategy was to improve reading instruction and to provide students access to good books. Superintendent

Bill Honig subsequently appointed a committee to develop a list of books that could be recommended to California's three million students in kindergarten through eighth grades. The book list, intended as a guide to school districts, was divided into three parts. The first list consisted of core literature works that have compelling, intellectual, social and/or moral content. Teachers were encouraged to give these readings intensive consideration and use them to stimulate student writing and discussion. The second list, extended literature, included works that have emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic substance. These works were designed to be assigned to individual students or small groups of students to read for homework or as supplementary reading. The third group, recreational/motivational literature, included works of special appeal to individual readers. The list was further categorized according to genre, such as poetry, plays, nonfiction, biographies, and foreign language books. An important consideration in compiling this list was an emphasis on including literature dealing with specific cultures, such as Black, Chinese, Hispanic, and American Indian. Each literary work also included a suggested grade span (California State Department of Education, 1986).

An integral component of the California Reading Initiative is the English Language Arts Framework which mandates the form and direction of the reading and language arts instruction in grades K-12. The framework has incorporated the theory and research of such eminent theorists as Smith, Goodman, and Rumelhart, psycholinguists who have long advocated a whole-language approach to reading and the language arts (Smith, 1988; Goodman, 1989a; and Rumelhart, 1985). According to Ms. Vogt, writing

in Reading To-day (December 1988/January 1989), the California English Language Arts Framework incorporates and integrates all of the language processes--speaking, writing, listening and reading, through the process of reading quality literature. At the middle school and secondary levels additional integration of the language processes is a practice as students continue to read quality literature while learning academic content. The History/Social Science framework complements the English Language Arts Framework as it directs teachers to incorporate the teaching of the language arts in the social science classroom (Vogt, 1988; Kane, 1988). This comprehensive plan includes components such as curriculum development, teacher training, and the development of accurate assessment tools (Vogt, 1988).

In their article "Translating the Vision Into Reality in California Schools", Janet Kierstead and Sally Mentor describe how educators in the State of California have come together to guide reform efforts in this state. As in all educational reform efforts, the success or failure of such ventures is witnessed in the classroom. The local level then becomes a focal point in any successful reform efforts. How enthusiastically teachers, staff developers and administrators embrace the reform effort is of critical importance to its success. A new approach to curriculum planning and staff development was initiated. The State Department enlisted the help of local leaders in promoting this "vision" or reform through the California School Leadership Academy's three year, 45 day (15 days per year) training for school administrators. As a result, according to Kierstead and Mentor "a vision of excellence" for California

schools has emerged in which all students share in this reform through a common core curriculum that provides a sound academic background and promotes literacy in the various disciplines. These disciplines are integrated so that students may, for example, study literature, history/social science, and language arts together (Kierstead & Mentor, 1988).

California, as part of its reform efforts, has broken with the traditional standardized testing policy and mandated a comprehensive assessment program on the local, district and state levels incorporating both informal and formal assessment procedures. Included in this assessment reforms are provisions for assessing students' competency in writing, both formal and informal--a neglected area of assessment in the traditional skills management system (California Assessment Program, 1987).

Central to any educational reform effort is a curriculum that caters to the individual needs of all students. The California Reading Initiative has focused prominently on providing a language arts framework that addresses these issues. High quality multicultural literature teaches students to respect and understand diversity. Minority students can experience their native culture and heritage with pride through inclusion of literary selections from racial and ethnic minority groups. The literature program provides for all students to extend their literary awareness beyond the core program (California State Dept. of Ed., 1986).

A basic component of the English Language Arts Framework is the California Writing Project which evolved from the Bay Area Writing Project begun in 1974 by the University of California, Berkeley, California

has been a pioneer in promoting writing across the curriculum, and according to Michael Scriven, "the Bay Area Writing Project appears to be the best large scale effort to improve composition instruction now in operation in this country" (Michael Scriven, 1986, p. 55). Writing skills for all students form an integral part of the English Language Arts Framework. Particular emphasis is placed on extending these skills beyond the classroom as an important component of the literacy drive currently in progress throughout the state.

This statewide reform effort on the part of the State of California provided new impetus to the whole language movement currently in vogue throughout this nation and many other English speaking nations in the world. How California teachers in one large school district perceive the effectiveness of this statewide whole language approach to literacy in their classrooms is the focus of this study.

Whole Language: What Research Reveals

Research of the literature on whole language reveals a broad spectrum of beliefs and approaches to the whole-language movement. The research covers the following issues.

What is Whole Language: Defining and Describing Whole Language

Whole Language, according to renowned reading theorists like Goodman, Smith and Weaver is a holistic approach to reading and writing instruction that has evolved to different degrees throughout our nation and other

English-speaking nations. It is based on the premise that young children best learn to read and write in the same way they learned to speak from whole to part--in direct opposition to a skills-based curriculum currently used in a great majority of elementary classrooms (McCallum, 1988). The whole-language movement supports the theories of early theorists like Dewey and Piaget, who advocate a child-centered learning environment for our schools where the child is the focus of his own learning and the teacher's role is that of a facilitator (Reutzel & Hollingsworth, 1988).

Unlike skill-based instruction that emphasizes the mastery of the language arts as isolated components allotted separate instructional periods during the day, whole language maintains that reading, writing and oral language not be considered separate components of the curriculum or merely ends in themselves, but rather be integrated and learned simultaneously through engaging the child in actual reading and writing (Weaver, 1990). In a whole-language curriculum the language processes of reading, writing, speaking and listening are integrated into whole-language instruction with particular emphasis on meaning, while direct word analysis skills are taught as needed in the learning process (Woronowicz and McInnis, 1991).

Assessment of student learning in whole-language classrooms focuses on students' overall growth and development in the language processes. According to Harp, "assessment of a child's progress should be process oriented rather than product oriented" (Harp, 1988, p. 160). Students

are not compared to a specific standard or to other students in a norm based on their mastery of isolated reading and language arts skills.

Whole-language instruction uses a number of strategies; a literature-based curriculum in lieu of basal texts, collaborative reading and writing, invented spelling and opportunities for sharing (Woronowicz & McInnis, 1991).

Whole Language: Roots and Foundations of the Whole Language Movement

Whole language is a dynamic evolving grass-roots movement solidly rooted in scientific research and theory. Its holistic approach to literacy integrates the psychological research of Piaget, Vygotsky and schema theorists, Bransford and Ausubel with the social, functional-linguistic research of Michael Halliday (Goodman, Y., 1989; Bransford, 1985; Ausubel, 1960).

John Dewey, a major twentieth century philosopher saw the importance of a child-centered integrated curriculum. He was concerned that all students participate in their own learning, and that reading and writing, as well as the oral use of language be taught in a related way--"as the out-growth of a child's social desire to recount his experiences and gain in return the experiences of others" (Goodman, Y. 1989, p. 116).

In addition to theorists from psychology, linguistics and philosophy, many well known theorists from the field of reading have contributed extensively to the whole-language movement. Research work on the reading process by Kenneth Goodman and Frank Smith in the early 1960's led to the application of their theories to reading instruction that established the concept of reading as a psycholinguistic process (Goodman, 1967; Smith, 1986; Hirsch, 1987), a truly interactive process more conducive

to a whole-language approach than a fragmented skill-based approach that is currently in use in the majority of American classrooms to comply with state mandated basic skills testing. In their early studies these prominent theorists established the concept of reading as a process of interaction between the reader, the text and language. These views on reading provide a sound rationale for literature-based reading programs (Goodman, K. S., 1989a).

Advocates of an integrated language arts curriculum go back to the 1940's and 1950's when the concept was actively promoted by curriculum theorists such as the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). With the ethnic diversity of the schools rapidly growing, educators were concerned about making education relevant for all students (Goodman, Y., 1989).

Concerned about the narrow accountability ethos that permeated the schools, educators in the early 1970's met at the University of North Dakota to share ideas about a more holistic method of assessing children's learning. Out of this conference the North Dakota Study Group was formed (Perrone, 1976). From studies like these evolved the dramatic call from many educators around the country for an alternative to standardized testing.

Using Literature in a Whole-Language Classroom

Research has shown that the most effective reading programs are those that de-emphasize the basal and promote literature as an integral part of the reading curriculum. The use of literature in the reading

curriculum to motivate students and promote literacy has been well documented in the literature (Sawyer, 1987; Huck, 1977). However, despite what the research has revealed elementary reading curricula throughout the United States for the most part appear to be directed toward teaching children "how to read" and no one seems to be concerned that they "do read or what they read" (Huck, 1977, p. 368).

Pilot programs incorporating a whole-language approach with literature as a base rather than basal texts have shown to be effective in promoting literacy and motivating children to read. The "Open Sesame" program in New York City P.S. 192 was set up by the American Reading Council in October 1985. This is an inner city school where 92% of the children come from non-English speaking homes and 96% come from homes below the poverty level. Eighty percent of the children could speak no English. The children were read to each day from trade books selected for their appeal to children. Letter identification and some phonics was handled within the context of the story. Teacher and students engaged in prolonged discussion of the story. Students dictated phrases or sentences to go with pictures they had drawn relating to the stories read. By the close of the school year in June, all 225 kindergarteners were able to read their dictated stories and some were even reading on a 2nd grade level. Best of all, they loved to read (Larrick, 1987).

In 1986, a group of educators at the West Des Moines School District in Iowa decided to implement a literature-based whole-language program using trade books in lieu of text book adoption. Two years into the program teachers reported positive results and enthusiasm from teachers,

students and parents (Henke, 1988). Tunnell and Jacobs reviewed the findings of several recent studies which support the success of a literature-based approach to literacy for various types of students, including limited English speakers, developmental readers, and remedial readers as well as ordinary readers (Tunnell & Jacobs, 1989).

Therefore there is a growing interest nationwide among classroom teachers for using children's literature as the core of the reading program, even though some teachers are still reluctant to abandon the basal text entirely. A national survey indicated that many states are involved to some degree in literature-based initiatives, and some states led by California have mandated the use of literature (Alexander, 1987; Cullinan, 1989).

There are a number of first hand accounts by teachers who have implemented literature-based reading programs (Hancock & Hill, 1987; Nelms, 1988; Routman, 1988). A second grade teacher in a rural Appalachian school supplements the required basal readings with regional literature to teach pertinent literacy elements to her students. These regional stories are also the basis for the reading/writing connection in this classroom as students are motivated to write their own regional stories and enthusiasm for both reading and writing in this classroom is high (Oxendine, 1989). Middle level students also respond well to a literature-based approach to reading. Mick Cummings, an elementary school teacher, reports on a thematic approach to literature that his students adopt as a group activity, extending the reading into writing, oral discussions and dramatic interpretation of thematic units (Cummings, 1987). Two

upper level elementary teachers find novels a useful source in teaching reading comprehension to their students through guided reading instruction (Poole & Poole, 1986).

Middle school teachers too are finding many ways to "turn their students on to books" by explaining the different genre of literature through various activities, including drama, poetry, written and oral critiques (Restrepo, 1988; Bosma, 1981; Karabas & Leinwein, 1985; Halpern, 1986). All teachers reported positive attitudes in their students towards literature in the curriculum.

Although there has been several independent studies of the effectiveness of literature-based reading instruction (Cohen, 1968; Chomsky, 1972; Eldredge & Butterfield, 1986) little systematic research has documented classroom practice in or teacher perceptions about literature-based reading programs (Lehman, 1989; Tunnel & Jacobs, 1989).

Whole Language and the Reading/Writing Connection

Central to the California English Language Arts Framework as to any whole-language program is the integration of reading and writing. The literature is inundated with studies and research that show the positive effects of the reading and writing connection and the rationale for the integration of these disciplines. The practice of divorcing the consideration of writing from reading was sharply criticized by the National Council of Teachers of English as far back as 1952 when research theory, at that time, emphasized that English language skills should be taught so that the specific skills would reinforce one another (Meckel, 1963). Current research on Reading/Writing all appear to bear

evidence that there is a definite relationship, in as much as reading and writing are both language processes, to merit integrating these disciplines.

Sandra Stotsky (1983) synthesizes the findings from a number of correlational and experimental studies on reading/writing relationships and offers the following summary of her findings: Better writers tend to be better readers, better writers tend to read more than poorer writers and that better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers. One research report indicated less incidence of dyslexia when children write before they read (Martin, 1984).

A similar theory was proposed in an earlier study by noted linguist Carol Chomsky in her article "Write First, Read Later" (1971). Ms. Chomsky maintained from her study that "if a child writes first, the written word grows out of his/her own consciousness and belongs to the child" (p. 296), indicating that for initial reading instruction children ought to read by creating their own spelling for familiar words. With this background and familiarity, conventional spelling should pose no problem when he/she comes to it gradually later on (p. 298). Ms. Chomsky further claims that the conventional method of expecting a child to read, as a first step, what someone else has written is backwards and counterproductive to effective teaching (Chomsky, 1971). Proponents of whole language hold the same theory when they advocate the child's use of invented spelling to encourage students to begin writing immediately, even if they do not know the correct spelling of all the words they write. According to whole-language theory "writing develops from scribbling

to invented spelling to mature writing" (Stahl & Miller, 1989, p. 88).

Marilyn Wilson in her article "A Review of Recent Research on the Integration of Reading and Writing" (1981) cites her review of reading/writing in the language arts curriculum by studying the nature of the relationship between the processes of reading and writing--how they are learned and what their functions are.

A number of researchers have proposed that the relationship between reading and writing may be due in large extent to the fact that both involve structuring of meaning. Elkind (1976) comments on this relationship and stresses the need for allowing children to experience the satisfaction of structuring their own writings. Elkind further proposes that the more freedom and experience the child has to structure their own writing, the better prepared they will be for interpreting the structures of others (Elkind, 1976; Nordberg, 1981).

Literacy research and instruction is becoming more focused on connections between reading and writing. Donald Graves and Jane Hansen, prominent advocates of writing in the classroom, have written many books and articles to this effect focusing primarily on encouraging teachers to allow students to take responsibility for their own learning by giving them a sense of control over their efforts and stressing how the reading/writing connection helps beginning readers learn to read (Graves, 1985; Hansen, 1987; Graves & Hansen, 1983). Throughout the United States individual classroom teachers are introducing their students to writing across the curriculum and reporting positive results in this reading/writing connection (Rukavina, 1977; Piccolo, 1986; Fisher, 1991).

The conclusions drawn from these studies indicate that reading and writing should be taught simultaneously in a whole-language environment. Even though research has established a definite rationale for integrating reading and writing in the language arts curriculum, there has been very little practical application to the research findings in the conventional classrooms. Most school districts still adhere to the traditional practice of allocating separate instructional periods and separate texts to the two basic components of literacy. A study run by Mary Ellen Varble analyzed the writing samples of students taught by teachers using whole-language and traditional approaches. The study evaluated the quality of writing of 2nd and 6th grades who were taught by two different approaches. The results revealed that second grade students who were taught by a whole-language based approach produced better writing samples when evaluated on content. The sixth grade whole-language group did not show a difference in the area of quality of content to the sixth grade traditional instruction group. No difference was found in the mastery of mechanics in any of the second grade or sixth grade groups of students. It should be noted that the sixth grade whole-language students had whole-language instruction for one year and traditional instruction in previous grades. Ms. Varble sees the results of this research project encouraging to the advocates of whole language and notes that whole-language instruction is particularly important in the K-3 curriculum when evaluating for content (Varble, 1990).

Meeting the Needs of All Students in a Whole-Language Classroom

Central to any educational reform is a curriculum that caters to the needs of all students. Whole language, according to Harste (1989), "is essentially a theory of voice that operates on the premise that all students must be heard" (p. 245). The publication of Becoming a Nation of Readers by the Commission on Reading (Anderson, Osborn & Tierney, 1985) sought to stimulate public awareness to the necessity of curriculum reform in our schools to meet the needs of all students in our vastly diversified society. Since whole-language programs are based fundamentally on the theory that the child is the center of his/her own learning, it would appear that such programs would become closer to meeting the needs of all students, LD students, ESL students, students from low-socioeconomic homes, and all students considered to be "at risk", than a skill-based basal program. Whole language provides a unique and promising framework for individualized instruction to meet the needs of all students in our classrooms.

Research of the literature to this effect reveals the benefits of a whole-language curriculum for learning disabled (LD) students. Traditionally LD students appear to be deficient in various sub skills of the reading process; decoding (vowels in particular) and comprehension strategies, often due to lack of schema and inability to use context effectively.. Remediation programs for such students usually mean heavy doses of these fragmented subskills which for the most part prove ineffective. Whole-language proponents believe that what these LD children need is not "more of the same thing" but rather a switch from the "part"

to the "whole" with more time spent on actual reading for meaning and less time devoted to acquiring isolated skills which these children appear unable to transfer to the actual reading process (Reutzel & Hollingsworth, 1988). Weaver and Goodman, two prominent advocates of whole language feel that it is unproductive to label particular children as LD students (Weaver, 1990; Goodman, K. S., 1986). According to Reutzel & Hollingsworth (1988) most of these LD children respond positively to the same whole-language strategies used in a regular whole-language classroom. Weaver further asserts that "our schools seem to create many of the less competent readers and writers, as well as many of the so called disabled learners" (Weaver, 1990, p. 56).

"At risk students" has become a common phrase for students with classroom behavioral and performance characteristics not up to the standards of their peers. These children are very often from low socioeconomic and minority backgrounds, and are often labeled as disadvantaged students with little motivation or stimulation to read at home. These children pose a never-ending concern for educators. The literature is inundated with conflicting theories on "the best method" to motivate these children to read and subsequently become literate individuals. Whole-language proponents like Goodman (1986) and Weaver (1990), strongly advocate a whole-language approach to reading for these students. Weaver cites a study which found "despite little difference between standardized test scores of minority, low-socioeconomic first and second-graders from whole-language classrooms and those from skills-based classrooms, the whole-language students far surpassed the skills-based students

in developing the understanding strategies and attitudes of readers, writers and thinkers" (Weaver, 1990, p. 139). Weaver's conclusions were collaborated by a two-year comparative study carried out by Caroline Stice and Nancy Bertrand in 1990. This study examined the effectiveness of whole language on the literacy development of selected at-risk children-- 100 first- and second-graders in whole-language and traditional classrooms. Findings showed that although both groups' performances on standardized achievement tests were about equal, children from the whole-language classrooms (1) read for meaning better, corrected more of their mistakes and gave better summaries of the stories read; (2) the writing of the whole-language group revealed accuracy in spelling and mechanics without any direct instruction superior to the students from the traditional classrooms. The researchers noted that the whole-language students appeared confident about their reading and writing abilities and were on the way to becoming more independent readers than the students from the traditional classrooms that engaged in direct systematic skill instruction (Stice & Bertrand, 1990).

Other research, however, views whole-language curriculum as being good for the gifted, talented and so called "average" students, but less effective with economically disadvantaged children requiring more structure (Harste, 1989; Stahl & Miller, 1989). Stahl and Miller in their quantitative research synthesis concluded that whole-language instruction and basal-reader instruction were equally effective as a beginning reading and writing method of instruction except in the case of low-socioeconomic students who have not had much exposure or incidental

learning about books and print as children from middle-class households had. "These lower-socioeconomic students needed direct instruction in the basic skills to "catch up", according to Stahl and Miller (1989, p. 108). Judith Schickedanz refuted these findings by Stahl and Miller in her article "The Jury is Still Out on the Effects of Whole Language and Language Experiences Approaches for Beginning Reading: A Critique of Stahl and Miller's Study" (Review of Educational Research, Spring 1990), on the basis that the study lacked longitudinal data since 3rd grade and beyond were not included in the study. McGee and Lomax also offered a rebuttal to Stahl and Miller's findings arguing that "Stahl and Miller had misrepresented concepts relating to emergent literacy, and inadequately defined whole language" (McGee & Lomax, 1989, p. 133). McGee and Lomax also cited several studies that support the claims of the whole-language movement and refute Stahl and Miller's charges of basal-instruction superiority over whole-language instruction for low-socioeconomic students and beginning readers.

A major concern to all educators across the United States is the changing ethnic and cultural shape of the American public school population brought about, primarily, but not entirely, by the significant influx of immigrants during the past seventeen years, to join our indigenous Blacks, Anglos, Latinos, Asians and Native Americans "to form one of the most ethnically diverse societies in history" (Olson, 1988, p. 212). "One of the foremost stumbling blocks facing minority students with a limited command of the English language is the problem of securing equal educational opportunity" (First, 1988, p. 207). According to

recent estimates, the number of students with limited proficiency in English who are enrolled in U.S. public schools range from 3.5 million to 5.5 million (First, 1988). Faced with a curriculum that is primarily designed for English-speaking students, both languagewise and culturally, the minority student's chance of succeeding in school is tragically undercut.

The California Reading Initiative has focused prominently on providing a language arts framework that addresses the needs of the minority student. High-quality multicultural literature teaches students to respect and understand diversity. Minority students can experience their native culture and heritage with pride through inclusion of literary selections from racial and ethnic minority groups.

Limited research exists on the use of whole-language approaches in bilingual education. In his article "The Future of Whole Language", Jerome Harste claims that whole language "is the only approach to teaching reading and writing that does not deny children their culture" (Harste, 1989, p. 246). He cites the Bureau of Indian Affairs as one agency proposing adopting whole language as an official language policy and describes how whole language is considered a bilingual teaching method among Native Americans in the Tucson area.

Whole-language advocates refer to language as being a social function and a dominant mode of thought and learning where knowledge is created through social interaction; children learn to respect their cultures and language that they bring to school with them and also to respect the diverse range of cultures they encounter as they become integrated

into the school system. In short, children are active participants in an ongoing process of figuring out how language works. In considering ESL children's acquisition of speaking, reading and writing skills "researchers have discovered that the process of first and second language acquisition in children are more alike than different" (Hudelson, 1989, p. 3). In keeping with the child-centered philosophy of the whole-language movement children's native language as well as English is used as a medium to teach ESL children (Crawford, 1987). The basic tenets of whole language are recommended for working with the ESL child in a whole-language classroom. The reading/writing connection is proposed by exposing ESL children to a wide variety of literary forms in reading, and extending these experiences into written expression by the child. Programs utilizing personal narratives and writing workshop techniques are proposed in order to help learners develop fluency and become more comfortable with writing. Diaries or journals are recommended to promote fluency in writing and as a means of self-expression (Hudelson, 1989).

Scattered reports from around the country show positive results of whole-language curriculum use with bilingual students. Schneider (1990) reports positive results to their Bilingual Immersion Program (BIP) currently used in the El Paso Independent School District in Texas. "Spanish-speaking students in elementary grades receive instruction in English in a non-threatening way" (Schneider, 1990, p. 3). Students' native language and culture is used to develop cognitive processes and develop pride in their heritage.

Another study by Anthony D'Annunzio and Paige Payne addresses the benefits of whole-language approaches in an ESL classroom with Asian-American and Hispanic immigrants using whole-language strategies. Students narrated their own stories to tutors and subsequently used these student-created texts for individualized reading instruction. Both groups showed appreciable gains. The Asian-American students gained three grade levels in 5.5 months and the Hispanic group gained two grade levels in four months. Starting at the non-English level both groups achieved the level of a fluent English speaker in the fourth grade (D'Annunzio & Payne, 1989).

Most of the strategies currently used in whole-language classrooms are those proved to be most effective with ESL children (English as a second language): Daily storytime, shared book experiences, responses to books in several forms, including art and drama, and through written discourse. All these activities proved effective with ESL children according to educators working with these students (Piper, 1986; Hayes & Bahruth, 1985).

Phonics in Whole Language

The whole-language movement is based on the premise that children acquire literacy by working from the whole to the part through immersion in a print-rich environment. The use of whole text is emphasized where children learn the essential elements of a story. Reading becomes an active constructive process where the child uses cues to make meaning (Goodman, 1967; Smith, 1988; Weaver, 1990).

Many educators today are in total agreement with the conclusions of these eminent theorists. A major bone of discontentment or controversy has to do with the role of phonics in a whole-language curriculum. Most whole-language advocates believe that putting undue stress on word analysis skills during reading is harmful to beginning readers as it interferes with the child's search for meaning (Goodman, 1986; Weaver, 1990; Watson, 1989). According to Goodman "Whole language doesn't ignore phonics instruction but only as the teacher sees the need for specific instruction" and is never taught in isolation or apart from the reading process (Goodman, 1989b, p. 69). Watson views phonics "as one of many cues of written language to be taught along with semantic cues, syntactic cues and pictorial cues" (Watson, 1989, p. 134). Neumann and Church (1990) claim that "whole-language teachers do teach phonics but not as something separate from actual reading and writing. "Phonic cues may be given during the writing process or the reading process as the need arises" (Neumann & Church, 1990, p. 21).

However, Stahl, et al., do feel that systematic code instruction (phonics) included along with reading of meaningful connected text results in superior reading achievement for both disadvantaged students and so called "average" beginning readers (Stahl, et al., 1990). These conclusions were again expressed by Stahl and Miller in their Quantitative Research Synthesis on Whole Language and Language Experience Approaches for Beginning Reading (1989). These findings of Stahl and Miller were refuted by McGee and Lomax (1990) and Schickedanz (1990).

Carla Heymsfeld (1989), in her article "Filling the Hole in Whole Language" advocates a combined approach to the reading curriculum integrating the strengths of both approaches. Heymsfeld cites excerpts from the report of the Commission on Reading (Anderson, et al, 1985) that classroom research shows that children who are taught phonics get off to a better start.

Commentaries from Spiedel and McCallum both advocate blending whole language with direct systematic instruction. Spiedel cites the importance of systematic direct instruction to "identify specific goals and objectives and insure that activities are carried out specifically to meet these goals" (Spiedel, 1992, p. 40). McCallum cites the necessity for basals "to help translate research into practice, respond to changes in theory and provide on-the-job training for teachers" (McCallum, 1988, p. 206).

Chall, long an advocate of systematic phonics, especially for beginning readers, renews her theories and research conclusions that phonics is an important aspect of beginning reading instruction, especially for 1st and 2nd graders and "at risk" students (Chall, 1989). While being a firm proponent for early phonics, Ms. Chall hails the merits of a whole-language curriculum claiming "literature, writing and thinking are not exclusive properties of any one approach to reading" (1989, p, 531). Ms. Chall claims that "a code-emphasis program is beneficial to earlier rather than later writing" (1989, p. 531). She hails studies from Australia and New Zealand, prominent proponents of whole language, that confirm the importance of word recognition and decoding in beginning reading (1989, p. 528). Citing a 1980 study from Sweden, Ms. Chall

synthesizes the findings of Ingvar Lundberg and his associates who found that "phonological awareness was the single most powerful predictor of future reading and spelling skills in a group of children tested at the end of their kindergarten year" (Chall, 1989, p. 529).

The great debate may never end. Both sides appear to hail the merits of both approaches but put in different perspectives. Goodman and his colleagues, adamant whole-language proponents, are quick to point out "whole language doesn't ignore phonics instruction; it puts it in proper perspective" (Goodman, 1989b, p. 69) while Ms. Chall acknowledges the importance of "reading for meaning" and immersion in good literature and the reading/writing connection but points out that "some people hold erroneous views about those who teach phonics. They tend to believe that if one teaches phonics, one cannot be concerned with the cognitive meaningful, creative, and joyful aspects of literature" (Chall, 1989, p. 532). It would appear to be a controversy over incidental phonics vs direct phonics instruction. How teachers in whole-language classrooms perceive the effectiveness of phonics in their curriculum is one of the issues raised in this research study.

Assessment in Whole Language

In a study by Beverly Bruneau and Richard Ambrose explaining the perceptions of teachers in kindergarten-2nd grade of a whole-language approach to literacy, teachers were asked to state their concerns about whole-language instruction (Bruneau & Ambrose, 1989). Teachers concerns focused upon two specific areas--skill development and evaluation of

children's learning. Teachers in this study were concerned that skill development may be neglected in a whole-language program, and in regard to evaluation "what to look for" seemed to be the constant concern. Evaluation and assessment of student progress in whole-language programs may be as big an issue as the place for phonics in a whole-language curriculum.

Schools across the country, for the most part, still adhere to the practice of standardized testing to comply with mandated skill management systems (SMS) that legislators have enacted. The typical skills management system (SMS) to complement the skills-based reading curriculum has been routinely criticized in the literature (Johnson & Pearson, 1975; Decker, 1986). NEA Today, a National Education Association publication, recently published an article--"Is Student Testing Out of Control"--voicing the concern of many educators that standardized testing may stop real school reform, if tests rather than local needs are allowed to dictate the curriculum (Weiss, 1988). The report of the Commission on Reading (1985) warned that over-emphasis on performance on skill mastery tests can unbalance a reading program, leading attention away from the holistic view of reading. Furthermore, the Commission voiced concerns that the skills management system was based on erroneous assumptions about the process of learning to read. In its recommendations to educators the Commission advocated a more comprehensive assessment of reading and writing reflecting the true interactive nature of these disciplines. Supplementary methods of assessment recommended by the Commission included: observation of reading fluency, extent of student

independent reading and writing and the assessment of students' ability for critical analysis of lengthy passages (Anderson, Osborn & Tierney, 1985).

Robert Berglund, writing for Reading Today summed up whole-language evaluation by reminding educators that "whole-language evaluation is always student-centered, self-referenced versus norm-referenced, continuous and holistic rather than fragmented into sub skills" (Berglund, Dec 1988/ Jan 1989, p. 18).

Standardized testing has been widely criticized by advocates for minority children in our schools. Charges of cultural bias are common complaints lodged against standardized tests (First, 1988). Guthrie (1983b), writing of his experience in New Zealand (a world leader in whole language), noted the "near absence of tests" in the New Zealand schools; yet, he remarked that "New Zealand students surpassed comparable students in the United States in both achievement and volume of reading" (Guthrie, 1983a, p. 16).

In whole-language approaches, the main purpose of assessment is to provide teachers and students with information useful in promoting student growth in literacy. Teachers working from a whole-language perspective are always evaluating according to Adams, (1990). Assessment and evaluation of student progress, coined accountability by those responsible for evaluation at the national, state and local levels appears to be one area of the whole-language movement that classroom teachers are perplexed about. Masenthal (1989) illustrates some of this dilemma in his article "The Whole-Language Approach: Teachers between a rock

and a hard place:" On the one hand officials are advocating that teachers should be teaching from a whole-language curriculum. On the other hand those responsible for evaluation at the national, state and local levels are calling for wider use of standardized tests.

Similar concerns were voiced by David Yellin in his article "Will Evaluation Kill Whole Language" in the Kansas Journal of Reading, Spring 1991. Yellin suggests observation as an alternative to testing and offers suggestions to teachers for keeping anecdotal records. He also recommends that students keep records and maintain folders of their work (portfolio assessment). Other similar articles appearing periodically in professional journals voice the concerns of teachers around the country about the complexities of whole-language assessment in a standardized testing environment (Taylor, 1990; Au, 1990; Snow, 1989; Otto, & Iacono, 1990).

Portfolio assessment is an evolving concept and is seen by many whole-language advocates as the alternative to standardized testing. Teachers have many questions concerning portfolio assessment. The literature is presently saturated with information to this effect (Morton, 1991; Hodge, 1990; Pils, 1991; Farr, 1992).

From research of the literature it would appear that teachers are concerned about the role and form of evaluation in a whole-language program, particularly the time factor involved in this daily assessment procedure, accurate record keeping, and accountability factors as well as keeping parents informed of student progress in the absence of standardized tests.

How teachers perceive the role and form of evaluation in a whole language program is a pertinent issue addressed in this study.

Whole Language Movements in Other Countries

For documentation as to the effectiveness of whole language as a national campaign for literacy one needs to look just across the border to Canada. Canada has become a leader in the whole-language movement in North America. In Quebec and Nova Scotia whole-language programs have become official policy. The whole-language movement in Canada has been strongly influenced by such prominent educators as Frank Smith, Gordon Wells and John McInnis. Influence from researchers in Britain, Meek and Rosen, and New Zealand, Clay and Holdaway, and Goodman and Graves from the United States, have had a strong impact on this movement (McConaghy, 1988).

Examining reading instruction in other countries suggests possible solutions to the serious problem of literacy that faces our society. New Zealand, noted for producing the best readers in the world, takes a psycho-linguistic view of reading instruction employing a whole-language approach. Use of trade books and language experience stories predominate in the curriculum, and writing is given its rightful priority in the curriculum (Decker, 1986). Many of the practices that American whole-language teachers use, such as the "shared book" experience were developed in New Zealand. The success of New Zealand's literacy instruction provides strong support for the whole-language movement. In their article, "Learning

to Read in New Zealand", Brian Cutting and Jerry Milligan point out a strategic difference between learning to read in the United States versus learning to read in New Zealand; age of beginning readers. In New Zealand children enter school on their fifth birthday (whenever it occurs during the year) and formal reading instruction begins on their first day at school without any reading readiness activities. Students then follow a balanced reading program based on whole-language philosophy without any strategic skills instruction. Absence of standardized testing was also noted by Cutting and Milligan (1979).

Australia reports positive results for their national campaign in whole language. Martin in his article "Empowering Teachers to Break the Basal Habit" (Martin, 1991) notes that "some reasons why teachers were so willing to break away from dependence on basal texts include the empowerment of teachers through the political acceptance of alternative training, a grass roots movement, and cooperative effort" (Martin, 1991, p. 5; Kerekes & Burchett, 1986).

Greece, noted for having few reading failures, is worthy of note since it faces many of the same cultural, societal and financial problems found in the United States, in addition to a dual language system. The use of whole language exclusively in the curriculum has proved successful in the Greek school system, in spite of their cultural, societal and language problems (Decker, 1986).

Summary

In 1985 the Commission on Reading published a report titled Becoming a Nation of Readers addressing the problem of illiteracy/aliteracy among our youth, and calling for educators nationwide to initiate major reform efforts in their schools (Anderson, Osborn & Tierney, 1985). California was one of the first states to mandate a statewide reform effort to address these problems with the launching of the California Reading Initiative by Superintendent of Public Instruction, Bill Honig in 1986.

The California Reading Initiative is a master plan advocating the use of quality literature as a foundation of the K-12 reading program. An integral component of the California Reading Initiative is the English Language Arts Framework which mandates the form and direction of the reading and language arts instruction in grades K-12. The framework has incorporated the theory and research of such eminent psycholinguists as Goodman, Smith and Rumelhart, strong advocates of a whole-language approach to reading and the language arts (Smith, 1988; Goodman, 1989a; and Rumelhart, 1985). The California English Language Arts Framework integrates all of the language processes--speaking, writing, listening and reading through the process of reading quality literature. The framework recognizes the critical role of writing in any literacy campaign, and has incorporated this component of literacy into its reform.

This statewide reform effort on the part of California has given new impetus to the whole-language movement. Whole language is a holistic approach to reading and writing instruction based on the premise that

young children best learn to read and write in the same way they learned to speak from whole to part (McCallum, 1988). Whole language maintains that reading, writing and oral language not be considered separate components of the curriculum, but rather be integrated and learned simultaneously by engaging the child in actual reading and writing (Weaver, 1990). Successful pilot programs incorporating a whole-language approach with literature as a base rather than basal texts have been documented in the literature (Huck, 1977; Sawyer, 1987; Larrick, 1987; Henke, 1988; Tunnel & Jacobs, 1989; Cummings, 1987; Poole & Poole, 1986). Although there have been several studies as to the effectiveness of literature-based reading instruction (Cohen, 1968; Chomsky, 1972; Eldredge & Butterfield, 1986) little systematic research has documented teachers' perceptions about literature-based reading programs (Lehman, 1989; Tunnell & Jacobs, 1989).

Central to any whole-language program is the integration of reading and writing. Current research on reading/writing all appear to show a definite relationship to merit integrating these disciplines (Meckel, 1963; Wilson, M., 1981; Elkind, 1976; Nordberg, 1981). The conclusions drawn from these studies indicate that reading and writing should be taught simultaneously in a whole-language environment most of the time.

One of the reforms called for in the report by the Commission on Reading (1985) was for schools to develop a curriculum that meets the needs of all students in our vastly diversified society. Reading theorists like Goodman, Weaver, Reutzel & Hollingsworth and Harste, etc., all feel that a whole-language curriculum best meets the needs of all students

(Goodman, 1986; Weaver, 1990; Reutzel & Hollingsworth, 1988; Harste, 1989). However, there is some disagreement in the literature that a whole-language curriculum best meets the needs of all students, and some researchers claim that whole language and traditional basal instruction were equally effective except in the case of low-socioeconomic students who needed direct skill-based instruction (Stahl & Miller, 1989). The findings of Stahl and Miller were refuted by McGee and Lomax (1989) on several technicalities. Limited research on the use of whole language in bilingual education show positive results (Harste, 1989; Hudelson, 1989; Crawford, 1987; Schneider, 1991; Piper, 1986; Hayes & Bahruth, 1985).

The whole-language movement is based on the theory that children acquire literacy through immersion in a print-rich environment where the basic components of literacy, reading and writing, are integrated (Goodman, 1986; Smith, 1988; Weaver, 1990). While most educators today are in total agreement with the conclusions of these eminent theorists, one bone of discontent and controversy applies to the use of phonics in a whole-language curriculum. Whole-language proponents like Goodman (1986), Weaver (1990), Watson (1989), Neumann & Church (1990), advocate an indirect approach to phonics within the reading process, without undue stress on word analysis skills. This is in direct opposition to pro-phonics advocates like Chall (1989), Stahl and Miller (1989), who claim that direct phonics instruction is essential to beginning reading. Some reading theorists advocate a combined approach, integrating the strengths of both approaches (Heymsfeld, 1989; Spiedel, 1992; McCallum, 1988).

Studies conducted by Bruneau and Ambrose (1989) with kindergarten through 2nd grade teachers revealed that teachers involved in a whole-language curriculum were concerned about two specific areas--skill development (especially phonics) and assessment of student progress. The report of the Commission on Reading (1985) warned that over-emphasis on performance on skills-mastery tests could unbalance a reading program leading attention away from the holistic view of reading. In its recommendation to educators the Commission advocated major reforms in this area (Anderson, Osborn & Tierney, 1985).

It would appear from the literature that there are two major areas of concern to educators who wish to espouse a whole-language curriculum: the question of direct versus indirect phonics and the dilemma of adequate and appropriate evaluation of students' reading and writing in the absence of standardized testing.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The investigator in this study sought to determine classroom teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of a statewide whole-language approach to literacy four years after the declaration of the California Reading Initiative.

Source of Data

The Sample

The subjects were selected from a large school district in California, the San Jose Unified School District. The participating schools represented a diverse range of demographic features relating to the ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic status of the student population of California's public schools. Pertinent demographic information from this school district is as follows: total student population, 29,000; ethnic diversity of the students: 11% Asian, 37% Hispanic, 3% Black, 46% White and 3% other. Twenty-five elementary schools and seven middle schools comprised this school district at the time this study was done. Cluster sampling was used to get a representative sampling of reading/language arts teachers from schools catering to the diverse student population in this school district. Ten elementary and four middle schools were selected based on the similar diversity of their student body. Reading/language arts teachers from the targeted schools

were used as subjects in the survey. According to Stephan and McCarthy (1958), there are many advantages for using groups of population elements as sampling units as opposed to individual elements. Among these are: cluster sampling is more convenient, involves less time and less expense, groups of elements can often be identified when individual elements cannot; the clustering of sample elements on a geographic basis can lead to economies in travel and other types of fieldwork (Stephan & McCarthy, 1985).

The steps necessary for cluster sampling were followed as outlined by Gay (1981). The total population was defined as twenty-five elementary schools and seven middle schools. The desired sample size was ten elementary and four middle schools. These schools were selected based on the similar ethnic and cultural diversity of their student bodies. The population to be surveyed were ninety-six reading/language arts teachers from these fourteen schools. The questionnaires were mailed to the schools for distribution to the teachers by their principals and picked up fourteen to twenty days later by the researcher. A total of sixty-nine out of the ninety-six delivered questionnaires were returned to the researcher even after repeated follow-up attempts to obtain additional replies.

Techniques for Data Collection

A descriptive approach, using a two-part questionnaire was used for this study. The first section of the questionnaire concerned demographic characteristics of the respondents. The second section of the questionnaire

was patterned after one of the four basic types of attitude scales--a Likert scale. Attitude scales seek to determine what an individual believes, perceives or feels. A Likert scale asks an individual to respond to a series of statements by indicating whether she/he strongly agrees, agrees, is undecided, disagrees or strongly disagrees with the statement (Good, 1963).

The decision to use a structured questionnaire was based on a review of the literature concerning the feasibility of this survey process in descriptive research. The form of questions on the questionnaire were closed. A closed questionnaire is one in which only certain designated responses are permitted. The check responses in this closed form of questionnaire provide categorized data "that greatly facilitate tabulating and summarizing processes" (Good, 1963). The Likert-type scale takes much less time to construct, and is used frequently in educational research (Good, 1963). The main advantages of the questionnaire, according to Hayman (1968), are its relatively low cost, and its ability to secure information from large numbers of widely distributed persons in a short time. Information supplied on this instrument can be easily interpreted and translated into quantitative forms for analysis. It insures that each individual sample is asked the same questions (Hayman 1968; Good 1963; Gay 1976).

Disadvantages to a closed form of structured questionnaire according to Hayman (1968) would be the inflexibility and lack of depth of information that could be obtained. Closed questions limit a respondent's reply to a designated and limited choice of answers; therefore careful consideration should be given to the wording and content of the individual items in this form of survey. However, since both the researcher and respondents were

quite familiar with the topic under survey, it was believed that a suitable questionnaire could be constructed to clarify the respondent's perceptions to meet the objectives of the survey analysis, thereby lessening or eliminating the cited disadvantages.

Specific guidelines suggested by Gay (1976), Good (1963), Stephan and McCarthy (1958) and Hayman (1968) were followed in the development of the survey instrument. These guidelines offer general information for constructing a questionnaire as to form and content, as well as specific recommendations concerning appearance of questionnaire, use of appropriate and familiar language, order and sequence of questions and relativity to topic under study. The following general recommendations were particularly influential in the development of the questionnaire used for this study.

- (1) Make questionnaire short enough so as not to be rejected by the respondent.
- (2) Relate questions to the topic of the survey (validity).
- (3) Avoid ambiguous or inappropriate item wording.
- (4) Begin the questionnaire with questions the respondent can easily interpret and answer.
- (5) Provide adequate categories for responses.
- (6) Pilot-test the instrument and note suggestions for any modifications or additions to questionnaire.

Development of the Questionnaire

To fulfill the purposes of the study, answer the research questions, and gather demographic data necessary to compare responses for the total population, it was necessary to develop an instrument based on the most current information and research on whole language. A wide range of literature was reviewed to investigate the effects of a whole-language curriculum on literacy. The objectives of the California Reading Initiative were studied before the questionnaire was developed. The questions on the survey instrument were designed to gather the perceptions of teachers concerning the study's five research questions outlined as follows:

Research Questions

- (1) How do teachers perceive the effectiveness of the California Reading Initiative in motivating their students to engage in independent reading (outside of classroom assignments)?
Questions 1, 2, 3, 4.
- (2) How effective has the California Reading Initiative been in providing a balanced classroom literature program that focuses on higher order thinking skills?
Questions 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.
- (3) How effective has the whole-language approach of the English Language Arts Framework been in providing for a schoolwide developmental writing program across the curriculum?
Questions 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

- (4) How does a whole-language school environment meet the needs of all students (average, gifted, minority, etc.)?

Questions 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.

- (5) What is the role and form of evaluation in a whole-language curriculum?

Questions 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.

The Questionnaire

The following questions were included in the questionnaire. The purpose for including these specific questions is also included.

Question: The California Reading Initiative has been very effective in:

- (1) Motivating students to engage in group student directed literacy discussions and activities (independent of assigned work).
- (2) Motivating students' independent reading of newspapers, periodicals, etc. (as evidenced by an increase in knowledge of current events).
- (3) Eliciting voluntary "book sharing" of selections read independently by students.
- (4) An atmosphere in the classroom that provides a curiosity about books and the habit of reading.

According to the publication Becoming a Nation of Readers by the Commission on Reading (Anderson, Osborn & Tierney, 1985) "motivating children to read by exposing them to fine literature and providing ample time for independent reading is the main solution to aliteracy/illiteracy."

Question: The California Reading Initiative has been very effective in providing a classroom literature program that:

- (5) Provides students with good knowledge of the various genre of literature gained through independent reading.
- (6) Exppses students to selections from each major literary area (fiction, non-fiction, poetry and drama).
- (7) Provides frequent opportunities for students to hear literature read orally and interpreted by students and teachers.

Whole-language proponents advocate a rich literature-based curriculum where the child is given access to a wide variety of books both to read independently and for group discussion and interpretation.

Through independent reading a child develops fluency and awareness of print. Frank Smith (Understanding Reading, 1988) maintains that a child learns to read by reading. In his article "Learning to read: the never ending debate" (Kappan, Feb. 1992), Frank Smith advocates putting children in touch with the author through the medium of reading aloud to children.

- (8) Allocates adequate classroom time to the "core program" in lieu of filling in blanks on ditto sheets.
- (9) Stimulates questioning techniques by teachers that encourage students to utilize higher order thinking skills and background knowledge.
- (10) Provide opportunities for students in departmentalized schools to apply literary selections studied to other curricular areas (through cross disciplinary planning).
- (11) Include instructional programs that guide students to focus on aesthetic, ethical and cultural issues in our society.

Reading theorists like Goodman (1986), Smith (1986) and Anderson (1985) report that students spend too much time mastering isolated reading skills through skill drills and ditto sheets, leaving little time for actual reading and the development of critical and creative thinking skills essential to all areas of the curriculum. Critically taught, literature opens minds to wider horizons preparing children to think productively and creatively about the multiple dimensions of their lives.

Question: The whole-language approach of the English Language Arts Framework has been very effective in providing:

- (12) A K-8 developmental program articulated and implemented at all grade levels.
- (13) An oral-language program providing a variety of speaking and listening activities integrated with reading and writing.

Proponents of whole language advocate an integrated approach of the basic subsystems of language (listening, speaking, reading and writing) developed from Kindergarten through 8th grade.

- (14) A schoolwide writing program implemented by teachers of all subject areas.
- (15) A writing program that focuses initially on content and fluency of student's writing before attention to the mechanics of writing.
- (16) A writing program that includes attention to the various stages of the writing process from prewriting to postwriting.
- (17) Learning opportunities regarding the conventions of writing as the need arises (during the actual writing process).

The literature is inundated with studies and research that show the positive effects of the reading and writing connections and the rationale for the integration of these disciplines.

Question: The California Reading Initiative has been very effective in meeting the needs of all students by:

- (18) Including literary selections from racial and ethnic groups in our society as well as known English literary authors.
- (19) Increasing minority student participation in classroom discussion on literary selections.
- (20) The encouragement of students' personal response to literature and the avoidance of imposed single "correct" interpretations.
- (21) The development of minority students' basic English skills before requiring them to write in English.

Extensive immigration to the United States during the last twenty years has resulted in historic levels of enrollment of immigrant students in public schools. California, in particular, has had to meet the challenge that these minority students pose--one in six California students is foreign born (First, 1988). The California Language Arts Framework advocates provisions for working with minority students and easing the transition from their cultural backgrounds into our society. By viewing this diversity as an asset, and including multi-ethnic literature into the curriculum, all students can benefit and gain insight into the cultural aspects of our multi-ethnic society.

- (22) Providing a schoolwide program where students receive recognition for their excellent literary writings.

- (23) Providing opportunity for students to enter district, state and national competition and receive recognition for excellence.

Theorists like Graves (1983) and Hansen (1987) have long advocated an aggressive program integrating reading/writing in the curriculum. Whole-language proponents like Goodman (1986) see writing as an important component of literacy that needs to be developed and nurtured throughout the grades.

Question: The role and form of evaluation in a "Whole Language Program" has been very effective in providing for:

- (24) Assessment programs that do not take up excessive classroom time at the expense of instructional time.
- (25) A program of informal classroom assessment of student proficiency in reading and writing in which subjective testing is emphasized over objective testing.
- (26) Informal classroom assessment of students' motivation for reading (indicated by the quantity and quality of student recreational reading).

Although instruction which reflects a whole-language philosophy is gaining in popularity, the literature indicates that teachers are concerned with the mode and form of evaluation in a whole-language curriculum--particularly the time factor involved in daily classroom assessment.

- (27) Self monitoring by students of their own writing development and that of their peers.

Proponents of writing in the curriculum (Graves and Hansen) have long advocated self-monitoring by students of their own work as well as peer

monitoring as a method of student involvement in their own literacy development.

- (28) Informal classroom assessment of students' proficiency in decoding skills exhibited during actual oral reading (grade school teachers only).

Teachers have expressed concern that a whole-language literature-based reading curriculum over a skill-based basal reading program may cause difficulty in assessing a student's mastery of essential decoding elements.

- (29) Formal state assessment program of a student's proficiency in reading and writing.

- (30) A method of reporting student's progress in reading and writing to parents.

The current state-mandated minimum competency tests are in direct opposition to the philosophy of the whole-language curriculum that advocates a more holistic approach to evaluation. Classroom teachers are seeking guidance from their local and state educational departments for acceptable methods of formal assessment and accountability to parents of student's progress in reading/writing.

Pilot Testing

According to Borg and Gall (1983), a pilot study is the best indication the researcher has regarding the feasibility of the study. It permits a preliminary testing of the instrument with a targeted population. Hayman (1968) states that pretesting is essential to the preparation for any survey to detect potential flaws in the instrument or subject's reaction

to the questionnaire. This, reports Hayman (1968) is true of even the most experienced researchers. Gay (1981) states that a pilot study can detect potential problems that can be corrected before the actual study. Hayman (1968) notes that since the pretest is the time in which weaknesses in the instrument must be discovered and eliminated, the persons involved in the pretest should be encouraged to make comments and point out ambiguities or flaws in the questionnaire. In a pilot study, the entire research procedure is carried out including analysis of the data collected.

The questionnaire was pilot tested with eight teachers from the San Jose Unified School District. These teachers were all reading/language arts teachers in grades K through 8. The subjects were encouraged to comment on the content and design of the questionnaire and to offer suggestions for modifications, if so called for. The researcher used several criteria suggested by Borg and Gall (1983) to analyze the pilot questionnaire.

Comments and suggestions by subjects were used as feedback to make minor changes in the questionnaire, although no questions were added or deleted. The final questionnaire is located in Appendix A.

Procedures

Having selected the sample, developed the questionnaire, conducted a pilot study and designed a composite of related correspondence, the actual data collection was carried out.

The San Jose Unified School District Language Arts coordinator, Nellwyn Doornbas, was contacted by mail and telephone regarding permission to run the study in her school district. Permission was received from both the

Language Arts coordinator and the superintendent, Dr. Baughman (see Appendix D). Principals from each participating school were then notified by telephone regarding the questionnaires mailed to them to distribute to their reading/language arts teachers involved in whole-language curricula. Sixty-nine out of ninety-four questionnaires were returned to the researcher for analysis.

Techniques for Data Analysis

In 1932 Likert (Likert, 1932) proposed a simple, reliable and useful technique of scoring attitudinal data. He showed that a "cluster" or attitude variable existed in a distribution resembling a normal distribution. This simpler method of scoring involved the assignment of a numerical value of one to the negative end of a statement, and a value of five to the positive part of a statement. Likert favored the use of five-point statements, where the responder is asked to check whether he strongly disapproves (1), disapproves (2), is undecided (3), approves (4), or strongly approves (5). Thus over a linear continuum of this kind it is possible to determine the central tendency of the frequency distribution of attitude in the group. The whole range of responses is accommodated. In addition the scale is constructed by means of the voting only. It is not necessary to use judges in evaluating the rank order of statements. The Likert technique is also easier to use than a sigma scoring technique, where the percentage distributions are converted into sigma values (Murphy & Likert, 1962).

Another advantage of the Likert technique is that it is possible to obtain high reliabilities with fewer items (Murphy & Likert, 1967). The Likert technique is readily adapted for use in determining the split-half reliability. A total of 30 questions was directed to eight respondents in the pilot-study group, and to 69 respondents in the main group. The test was divided into two comparable groups with all the odd questions in one half and the even questions in the other half. A score for the odd questions and a score for the even questions was computed for each respondent. Then the two sets of scores are correlated to determine how good the split-half reliability is. The Spearman-Brown formula is used to calculate the reliability of the total test from the split-half reliability:

$$r_{tt} = 2r_{sh} / (1 + r_{sh}).$$

Here r_{sh} is the split-half reliability, and r_{tt} is the reliability for the total test. Since the number of questions was the same for all respondents the sum of the numerical scores rather than the mean was used in determining the split-half reliability (Murphy & Likert, 1967).

Factors Used in Analysis

The responses were tabulated manually, and frequency percentages were calculated for numerical values of Likert numbers ranging from 1 to 5 for each of the five different positions on the five-point statements. These values were also cross-checked by entering the data into a MacIntosh computer and calculating frequency percentages with the use of the statistics software program SAS. Demographic information on the teachers included each teacher's age, years of teaching experience, the grades taught, and the ethnic

composition of the class. The frequency percentage and Likert numbers are presented in Appendix B for the pilot study with eight responders and in Tables 1 to 5 for the Main Study with 69 responders. Figures 1 through 5 show a plot of the frequency percentage as a function of the Likert number, which is an indicator of teacher attitude.

The pilot study of eight respondents was analyzed for reliability using a split-half technique. The results showed a reliability of 98.1%. The data and details of computations are shown in Appendix B. Because of the high reliability obtained in the pilot study by the split-half technique, a decision was made to proceed with the main study.

Summary

The descriptive research method was used to analyze the perceptions of teachers in one large school district in California regarding a whole-language approach to literacy. Fourteen schools (ten elementary and four middle schools) and ninety-seven teachers were selected to participate in the study. Sixty-nine questionnaires were returned to the researcher. Data from the Likert-type questionnaire were analyzed to determine teacher attitudes towards a whole-language approach to literacy.

CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS OF DATA
Introduction

This study was designed to identify and describe the perceptions of teachers from one large school district in California concerning the effects of statewide whole-language approaches to literacy. Ten elementary and four middle schools were selected to participate in the research based on the similar diversity of their student body. Reading/language arts teachers from the targeted schools were used as subjects in the survey. A total of sixty-nine questionnaires were returned to the researcher.

The demographic characteristics of the sample population who responded to the questionnaire were obtained from the demographic part of the two-part questionnaire. Pertinent demographic information of the respondents appears in Appendix C.

Of the sixty-nine responding teachers, sixty-four filled out the demographic information on the questionnaire. Of the sixty-four responding, fifty-six (88%) listed their age as 40+. Six teachers (9%) listed their age as between 30-39 years. Two teachers (3%) listed their age as between 20-29 years.

Forty-six teachers (72%) listed 12+ total years of full time teaching experience. Seven teachers (11%) listed 8-11 years of full time teaching experience. Five teachers (8%) listed their teaching experience as 4-7 years, while six teachers (9%) reported having between 0-3 years teaching experience.

The grade level taught was listed as K-3 and 4-8. Thirty-six teachers (56%) listed K-3 as the grade level they taught. Twenty-eight teachers (44%) listed the grade level as 4-8.

In regard to the ethnic make-up of students in their classes, thirty-one teachers (48%) reported having an even distribution. Twenty-six (41%) of the teachers reported having mostly ethnic minority students in their classes, and seven teachers (11%) reported having mostly ethnic majority students in their classes.

It would appear from the demographic information as reported here that the majority of the teachers responding to the questionnaire were in the 40+ age group with 12+ years of experience.

The data from the questionnaires were tabulated manually and frequency percentages were calculated. The data were also entered into a MacIntosh Plus computer and the frequency percentages were cross-checked with the use of the SAS statistical software. The results are presented in Tables 1 through 5, and in Figures 1 through 5. The basic data entered in the computer were printed, and are presented in Appendix C for the main study, and in Appendix B for the pilot study.

A reliability check on the response data for each of the sixty-nine respondents was obtained by use of a split-half technique and SAS statistical software. The results showed a reliability of 99.3%. Detailed calculations can be found in Appendix C.

Research Question 1

How do teachers perceive the effectiveness of the California Reading Initiative in motivating their students to engage in independent reading (outside of classroom assignments)?

Four questions on the questionnaire were used to answer this question. The first question dealt with student motivation to voluntarily engage in group student-directed literary discussions and activities, independent of assigned work. A total of 60% of the teachers agreed that the California Reading Initiative had a positive effect in motivating students to engage in such activities, while 12% disagreed and 28% were undecided about the effect.

The next question dealt with motivating students' independent reading of newspapers, periodicals, etc. as evidenced by an increase in knowledge of current events. A total of 40% of the respondents agreed that students appeared to be motivated towards more diversified independent reading, while 13% disagreed and 47% were undecided as to the effectiveness of the California Reading Initiative on this matter.

The third question dealt with "voluntary book sharing". The majority of the teachers responding, 66%, perceived this as a positive result of the California Reading Initiative, while 16% disagreed and 18% were undecided.

The fourth question dealt with the California Reading Initiative's effectiveness in creating an atmosphere in the classroom that provides a curiosity about books and instilled the habit of reading among students.

A majority of the teachers, 78%, agreed or strongly agreed with this perception, while 9% disagreed and 13% were undecided.

The numerical data are presented in Table 1, and the frequency percentages are plotted as a function of Likert numbers in Figure 1.

Research Question 2

How effective has the California Reading Initiative been in providing for a balanced classroom literature program that focuses on higher order thinking skills?

Seven questions numbered from 5 through 11 were composed to explore this facet of the research. Question 5 dealt with student exposure to the various genre of literature gained through independent reading. A total of 81% of the responding teachers felt that their students engaged in a wide variety of independent reading covering all of the literary genre, while 2% disagreed and 17% of the teachers were undecided.

Question 6 sought to determine whether the California Reading Initiative had been effective in exposing the students to literary selections from each major literary area (fiction, non-fiction, poetry and drama). A total of 89% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed, while 2% disagreed and 9% were undecided.

Question 7 dealt with providing frequent opportunities for students to hear literature read orally and interpreted by both students and teachers. A large majority of teachers, 92%, agreed or strongly agreed that students

Table 1

Frequency Percentages of Positive and Negative Attitudes Among
69 California Language Arts Teachers in Response to Questions on
Research Problem 1:

How do Teachers Perceive the Effectiveness of the
California Reading Initiative (CRI) in Motivating
Their Students to Engage in Independent Reading
(Outside of Classroom Assignments)?

<u>Type of Response</u>		<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>Responses</u>
<u>Likert Number</u>		5	4	3	2	1	
<u>Question</u>		<u>Frequency Percentages</u>					
1.	Independent student literary discussions	20	40	28	11	1	69
2.	Independent student reading of periodicals, etc.	13	27	47	13	-	68
3.	Voluntary "book sharing" of books read independently by students	29	37	18	16	-	68
4.	Reading atmosphere in the classroom	39	39	13	9	-	69

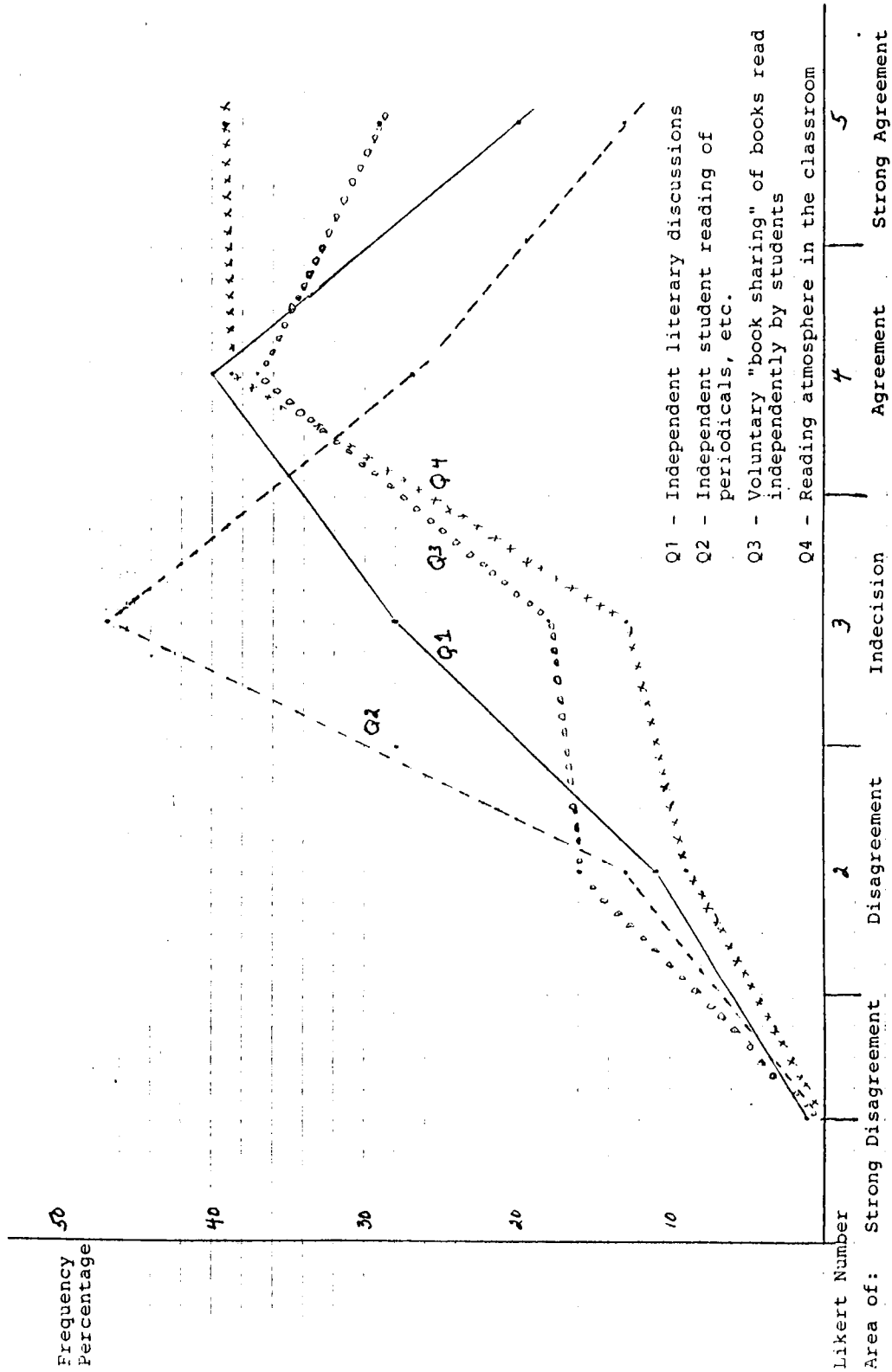


Figure 1. Frequency Percentage as a Function of Likert Number Among 69 California Language Arts Teachers Responding to Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 (Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4) on

Research Problem 1:
How Do Teachers Perceive the Effectiveness of the California Reading Initiative (CRI) in Motivating Their Students to Engage in Independent Reading (Outside of Classroom Assignments)?

have frequent opportunities to hear and discuss the oral reading of literature, while 3% disagreed and 5% were undecided.

In Question 8 the teachers were asked if adequate classroom time was being allotted to the core program in lieu of filling in blanks on ditto sheets. On this issue a total of 81% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed, while 6% disagreed and 13% were undecided.

Question 9 had to do with a literature program that stimulates questioning techniques by teachers that encourage students to utilize higher-order thinking skills and background knowledge. A total of 89% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, 2% disagreed, while 9% of the teachers were undecided.

In Question 10 the teachers were asked to respond to the statement that the classroom literature program provides opportunities for students in departmentalized schools to apply literary selections studied to other curricular areas (through cross-disciplinary planning). A total of 67% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while 4% disagreed and 29% were undecided.

Question 11 asked the teachers to respond to the statement that their classroom literature program includes instructional programs that guide students to focus on aesthetic, ethical and cultural issues in our society. A total of 75% of the teachers responding agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while 7% disagreed and 18% were undecided.

The numerical data are presented in Table 2, and the frequency percentages are plotted as a function of Likert numbers in Figure 2.

Table 2

Frequency Percentages of Positive and Negative Attitudes Among
69 California Language Arts Teachers in Response to Questions on
Research Problem 2:

How Effective has the California Reading Initiative (CRI)
Been in Providing a Balanced Classroom Literature Program that
Focuses on Higher-Order Thinking Skills?

<u>Type of Response</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Total Responses</u>
<u>Likert Number</u>	5	4	3	2	1	
<u>Question</u>	<u>Frequency Percentages</u>					
5. Various genre of literature	33	48	17	2	-	69
6. Selections from each major literary area	43	46	9	2	-	69
7. Oral reading of literature	49	43	5	3	-	69
8. Allocation of adequate class-room time for the "core" program	37	44	13	6	-	69
9. Use of higher-order thinking skills	38	51	9	2	-	69
10. Application of literary selections to other curricular areas through cross-disciplinary planning	16	51	19	4	-	69
11. Focus on aesthetic ethical and cultural issues	23	52	18	7	-	69

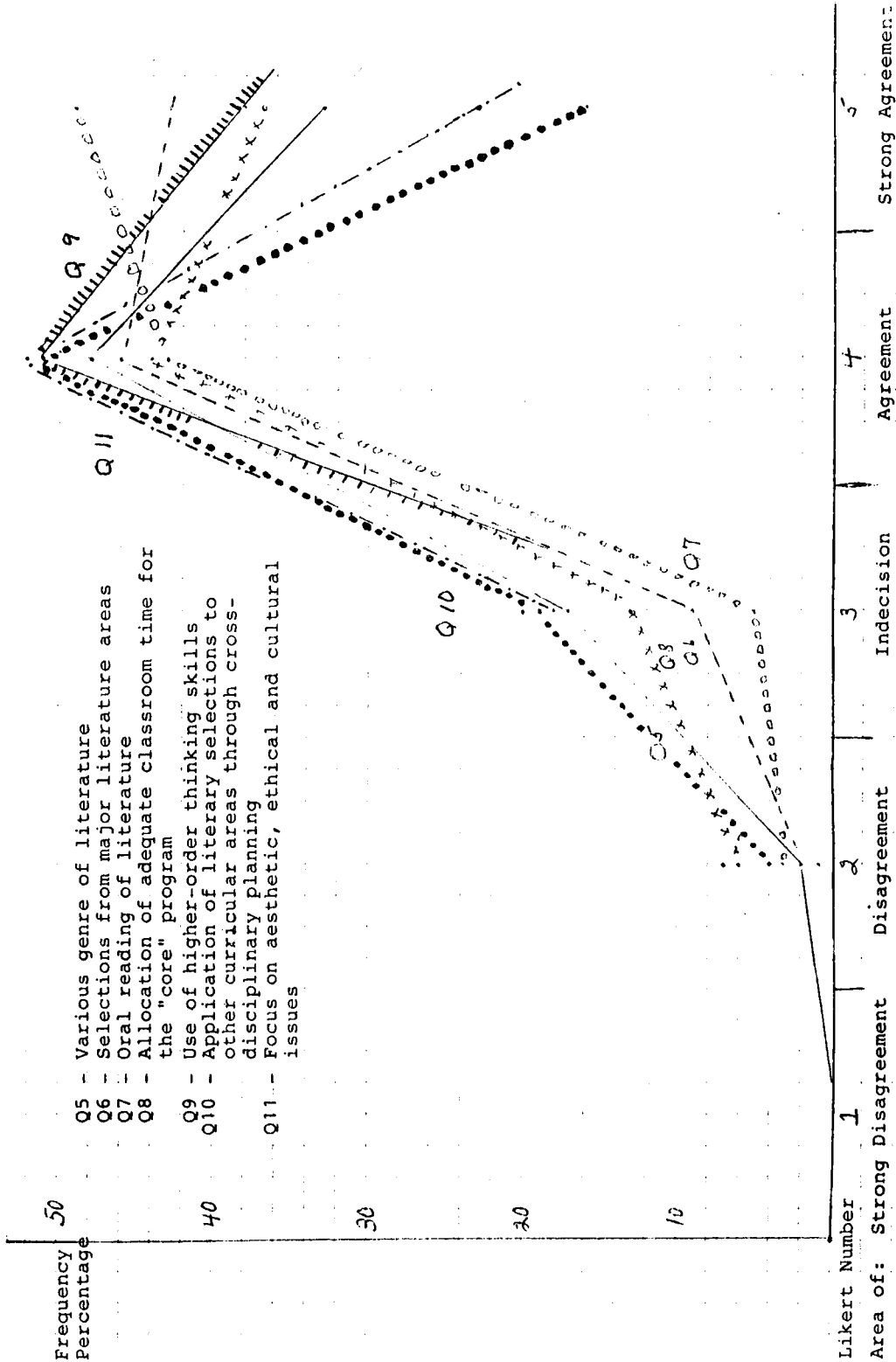


Figure 2. Frequency Percentage as a Function of Likert Number Among 69 California Language Arts Teachers Responding to Questions 5 through 11 (Q5 through Q11) on

Research Problem 2:
How Effective has the California Reading Initiative (CRI) been in
Providing a Balanced Classroom Literature Program that
Focuses on Higher-Order Thinking Skills?

Research Question 3

How effective has the whole-language approach of the English Language Arts Framework been in providing for a schoolwide developmental writing program across the curriculum?

Six questions were used to address this topic (Questions 12 through 17). On Question 12 the teachers were asked to comment on the statement that the English Language Arts Framework had been effective in providing a K-8 developmental program articulated and implemented at all grade levels. A majority, 62% of the responding teachers, agreed with this statement, 7% disagreed, while 31% were undecided.

In Question 13 the teachers were asked if the English Language Arts Framework had been effective in providing an oral language program with a variety of speaking and listening activities, integrated with reading and writing. A total of 82% of the teachers responded positively to the statement, while 6% disagreed and 12% were undecided.

Question 14 sought to ascertain whether the framework had been effective in providing for a schoolwide writing program implemented by teachers of all subject areas. On this issue 67% of the respondents were positive in their response (agreeing or strongly agreeing), while 23% reacted negatively (disagreed or strongly disagreed) and 10% were undecided.

In Question 15 the teachers were asked if the framework had been effective in providing a writing program where prime attention was focused

on content and fluency before attention to the mechanics of writing. A total of 77% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the framework had a positive effect in this area, while 4% reacted negatively and 19% were undecided.

Question 16 sought to find out how teachers felt about the effectiveness of the English Language Arts Framework in providing a writing program that focused on all stages of the writing process from prewriting to post-writing. A total of 79% of the teachers responded favorably as to the effectiveness of the framework on their writing program, while 4% disagreed and 17% were undecided.

Question 17 asked the teachers to respond to the statement that the English Language Arts Framework had been effective in providing learning opportunities regarding the conventions of writing as the need arises and during the actual writing process. A total of 76% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed, while 2% disagreed and 22% were undecided as to the effect.

Numerical data are given in Table 3 and frequency percentages as a function of Likert numbers are plotted in Figure 3.

Research Question 4

How does a whole-language school environment meet the needs of all students (average, gifted, minority, etc.)?

Table 3

Frequency Percentages of Positive and Negative Attitudes Among
69 California Language Arts Teachers in Response to Questions on
Research Problem 3:

How Effective has the Whole-Language Approach of the
English Language Arts Framework Been in Providing for a
School-wide Developmental Writing Program Across the Curriculum?

<u>Type of Response</u>	<u>Strongly</u>					<u>Total</u>
	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	
<u>Likert Number</u>	5	4	3	2	1	
<u>Question</u>		<u>Frequency Percentages</u>				
12. A K-8 develop mental writing program at all grade levels	16	46	31	7	-	69
13. An oral language program inte- grated with read- ing and writing	30	52	12	6	-	69
14. A school-wide writing program for all subject areas.	24	43	10	20	3	69
15. A writing pro- gram focusing on content and fluency	31	46	19	4	-	67
16. A writing pro- gram from pre- writing to post-writing	30	49	17	4	-	69
17. Learning the con- ventions of writing during the actual writing process	22	54	22	1	1	69

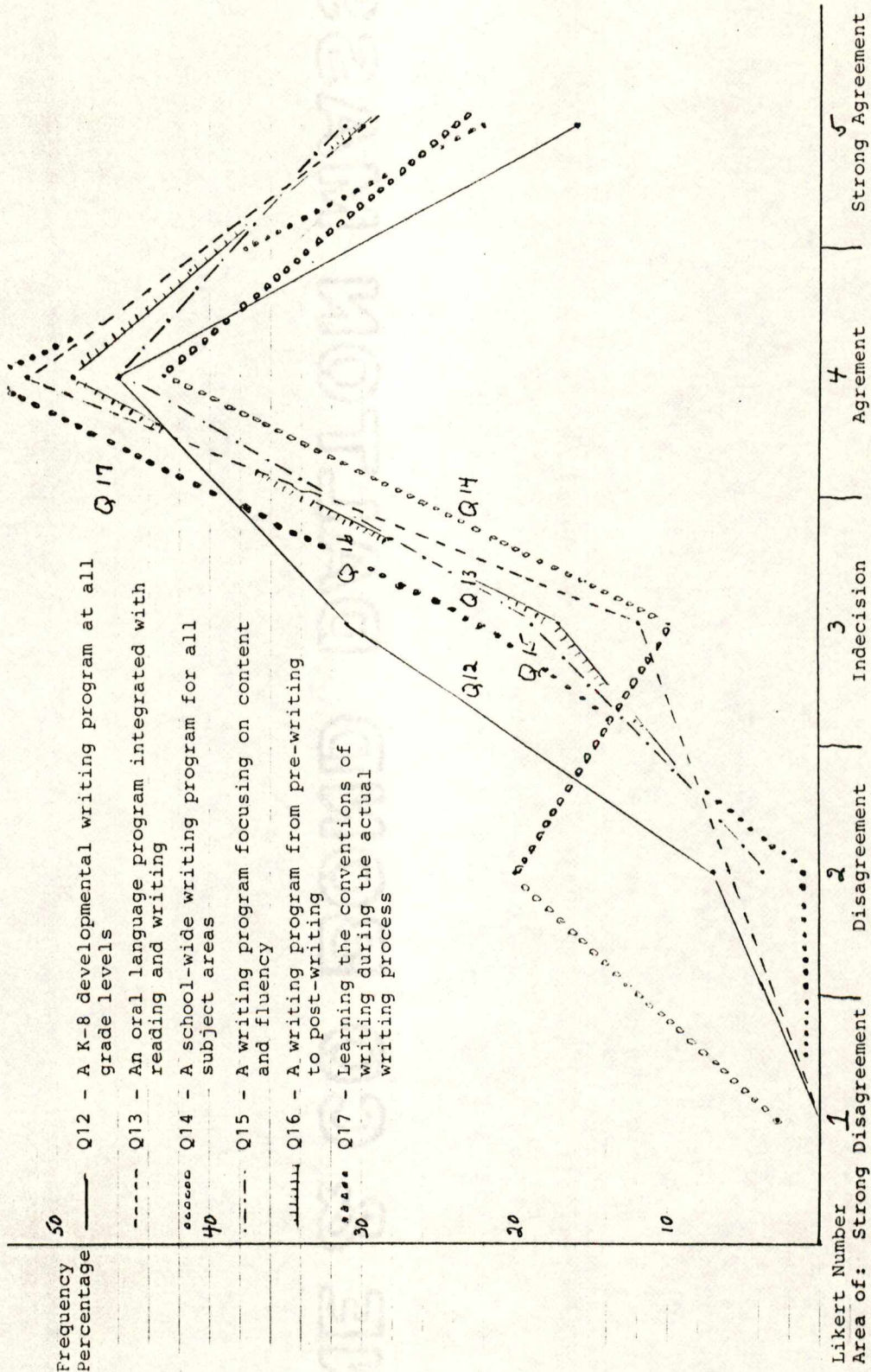


Figure 3. Frequency Percentage as a Function of Likert Number Among 69 California Language Arts Teachers Responding to Questions 12 through 17 (Q12 through Q17) on Research Problem 3:

How Effective has the Whole-Language Approach of the English Language Arts Framework been in Providing for a School-wide Developmental Writing Program Across the Curriculum?

Six questions were used to address this issue. The questions are numbered from 18 through 23.

Question 18 sought to determine how effective the California Reading Initiative has been in meeting the needs of all students by inclusion of multicultural literature in the reading program as well as selections by known English literary authors. A total of 75% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their literature program met the needs of all students through the inclusion of multicultural literature, while 9% disagreed and 16% were undecided.

Question 19 dealt with the effectiveness of the California Reading Initiative in increasing minority student participation in classroom discussion on literary selections. A total of 61% of the teachers responding agreed or strongly agreed that the California Reading Initiative had a positive effect on minority student participation in classroom discussions on literary selections, while 15% disagreed and 24% were undecided.

Question 20 sought to determine how effective the California Reading Initiative had been in encouraging students' personal response to literature and the avoidance of imposed single "correct" interpretations. A large majority, 90%, of the teachers responded positively (agreed or strongly agreed), 3% disagreed, while 7% were undecided as to the effect.

Question 21 sought to determine how effective the California Reading Initiative was in meeting the needs of all students by stressing the development of minority students' basic English skills before requiring them to write in English. A total of 55% of the responding teachers felt that

the California Reading Initiative had a positive effect in catering to this aspect of the minority students' needs, while 8% disagreed and 37% of the respondents were undecided.

Question 22 dealt with providing a schoolwide program where students receive recognition for their excellent literary writings. A majority, 71%, of the teachers felt positive about this effect of the California Reading Initiative, 16% of the teachers disagreed, while 13% were undecided.

In Question 23 teachers were asked whether opportunity was provided for all students to enter district, state and national competition to receive recognition for excellence. In this case 68% of the teachers felt that this was a positive effect of the California Reading Initiative, while 15% disagreed and 17% were undecided.

The numerical data are presented in Table 4, while frequency percentages are plotted as a function of Likert numbers in Figure 4.

Research Question 5

What is the role and form of evaluation in a whole-language curriculum?

Seven questions were used to address this issue (Questions 24 through 30).

In Question 24 the teachers were asked to respond to the statement that assessment in whole-language programs did not take up excessive classroom time at the expense of instructional time. A total of 44% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, while 21% disagreed and 35% of the teachers were undecided.

Table 4

Frequency Percentages of Positive and Negative Attitudes Among
69 California Language Arts Teachers in Response to Questions on
Research Problem 4:

How Does a Whole-Language School Environment Meet
the Needs of All Students (Average, Gifted, Minority, etc.)?

<u>Type of Response</u>		<u>Strongly</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Likert Number</u>		<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>Responses</u>
Question		Frequency Percentages					
18.	Racial and ethnic literary selections are included	29	46	16	9	-	69
19.	Minority student participation is increased	26	35	24	15	-	68
20.	Student's personal response to literature is increased	32	58	7	3	-	69
21.	Basic English skills of minority students are developed	19	36	37	8	-	67
22.	Excellent literary writings of students are recognized	28	43	13	13	3	69
23.	Opportunity is provided for students to enter district, state and national competition	20	48	17	15	-	69

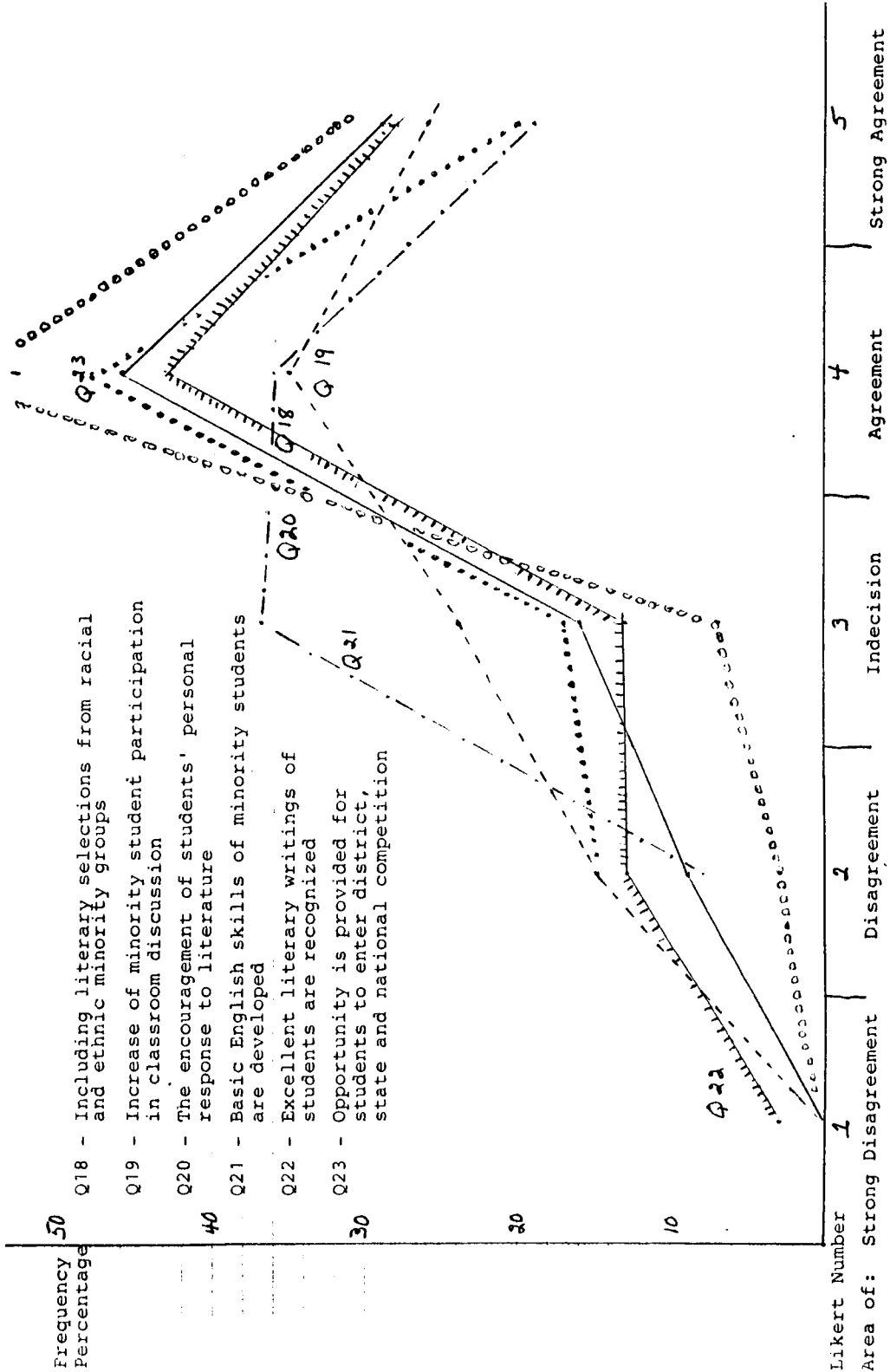


Figure 4. Frequency Percentage as a Function of Likert Number Among 69 California Language Arts Teachers Responding to Questions 18 through 23 (Q18 through Q23) on Research Problem 4:

How Does a Whole Language School Environment Meet the Needs of All Students (Average, Gifted, Minority, etc.)?

In Question 25 teachers were asked to respond to the statement that evaluation in a whole-language program has been effective in providing informal classroom assessment of students' reading and writing where subjective testing is emphasized over objective testing. A total of 60% of the teachers responding agreed with this statement, 17% disagreed and 23% were undecided.

In Question 26 the teachers were asked if the role and form of evaluation in a whole-language program had been effective in providing for informal classroom assessment of student's motivation for reading indicated by the quantity and quality of student recreational reading. A total of 68% of the teachers felt positive about this aspect of whole-language assessment, while 10% were negative and 22% were undecided.

Question 27 required the teachers to comment on the effectiveness of whole-language assessment in providing for self monitoring by students of their own writing and that of their peers. A majority of teachers, 66%, felt positive about this particular role and form of evaluation in their classrooms, while 6% were negative and 28% were undecided.

Question 28 was directed at grade-school teachers only and dealt with informal assessment of students' decoding skills during the actual process of oral reading. A total of 69% of teachers responding felt positive about this form of assessment in their classrooms, while 8% were negative and 23% were undecided about the effectiveness of this method of assessing students' proficiency in decoding skills in their classrooms.

Question 29 dealt with the effectiveness of whole-language assessment in complying with formal state assessment of students' proficiency in reading and writing. A total of 50% of the teachers felt positive about this aspect

of whole-language assessment in their classrooms, while 18% of the teachers felt negative (disagreed) and 32% of the teachers were undecided.

Question 30 sought to determine how classroom teachers perceived the effectiveness of the role and form of whole-language assessment in providing a method of reporting students' progress in reading and writing to parents. A total of 52% of the responding teachers felt positive about this aspect of whole-language assessment, while 16% were negative and 32% were undecided about this effect.

The numerical data are presented in Table 5, while the frequency percentages are plotted as a function of the Likert numbers in Figures 5.

Table 5

Frequency Percentages of Positive and Negative Attitudes Among
69 California Language Arts Teachers in Response to Questions on
Research Problem 5:

What is the Role and Form of Evaluation in a Whole Language Curriculum?

<u>Type of Response</u>		<u>Strongly Agree</u>			<u>Strongly Disagree</u>		<u>Total Responses</u>
<u>Likert Number</u>		<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	
<u>Question</u>		<u>Frequency Percentages</u>					
24.	Assessment does not require excessive classroom time at the expense of instructional time	16	28	35	20	1	69
25.	Subjective testing is emphasized over objective testing in student classroom assessment of reading and writing	17	43	23	17	-	69
26.	Informal classroom assessment of students' reading motivation	17	51	22	10	-	69
27.	Student self-monitoring of their own writing	14	52	28	6	-	69
28.	Informal classroom assessment of students' decoding skills during oral reading	23	46	23	7	1	61
29.	Formal state assessment program of students' reading and writing	19	31	32	15	3	68
30.	Reporting of a students' progress in reading and writing to parents	16	36	32	11	5	69

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The problem of illiteracy among adult Americans has been the focus of growing concern among leaders in industry, business, government, the armed forces and education. As the rapid advancement in technological research requires a sophisticated population with a high level of literacy, major measures need to be taken to alleviate this problem. However, if adult illiteracy is not to remain a permanent problem, we need to take an aggressive approach to preventing the problem at the elementary and high school level.

In the report Becoming a Nation of Readers, the Commission on Reading (1985) addressed the problems of illiteracy/aliteracy among our youth, challenging educators nationwide to initiate major reforms in their schools that will not only produce citizens who read with high levels of skill, but also possess the motivation to do so frequently with satisfaction. Among the recommendations outlined in the Commission's report was a move away from the fragmented skills approach to reading to a more holistic, meaning-oriented approach. In addition, prominent reading theorists have indicated that a major contributing factor to illiteracy/aliteracy among our youth is the heavy emphasis on the fragmented approach to reading and language arts, with almost total neglect of "writing" in the curriculum.

Prominent reading theorist Kenneth Goodman points out that a child learns to read by reading and exposure to the printed word must occur often in order to reinforce reading and writing vocabulary. Many educators in this country

and in other English speaking countries like Canada, Australia and New Zealand have documented the merits of a whole-language curriculum where literature becomes the focus of the language arts instead of basal texts, and writing is an integral component of the curriculum.

California was one of the first states to heed the Commission's recommendations, with the launching of the California Reading Initiative by Superintendent of Instruction, Bill Honig in 1986. The California Reading Initiative, based on whole-language philosophy, is a master plan that advocates the use of quality literature as a foundation of the K-12 reading program integrated with the English Language Arts Framework, with a major emphasis on the Reading/Writing connection. How California teachers in one large district perceive the effectiveness of a whole-language approach to literacy was the focus of this study.

This chapter contains a summary of the findings of the study. It also presents the major conclusions which were drawn from these findings. Recommendations for further research are also contained in this chapter.

The Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of state-wide whole-language approaches to literacy as perceived by teachers' attitudes and student performance in their classrooms. The central questions of this study were:

1. How do teachers perceive the effectiveness of the California Reading Initiative in motivating their students to engage in independent reading (outside of classroom assignments)?

2. How effective has the California Reading Initiative been in providing for a balanced classroom literature program that focuses on higher-order thinking skills.

3. How effective has the whole-language approach of the English Language Arts Framework been in providing for a schoolwide developmental writing program across the curriculum?

4. How does a whole-language school environment meet the needs of all students (average, gifted, minority, etc.)?

5. What is the role and form of evaluation in a whole-language curriculum?

Procedures

A descriptive approach using a two-part structured questionnaire was used for this study. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher and used to determine teachers' perceptions of whole-language approaches to literacy.

The population used for this study was Reading/Language Arts teachers from one large school district in California (San Jose Unified School District) comprised of 25 elementary schools and 7 middle schools. Cluster sampling was used to select teachers from 10 elementary and 4 middle schools to parti-

cipate in the study. Sixty-nine teachers out of ninety-six who were sent questionnaires responded to the survey.

Each principal from the selected schools was contacted by telephone and the questionnaires were mailed to the principal to be distributed to their Reading/Language Arts teachers. The completed questionnaires (69/96) were picked up by the researcher two to three weeks later.

Data generated by the questionnaire were analyzed in order to answer the five research questions posed in this study.

Findings

Research Question 1: How do teachers perceive the effectiveness of the California Reading Initiative in motivating their students to engage in independent reading (outside of classroom assignments)?

The majority of teachers agree that the California Reading Initiative had "turned their students on to books" instilling in them a curiosity about books and the habit of reading. Teachers also perceive their students' interest in voluntary book sharing and involvement in group literary discussion about books has increased. However, the majority of teachers were undecided about the effect of the California Reading Initiative on students' independent reading outside of class.

Research Question 2: How effective has the California Reading Initiative been in providing for a balanced classroom literature program that focuses on higher-order thinking skills?

The majority of the teachers felt that the California Reading Initiative had a positive effect on exposing students to a wide variety of literary works of all genre, both through independent reading and classroom reading. The majority of teachers also felt that their students had frequent opportunities in the curriculum to hear literature read orally and interpreted by students and teachers. The majority of teachers also felt that the major part of the classroom time was spent in actual involvement with literature as opposed to filling in ditto sheets with isolated skill exercises. As part of the literature program the majority of teachers felt stimulated to adopt questioning techniques that motivated students to use higher-order thinking skills. Most teachers felt that through crossdisciplinary planning literary selections could be applied to other subject areas (through thematic units, etc.). Most teachers also felt that classroom literature programs provided opportunities for students to focus on aesthetic, cultural and ethical issues in our society.

Research Question 3: How effective has the whole-language approach of the English Language Arts Framework been in providing for a schoolwide developmental writing program across the curriculum?

Overall teachers were very positive about writing in the curriculum. Most teachers felt that the K-8 developmental writing program was integrated effectively with oral and listening activities and extended to all subject areas through crossdisciplinary planning. The majority of the teachers also

felt that the classroom writing program as outlined by the English Language Arts Framework concentrated primarily on content and fluency in the initial stages of the writing process before attention to the mechanics of writing. In addition, the majority of the teachers felt that the Framework effectively provided for all stages of the writing process from pre-writing to post-writing, with adequate attention devoted to the conventions of writing during the actual writing process and as the need arose.

Research Question 4: How does a whole-language school environment meet the needs of all students (average, gifted, minority, etc.)?

In general teachers responding to this area of the study felt very positive about the effectiveness of their classroom literature program as it applied to all students from their diversified cultural and ethnic population through the inclusion of multicultural literature as well as known English literary authors. Teachers also noted an increase in minority student classroom participation during literary discussions, and felt that the whole-language classroom environment encouraged students' free personal response and interpretation of the literature. Many teachers also felt that the whole-language school environment had a positive effect on bilingual students' mastery of basic English skills before being required to write in English. The majority of teachers also felt that their whole-language school environment catered to the needs of talented and gifted students by providing opportunities for them to receive recognition for their excellent literary writings in district, state and national competition.

Research Question 5: What is the role and form of evaluation in a whole-language curriculum?

On this issue teachers appeared to have mixed feelings about the extent of classroom time devoted to informal assessment and subjective evaluation of student performance at the expense of instructional time. Although a moderate percentage (44%) of teachers did not feel that excessive time was devoted to assessment, a large percentage of teachers appeared to be undecided or disagreed with the other teachers. A majority of teachers agreed that whole-language assessment lent itself effectively to subjective testing of students' reading and writing over objective testing. However, many teachers were undecided or negative about this aspect of whole-language assessment.

When teachers were asked to comment on the effectiveness of informal assessment of student motivation for reading, a large majority of the teachers felt positive about this aspect of whole-language assessment. Teachers as a whole felt that student selfmonitoring and peermonitoring was an effective method of informal assessment, although a fair percentage were undecided. In assessing student proficiency in decoding skills, the majority of the responding teachers felt that this could be effectively performed during the actual oral reading process.

When teachers were asked if the whole-language informal assessment of student reading and writing complied with the formal state assessment requirements of student proficiency in reading and writing, only half of the teachers felt it did. Teachers were split again when asked if the informal assessment procedures of a whole-language curriculum provided a viable method of reporting student progress in reading and writing to parents.

Conclusions

An analysis of the findings produced the following major conclusions:

1. Teachers see a literature-based reading program as a positive alternative to a basal text in motivating their students to becoming actively involved in reading, discussing, analyzing and writing about the literature. This conclusion correlates with documented data from research of the literature (Chapter II) on literature-based reading programs.

2. The reading/writing connection (a major component of any whole-language curriculum) is an important component of the California Language Arts Framework, providing for a schoolwide developmental writing program across the curriculum while attending to all areas of the writing process from pre-writing to post-writing.

3. Subjective assessment versus objective assessment appears to be one area of the whole-language movement about which classroom teachers have mixed perceptions. Concerns vary from extent of classroom time devoted to informal assessment to compliance with formal state assessment requirements, and accountability to parents. These concerns were similar to concerns teachers in pilot programs across the country had voiced as documented in the literature researched in Chapter II of this study.

Discussion

Jonathan Kozol in his book Illiterate America noted that it would take more than isolated reform efforts to transform the American public into a "nation of readers", and that a national campaign in the form of statewide mandated initiatives was needed to address the recommendations outlined in the Commission of Reading's report. California's Reading Initiative is an example of one state's approach to enacting major reform efforts in its schools. Other countries' reform efforts as cited in this research, New Zealand, Canada, Australia, etc., have all based the success of their whole-language literacy programs on the fact that these programs evolved from a national initiative rather than sporadic and isolated reform efforts on the part of individual teachers. It would appear then that state-mandated initiatives are essential to the success of a national whole-language based approach to literacy in this

Teacher training courses and workshops in whole-language philosophy and methodology are an integral part of the California Reading Initiative. However, if the whole-language movement is to take hold on a national basis, teacher-training colleges will need to incorporate whole-language methodology courses into their curriculum for teacher certification. In New Zealand, according to Cutting & Milligan "teacher training colleges appear to be much more involved with schools than in the United States, and they all seem to advocate the same type of beginning reading instruction producing teachers who have similar views about the way reading should be taught" (Cutting & Milligan, 1979).

Teacher empowerment is an outgrowth of the whole-language movement.

It is a political issue and has to do with teachers reclaiming their classrooms from state textbook adoption committees, standardized testing proponents, etc. Accountability factors have largely been responsible for state government programs of skills-based instruction and evaluation procedures. In this study teachers were perceived to be relatively undecided about evaluation in their whole-language classrooms and complying with formal state assessment requirements. However, at the time of this survey the California State Department of Education was in the process of enacting a more comprehensive approach to evaluation of students' proficiency in reading and writing to comply with whole-language curricula. The research of the literature and this survey indicate that teachers feel the need for adequate training in whole-language assessment procedures, as well as empowerment over the role and form of evaluation in their classrooms. Without this training and empowerment teachers may be hesitant to abandon the basal and the traditional skills model of evaluation over the more comprehensive subjective evaluation of whole language.

In summary, from this study I see the success of a national whole-language movement dependent largely on the following three issues:

1. State-mandated initiatives directing and guiding local school districts in adopting a whole-language curriculum for their schools.
2. Collaboration and cooperation between state departments of education and teacher-training institutions, in teacher training reform.
3. Transfer of power for curriculum and assessment from the state bureaucratic level to the classroom teacher at the grass roots level (empowerment of teachers).

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings and conclusions of this study generated the following recommendations for further study.

1. A similar study on statewide whole-language approaches to literacy applicable to another state's program.
2. A follow-up study--10 years after the launching of the California Reading Initiative.
3. Phonics in whole language--How successful is incidental phonics for beginning readers in a whole-language curriculum?
4. A study on the effectiveness of alternative assessment procedures applicable to whole-language assessment and in compliance with formal state assessment requirements.
5. A study on the extent to which teacher-training institutions are offering courses in whole-language methodology.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Category	Demographic Characteristics		
Age	20-29	30-39	40+
Total years of Full Time Teaching	0-3	4-7	8-11
Grades Taught	K-3	4-8	
Ethnic Makeup of Students in My Class	Mostly Ethnic Majority	Mostly Ethnic Minority	Even Distri- bution

**THE CALIFORNIA READING
INITIATIVE HAS BEEN
VERY EFFECTIVE IN:**

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. Motivating students to engage in group student directed literary discussions and activities. (Independent of assigned work.)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Motivating students independent reading of newspapers, periodicals, etc. (As evidenced by an increase in knowledge of current events.)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Eliciting voluntary "book sharing" of selections read independently by students	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. An atmosphere in the classroom that provides a curiosity about books and the habit of reading.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

**THE CALIFORNIA READING
INITIATIVE HAS BEEN VERY
EFFECTIVE IN PROVIDING A
CLASSROOM LITERATURE
PROGRAM THAT:**

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
5. Provides students with good knowledge of the various genre of literature gained through independent reading.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Exposes students to selections from each major literary area. (Fiction, Non-Fiction, Poetry, Drama)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Provides frequent opportunities for students to hear literature read orally and interpreted by students and teachers.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Allocates adequate classroom time to the "core program" in lieu of filling in blanks on ditto sheets.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
9. Stimulates questioning techniques by teachers that encourage students to utilize higher order thinking skills and background knowledge.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Provides opportunities for students in departmentalized schools to apply literary selections studied to other curricular areas. (Through cross disciplinary planning.)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Includes instructional programs that guide students to focus on aesthetic, ethical and cultural issues in our society.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

**THE WHOLE LANGUAGE APPROACH
OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
FRAMEWORK HAS BEEN VERY
EFFECTIVE IN PROVIDING:**

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
12. A K-8 development program articulated and implemented at all grade levels.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. An Oral Language program providing a variety of speaking and listening activities integrated with reading and writing.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. A Schoolwide writing program implemented by teachers of all subject areas.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. A writing program that focuses initially on content and fluency of student's writing before attention to the mechanics of writing.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
16. A writing program that includes attention to the various stages of the writing process from pre-writing to post writing.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
17. Learning opportunities regarding the conventions of writing as the need arises. (During the actual writing process.)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

**THE CALIFORNIA READING
INITIATIVE HAS BEEN VERY
EFFECTIVE IN MEETING THE
NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS BY:**

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
18. Including literary selections from racial and ethnic minority groups in our society as well as known English literary authors.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
19. Increasing minority student participation in classroom discussion on literary selections.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
20. The encouragement of students' personal response to literature and the avoidance of imposed single "correct" interpretations.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
21. The development of minority students' basic English skills before requiring them to write in English.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
22. Providing a school wide program where students receive recognition for their excellent literary writings.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
23. Providing opportunity for students to enter district, state and national competition and receive recognition for excellence.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

**THE ROLE AND FORM OF
EVALUATION IN A "WHOLE
LANGUAGE" PROGRAM HAS
BEEN VERY EFFECTIVE IN
PROVIDING FOR:**

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
24. Assessment programs that do not take up excessive classroom time at the expense of instructional time.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
25. A program of informal classroom assessment of student proficiency in reading and writing in which subjective testing is emphasized over objective testing.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
26. Informal classroom assessment of students' motivation for reading. (Indicated by the quantity and quality of student recreational reading.)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
27. Self monitoring by students of their own writing development and that of their peers.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
28. Informal classroom assessment of students proficiency in decoding skills exhibited during actual oral reading. (Grade school teachers only.)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
29. Formal State Assessment program of a student's proficiency in reading and writing.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
30. A method of reporting students' progress in reading and writing to parents.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX B
PILOT STUDY DATA AND RELIABILITY

Table 6. Pilot Study Data

Attitudinal Data Expressed in Terms of Likert Numbers From Eight Language Arts Teachers Responding to Thirty Questions (Q1 through Q30) Distributed Over Five Major Research Areas: Motivating Independent Reading (Q1-Q4), Providing a Classroom Literature Program (Q5-Q11), Providing a Reading/Writing Program (Q12-Q17), Meeting the Needs of All Students (Q18-Q23), and Providing Assessment Programs (Q24-Q30).

Respondent	Motivating Independent Reading			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1	4	4	4	4
2	5	4	5	5
3	4	4	3	4
4	5	5	5	4
5	3	3	3	3
6	5	4	5	4
7	4	4	4	4
8	3	4	5	5

Respondent	Providing a Classroom Literature Program						
	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
1	4	4	4	5	5	5	5
2	5	5	5	4	5	4	4
3	4	5	5	4	5	5	3
4	5	4	3	3	2	4	4
5	3	4	4	3	3	5	4
6	5	5	4	4	4	5	4
7	4	5	5	4	5	5	5
8	4	4	4	3	4	3	2

Respondent	Providing A Reading/Writing Program					
	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17
1	3	5	5	5	5	5
2	4	5	5	5	5	5
3	3	4	4	4	4	4
4	2	4	4	4	5	5
5	3	3	3	3	3	3
6	3	4	5	5	5	5
7	1	4	4	4	4	3
8	3	5	5	4	5	3

Table 6. Pilot Study Data (Continued)

Respondent	Meeting The Needs of All Students					
	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23
1	5	4	4	4	4	4
2	5	5	5	5	5	5
3	5	5	5	5	5	5
4	5	2	3	4	5	2
5	4	4	4	3	3	3
6	5	4	5	5	4	4
7	5	5	3	2	4	5
8	5	4	5	4	3	3

Respondent	Providing Assessment Programs						
	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30
1	3	4	4	4	4	4	4
2	4	4	4	3	4	1	4
3	2	4	4	4	5	5	5
4	2	4	4	2	4	2	3
5	3	3	4	3	3	3	3
6	2	4	5	5	5	5	4
7	1	2	4	2	4	4	4
8	3	3	2	2	4	4	3

Table 7. Demographic Information on Eight Language Arts Teachers Responding to Thirty Questions on the Pilot Study Questionnaire.

Respondent	Age, years	Teaching Experience	Grades Taught	Ethnic Percent
1	20-29	0-3	4-8	75
2	40+	12+	K-3	25
3	30-39	8-11	4-8	25
4	30-39	4-7	K-3	50
5	20-29	4-7	4-8	50
6	40+	12+	K-3	25
7	20-29	0-3	K-3	25
8	20-29	4-7	4-8	25

Table 8. Calculating the Split-half Reliability of Each Respondent With Pilot Study Data From Eight Respondents (Gay, 1976, p. 94; Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 284).

Respondent	Sum:odd	Sum:even	Reliability: Quotient <1	Sum:1st half	Sum:2nd half	Reliability: Quotient <1
1	65	63	0.969	66	62	0.939
2	67	67	1.000	70	64	0.914
3	67	66	0.985	64	69	0.928
4	53	57	0.930	58	52	0.897
5	48	51	0.941	50	49	0.980
6	68	65	0.956	66	67	0.985
7	58	56	0.966	62	52	0.839
8	54	57	0.947	58	53	0.914

Arithmetic Mean
Corrected Value

96.2%
98.1%

92.5%
96.1%

The odd sum is the sum of Likert numbers assigned by each respondent to the odd-numbered questions in the Questionnaire (Q1 + Q3 + Q5.....Q29), while the even sum is the sum of Likert numbers assigned by each respondent to the even-numbered questions (Q2 + Q4 + Q6.....Q30). Similarly the first-half sum is the sum of Likert numbers assigned by each respondent to the first 15 questions in the Questionnaire (Q1 + Q2 + Q3.....Q15), while the second-half sum is the sum of Likert numbers assigned by each respondent to the questions in the back-half of the Questionnaire (Q16 + Q17 + Q18.....Q30). The sum of the numerical scores rather than the mean can be used (Murphy & Likert, 1967, p. 44).

The reliability of the total test r_{tt} is obtained by using the Spearman-Brown formula: $r_{tt} = 2r_{sh} / (1 + r_{sh})$, where r_{sh} is the arithmetic mean calculated above.

APPENDIX C
MAIN STUDY DATA AND RELIABILITY

Table 9. Main Study Data

Attitudinal Data Expressed in Terms of Likert Numbers from Sixty-Nine Language Arts Teachers Responding to Thirty Questions (Q1 through Q30), Distributed Over Five Major Research Areas:
 Motivating Independent Reading (Q1-Q4), Providing a Classroom Literature Program (Q5-Q11), Providing a Reading/Writing Program (Q12-Q17), Meeting the Needs of All Students (Q18-Q23), and Providing Assessment Programs (Q24-Q30).

Respondent	Reading Motivation				Classroom Literature Program						
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
1	3	3	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	3	4
2	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	5	3	3	4
3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	4
4	4	2	2	3	4	5	4	4	4	3	4
5	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4
6	4	4	2	2	4	3	4	2	4	4	4
7	5	5	3	5	4	2	4	3	4	4	2
8	3	3	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
9	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
10	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	4
11	1	2	2	3	4	5	4	4	4	4	4
12	4	3	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	4
13	4	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5
14	2	2	2	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	3
15	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	5	4	4
16	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4
17	4	4	3	3	5	5	5	5	5	4	5
18	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
19	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4
20	3	3	4	5	3	4	5	5	5	5	5
21	3	2	4	4	3	4	2	4	4	4	4
22	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	4
23	4	3	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	4	3
24	4	3	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	3	4
25	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3
26	2	4	3	5	5	5	4	3	5	4	4
27	4	3	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
28	4	3	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4
29	4	3	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	3	3
30	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4
31	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	3	5
32	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
33	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	4
34	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
35	4	3	2	4	3	4	5	4	4	4	3

Table 9. Main Study Data (Continued)

Respondent	Reading Motivation				Classroom Literature Program						
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
36	4	3	5	5	4	4	5	4	4	3	3
37	3	3	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
38	2	2	3	2	3	4	2	2	2	3	2
39	2	2	2	2	4	4	4	3	3	3	3
40	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4
41	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
42	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
43	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	3	4
44	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
45	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4
46	3	3	3	4	3	4	4	2	4	4	4
47	3	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
48	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	5
49	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
50	3	2	5	5	4	4	5	4	4	3	2
51	3	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
52	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
53	5	-	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
54	5	3	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	5
55	3	3	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
56	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	4
57	3	3	2	2	3	4	4	4	4	2	2
58	2	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	3	3	2
59	3	2	4	4	3	4	4	3	2	2	3
60	3	4	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	4	4
61	3	3	3	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4
62	3	3	-	4	4	5	5	5	4	-	4
63	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4
64	2	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	3	3
65	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5
66	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4
67	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	4
68	4	3	2	2	4	4	5	5	5	4	5
69	4	2	2	2	4	5	4	4	5	4	5

Table 9. Main Study Data (Continued)

	Reading/Writing Curriculum							Meeting Student Needs					
Respondent	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	
1	3	2	4	4	4	4	4	3	5	4	5	5	
2	4	4	5	5	5	5	3	3	3	4	5	5	
3	4	4	5	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	
4	4	3	4	4	4	4	5	3	4	4	4	3	
5	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	2	3	3	
6	3	3	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	2	3	4	
7	3	4	2	2	4	3	2	2	4	3	5	5	
8	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	
9	2	4	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	4	
10	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	4	
11	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	
12	4	2	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	2	
13	5	4	2	5	4	4	4	3	5	3	4	4	
14	4	4	2	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	
15	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	3	2	2	
16	4	4	2	4	4	1	4	4	4	4	4	2	
17	3	3	4	4	5	4	4	5	5	4	4	4	
18	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	-	
19	3	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	
20	4	4	3	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	
21	3	4	3	3	2	3	4	4	4	3	2	2	
22	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	
23	4	4	2	4	3	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	
24	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	
25	2	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	2	2	
26	4	4	2	3	4	3	5	4	4	4	2	3	
27	4	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	
28	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	
29	4	4	5	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	3	
30	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	5	4	
31	4	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	5	5	4	5	
32	5	5	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	5	5	
33	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	
34	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	
35	3	4	4	4	4	4	2	3	4	4	2	4	

Table 9. Main Study Data (Continued)

	Reading/Writing Curriculum						Meeting Student Needs					
Respondent	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23
36	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	4
37	4	5	4	2	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4
38	2	3	1	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	1	4
39	3	3	1	3	3	2	4	2	4	3	1	5
40	3	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	3	5	2
41	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
42	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
43	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	2
44	3	5	2	3	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
45	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	4	3
46	5	5	4	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	3	3
47	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	3	5	5
48	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4
49	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
50	3	3	3	4	4	4	2	2	4	4	5	4
51	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	4
52	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
53	3	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	3
54	3	5	4	5	3	4	5	5	5	5	4	3
55	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4
56	3	4	2	4	3	3	4	5	5	3	2	2
57	2	4	2	4	5	4	2	2	4	2	4	2
58	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	3	2
59	3	2	2	3	3	3	4	2	2	3	2	4
60	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4
61	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	5
62	3	4	5	5	5	4	4	-	4	4	5	4
63	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4
64	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	3
65	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	4	5	5
66	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
67	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	4	3	5	4
68	5	4	5	5	4	4	4	2	4	2	4	4
69	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	2	4	2	2	4

Table 9. Main Study Data (Continued)

Respondent	Assessment						
	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30
1	3	4	4	4	4	2	4
2	4	4	4	4	3	3	3
3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3
4	2	2	4	4	2	5	3
5	3	4	3	3	4	4	3
6	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
7	2	2	4	4	-	4	4
8	3	3	4	4	4	3	2
9	2	2	4	4	-	2	2
10	5	4	3	4	-	5	4
11	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
12	2	4	4	4	4	4	3
13	3	4	2	4	-	5	5
14	2	2	2	3	4	4	3
15	2	2	3	3	2	3	3
16	3	3	5	4	1	2	3
17	-	3	3	4	3	5	4
18	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
19	3	4	4	4	4	4	4
20	4	4	3	3	-	5	4
21	3	3	4	3	-	5	3
22	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
23	2	3	4	3	2	3	3
24	2	2	3	4	4	3	2
25	2	2	4	2	4	2	2
26	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
27	5	5	4	4	4	3	3
28	4	4	4	3	4	3	4
29	3	4	4	4	4	4	4
30	4	4	5	4	4	4	4
31	4	5	5	3	5	2	3
32	4	4	4	5	5	4	4
33	3	3	4	4	4	3	3
34	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
35	3	4	3	2	3	3	3

Table 9. Main Study Data (Continued)

Respondent	Assessment						
	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30
36	4	3	4	4	4	4	4
37	3	2	4	3	4	4	4
38	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
39	1	3	3	3	3	1	1
40	4	4	5	5	5	2	5
41	4	4	4	4	4	3	3
42	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
43	4	4	4	2	3	2	3
44	5	5	5	5	5	3	5
45	4	4	4	4	4	4	5
46	4	4	4	4	5	4	4
47	3	5	5	5	5	5	3
48	5	5	5	5	5	4	5
49	5	5	5	5	5	2	2
50	3	4	4	4	4	5	4
51	3	4	4	4	4	5	4
52	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
53	3	4	5	5	5	3	4
54	3	4	4	4	3	3	3
55	5	4	4	4	5	4	4
56	3	3	4	3	3	3	4
57	4	4	2	4	4	2	2
58	4	4	3	3	3	3	3
59	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
60	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
61	4	4	3	3	4	1	4
62	4	3	3	4	4	3	1
63	3	3	4	3	3	3	4
64	2	4	4	4	4	4	2
65	5	5	4	4	5	4	4
66	5	5	4	4	4	4	5
67	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
68	3	5	2	4	3	4	4
69	2	2	2	4	4	4	2

Table 10. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Respondent	Age	Teaching Exp. years	Grades Taught	Ethnic Percent
1	40+	12	K-3	50
2				
3	20-29	0-3	K-3	50
4	30-39	12	4-8	75
5	40+	4-7	K-3	25
6				
7	30-39	12	4-8	75
8	40+	4-7	4-8	25
9	40+	12	4-8	50
10	40+	12	K-3	50
11	40+	12	4-8	50
12	40+	12	K-3	50
13	40+	12	4-8	50
14	40+	12	4-8	25
15	40+	12	4-8	25
16	40+	12	K-3	75
17	30-39	4-7	4-8	50
18				
19	40+	12		75
20	40+	12	4-8	50
21	40+	12	4-8	
22	30-39	12	4-8	50
23	40+	12	4-8	50
24	40+	12	K-3	50
25	40+	12	K-3	50
26	40+	12	K-3	50
27	40+	12	K-3	50
28	40+	12	K-3	50
29	40+	12	4-8	75
30	40+	12	4-8	50
31	40+	12	K-3	50
32	40+	12	4-8	25
33	40+	12	K-3	50
34	40+	12	4-8	25
35	40+	12	K-3	50

Table 10. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (Continued)

Respondent	Age	Teaching Exp. years	Grades Taught	Ethnic Percent
36	40+	12	K-3	50
37	40+	12	K-3	50
38	40+	12	K-3	50
39	30-39	12	K-3	50
40	40+	12	K-3	25
41	20-29	0-3	K-3	50
42				
43	40+	12	4-8	25
44	30-39	0-3	K-3	25
45				
46	40+	12	K-3	25
47	40+	12	K-3	25
48	40+	12	K-3	25
49	40+	12	K-3	25
50	40+	4-7	K-3	50
51	40+	0-3	4-8	25
52	40+	4-7	4-8	25
53	40+	12	K-3	25
54	40+	12	K-3	25
55	40+	12	K-3	25
56	40+	12	K-3	50
57	40+	12	4-8	75
58	40+	12	4-8	50
59	40+	12	4-8	50
60	40+	12	4-8	25
61	40+	12	4-8	25
62	40+	12	K-3	50
63	40+	0-3	K-3	25
64	40+	12	4-8	25
65	40+	12	K-3	25
66	40+	12	K-3	75
67	40+	12	K-3	50
68	40+	12	4-8	25
69	40+	12	4-8	50

Table 11. Calculating the Split-half Reliability of Each Respondent
With Main Study Data From Sixty-nine Respondents
(Gay, 1976, p. 94; Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 284).

Respondent	Sum: 2nd half	Sum: 1st half	Reliability: Quotient <1	Sum: Even	Sum: Odd	Reliability: Quotient <1 e/odd
1	59	59	2.000	56	55	0.982
2	58	63	0.921	57	57	1.000
3	54	60	0.900	54	53	0.981
4	54	54	0.982	53	50	0.943
5	49	57	0.860	48	50	0.960
6	50	48	0.960	44	47	0.936
7	-	52	-	49	46	0.939
8	54	56	0.964	50	53	0.943
9	-	45	-	36	43	0.837
10	-	-	-	55	57	0.965
11	62	56	0.903	56	57	0.982
12	54	59	0.915	53	52	0.981
13	-	65	-	57	58	0.983
14	53	49	0.924	45	51	0.882
15	48	57	0.842	49	50	0.980
16	48	64	0.750	55	51	0.927
17	-	62	-	-	59	-
18	-	59	-	55	-	-
19	56	56	1.000	51	53	0.962
20	-	63	-	59	61	0.967
21	-	51	-	46	47	0.979
22	73	65	0.890	64	65	0.985
23	48	56	0.857	48	50	0.960
24	49	61	0.803	49	53	0.925
25	43	51	0.843	45	42	0.933
26	50	57	0.877	51	51	1.000
27	59	62	0.952	55	58	0.948
28	64	63	0.984	60	59	0.983
29	55	59	0.932	53	53	1.000
30	65	68	0.956	64	61	0.953
31	63	70	0.900	61	62	0.984
32	62	73	0.849	62	63	0.984
33	54	60	0.900	54	52	0.963
34	60	60	1.000	56	56	1.000
35	48	55	0.873	47	49	0.959

Table 11. (Continued)

Respondent	Sum: 2nd half	Sum: 1st half	Reliability: Quotient <1	Sum: Even	Sum: Odd	Reliability: Quotient <1 e/odd
36	57	61	0.934	56	54	0.964
37	54	55	0.982	53	49	0.924
38	34	36	0.944	30	36	0.833
39	39	42	0.929	35	41	0.854
40	64	69	0.928	65	59	0.907
41	50	45	0.900	44	44	1.000
42	45	43	0.956	41	42	0.976
43	54	64	0.844	58	53	0.914
44	71	66	0.929	61	66	0.924
45	63	71	0.887	64	61	0.953
46	63	57	0.905	55	57	0.965
47	70	70	1.000	65	67	0.970
48	69	69	1.000	65	63	0.969
49	69	72	0.958	65	66	0.985
50	57	54	0.947	50	54	0.926
51	60	69	0.870	60	62	0.968
52	75	75	1.000	70	70	1.000
53	65	-	-	-	65	-
54	58	67	0.866	55	62	0.887
55	65	54	0.831	55	56	0.982
56	50	63	0.794	51	54	0.944
57	47	45	0.958	42	43	0.977
58	48	48	1.000	45	46	0.978
59	41	44	0.932	38	41	0.927
60	56	61	0.918	54	56	0.964
61	61	59	0.967	57	54	0.982
62	-	-	-	-	-	-
63	53	56	0.946	52	51	0.981
64	53	52	0.981	51	48	0.941
65	72	69	0.958	65	66	0.985
66	66	70	0.943	64	63	0.984
67	68	70	0.971	65	64	0.985
68	53	62	0.855	53	55	0.964
69	48	55	0.873	45	50	0.900

Arithmetic Mean

91.9%

98.6%

Corrected Value

95.8%

99.3%

Table T11. (Continued)

The odd sum is the sum of LIKERT numbers assigned by each respondent to the odd-numbered questions in the Questionnaire (Q1 + Q3 + Q5.....Q15, while the even sum is the sum of Likert numbers assigned by each respondent to the even-numbered questions (Q2 + Q4 + Q6.....Q30). Similarly the first-half sum is the sum of Likert numbers assigned by each respondent to the first 15 questions in the Questionnaire (Q1 + Q2 + Q3.....Q15), while the second-half sum is the sum of Likert numbers assigned by each respondent to the questions in the second-half of the Questionnaire (Q16 + Q17 + Q18.....Q30). The sum of the numerical scores rather than the mean can be used (Murphy & Likert, 1967, p. 44).

The reliability of the total test r_{tt} is obtained by using the Spearman-Brown formula: $r_{tt} = 2r_{sh}/(1 + r_{sh})$, where r_{sh} is the arithmetic mean calculated above.

APPENDIX D

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE SAN JOSE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

CRANE & CO BOLD

P.O. Box 13
Philadelphia, TN 37846

July 21, 1989

Dear Ms. Doornbas:

Attached is a copy of the questionnaire I would like to distribute to teachers K-8 in the following schools.

Elementary

Simonds
Hacienda
Terrell
Bachroft
Almaden
Lowell
Horace Mann
Los Alameda
Greystone
Willow Glen

Middle

Burnett Academy
Bret Harte
Markham
John Steinbeck

I plan to run a pilot study initially (about 8-10 teachers) before the actual survey. Since the questionnaire is subject to the approval of my doctorate committee at the University of Tennessee, I do not anticipate distribution of this questionnaire to the teachers in your schools before May of 1990.

I appreciate your assistance in this matter and hope the Superintendent will grant me the necessary approval to distribute this questionnaire. You may contact me at my local address (top of letter) until mid August, should you need any additional information.

Sincerely,

Teresa Willett

SAN JOSE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

1605 PARK AVENUE, SAN JOSE, CA 95126



August 8, 1989

Ms. Teresa Willett
P. O. Box 13
Philadelphia, TN 37846

Dear Ms. Willett:

I reviewed the questionnaire you wish to distribute to our elementary and middle school teachers regarding the California Reading Initiative and its effectiveness in our schools. It has been approved by our Superintendent, Dr. Baughman.

If you need further assistance, please call me (408) 998-6127.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nellwyn Doornbos".

Nellwyn Doornbos *meh*
Coordinator, Language Arts

ND:meh:099:8

140

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

Letter to Principals

May 22, 1990

Dear :

Enclosed are the survey questionnaires to be distributed to the teachers as per our discussion on the telephone to-day. I have also attached the letter of approval for the survey from Ms. Nellwyn Doornbas.

I greatly appreciate your help in this matter and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Teresa Willett

May 22, 1990

Dear Teachers:

I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Tennessee engaged in research for my doctoral dissertation, as well as a classroom reading and language arts teacher in the public school system here in Tennessee. The topic of my research is "Classroom Teachers' Perceptions of the Effects of a Statewide Whole Language Approach to Literacy." Since California was the first state to adopt such a program on a statewide level (through The California Reading Initiative), teachers here in Tennessee are very much interested in California teachers' perceptions of the impact or effect of such a program in their classroom and school four years after its inception.

I would greatly appreciate you taking the time to complete this questionnaire and return it to _____ as soon as it is completed. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Teresa Willett

P.O. Box 13

Philadelphia, Tenn. 37846

VITA

Teresa Donohue Willett was born in Cork City, Ireland on June 16, 1938. She was educated at the Presentation Convent, Cork and attended the University College, Cork and General School of Commerce where she majored in Business Practices. The author attended Rivier College in Nashua, New Hampshire, from 1976-1978, graduating "magna cum laude" with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education in May 1978. Mrs. Willett taught in the public school system in New Hampshire before moving to Tennessee in 1979.

In 1981 the author entered the University of Tennessee to begin work on her Master's degree and received a Master of Science degree in August 1983. In 1984 Mrs. Willett was awarded a certificate from the University of Tennessee College of Education for outstanding achievement and academic performance during her graduate studies.

In 1986 the author started work on her doctorate degree. During this time she worked for the Loudon County School system and as a graduate assistant in the Reading Center at the University of Tennessee. She received the Doctorate of Education degree with a major in Curriculum and Instruction and an emphasis in Language Arts and Reading in May 1993.

Mrs. Willett is currently a State Career Ladder-Level III teacher in the Loudon County School system where she has taught since coming to Tennessee in 1979. She is a member of Phi Delta Kappa and the International Reading Association.