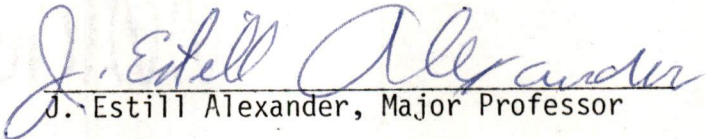
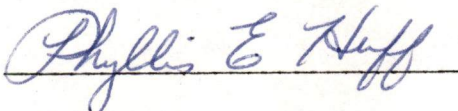


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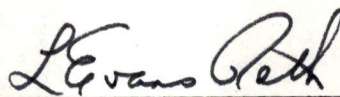

J. Estill Alexander, Major Professor

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A COMPARISON OF FIRST GRADE ACHIEVEMENT TEST SCORES
FOR TWO SCHOOL YEARS WITHOUT A MIDYEAR BREAK
AND TWO YEARS OF A PROLONGED MIDYEAR BREAK

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Science

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Nancy B. Williamson

August 1979

1397245

DEDICATED

To my Mother, whose quiet devotion to
her daughter has been an inspiration
for every level of my education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to compare the year-end achievement test scores of two school years without a midyear break and two school years of a prolonged midyear break. This study included students over a five-year period. Students from three first grade classrooms at Oneida Elementary School were used in this study. The first group of students were in the first grade during the school years of 1973-1974 and 1975-1976. These students experience formal reading instruction during a regular school year schedule without a midyear break. The second group of students were in the first grade during the school years of 1976-1977 and 1977-1978. The formal reading instruction of these students was interrupted for six weeks at midyear.

The data used were the year-end reading achievement test scores. The scores for the school years 1973-1974 and 1975-1976, which were the years without interruption of the regular school year schedule, were compared with the scores of 1976-1977 and 1977-1978, which were the years when the regular school year schedule was interrupted by snow. The achievement test used was the Metropolitan Achievement Test, PRL-Form F. No additional tests were used.

The major findings of the study were that the midyear break had no effect on the year-end reading achievement test scores. The data were divided into three achievement groups; above average, average, and below average. In all three achievement groups, there was no apparent difference in the scores of the years when there was

no prolonged midyear break and the years of the prolonged midyear break. The findings were based on three comparisons; achievement group percentages, achievement means, and range of achievement test scores.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One question that has been asked by educators is, "What effect does any break in formal instruction have on the scholastic achievement of students?" Some feel there is a loss in basic skills and a certain amount of reteaching is necessary when formal instruction begins again after a vacation. A limited number of studies of the effect of summer vacations on reading skills retention have been conducted. This paper is a look at what effect, if any, a midyear break had on the reading achievement of selected first grade students.

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The winters of 1976-1977 and 1977-1978 brought severe cold and snowy weather to the state of Tennessee. Along with this severe weather, the state also experienced energy shortages. Several schools in various counties across the state were closed most of the month of January during both these years. Some local and state school officials considered the possibility of closing schools during the month of January in the future in anticipation of severe weather. The problem to be considered here is whether this long absence from formal instruction would affect the reading achievement of beginning readers.

There is limited research dealing with the effect of summer vacations on beginning readers. This area of reading achievement, or lack of reading achievement, has been researched very little. After conducting a formal ERIC-CIJE search, no material could be

found concerning a midyear break and reading achievement. Only six documents were found dealing with summer vacations and reading achievement of beginning readers.

Since there is no known available research on the effect of a midyear break in instruction, the relationship of summer vacation can be used only to a limited extent. The summer break is longer in duration and the students have experienced a full school year of instruction. The midyear break would be after four and one-half months of instruction with another four and one-half months to follow after an absence of four to six weeks.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to compare the year-end achievement test scores of two groups of first grade students. This comparison was done to see if there was any apparent difference in the scores of the first grade students who had experienced a six-week midyear break in formal reading instruction and those who had not experienced this break in formal reading instruction.

Need for the Study

Because of the severe winters of 1977 and 1978, an interest was expressed by educators in the Oneida Special School District relative to the effect of this absence from school on the reading achievement of beginning readers. This presented the topic for the following study. It was decided to use the Total Reading scores from the year-end achievement test for first grade students in the Oneida Special School District to ascertain whether the prolonged absence of formal instruction had any effect on these year-end achievement test scores.

Permission for the study was secured from the Superintendent of the Oneida Special School District, Andrew H. Jacobs.

The students who are beginning readers now will be the eighth grade and high school students facing a proficiency test in the future. There is a need to see if the prolonged midyear break is in any way going to affect the reading achievement of this group of beginning readers and what effect it could possibly have on the children who will be beginning readers in the future.

There is a need to see if students from one or all of the three achievement groups used in this study are affected in any way by this prolonged midyear break. If any such group is revealed, they need to be identified and given extra attention beyond the regular classroom reading instruction. Two such ways for further instruction could be either by special take-home packets, as suggested in a study by the Connecticut State Department of Education (1972), or special help by Title I personnel.

Specific questions that were investigated were:

1. Is there an apparent relationship between achievement in beginning readers and a prolonged midyear break?
2. Are the students from one achievement group affected more than the students from other achievement groups by the midyear break.

Definition of Terms

Beginning Readers. This term is used to describe first grade students starting to master the skills necessary for reading mastery.

Reading Achievement. Reading achievement for this study was a reading score of grade level or above placement on the Metropolitan Achievement Test.

Mature Readers. Students in middle and junior high school with an age range from nine to thirteen years and reading on a 3.1 or above grade level.

Metropolitan Achievement Test. A standardized, nationally normed test of varying levels and forms. It is used as a pretest and/or posttest for measuring scholastic achievement in the area of classroom instruction. The reading section of this test is divided into four parts; Word Knowledge, Word Analysis, Reading, and Total Reading. The Total Reading score is an average of the other three subtests.

Achievement Groups. The three groups into which the students were divided for this study were based on the year-end Total Reading scores on the Metropolitan Achievement Test.

Above Average. Students whose Total Reading scores were 2.2 or above on the Metropolitan Achievement Test.

Average. Students whose Total Reading scores ranged between 1.8 and 2.1 on the Metropolitan Achievement Test.

Below Average. Students whose Total Reading scores were 1.7 or below on the Metropolitan Achievement Test.

Midyear Break. A suspension of formal instruction for a time period of four to six weeks during the school year.

Problem Beginning Readers. Children having various difficulties with areas of reading that cause the year-end achievement test scores to be 1.7 or below on the Metropolitan Achievement Test.

Nonproblem Beginning Readers. Students scoring 1.8 or above on the year-end Metropolitan Achievement Test.

Limitations of the Study

1. There have been several position changes in the first, second, and third grades during the past five years in the Oneida Special School District. Because of these changes, the study was confined to first grade students of those teachers who had been in continuous service.
2. Retainees from any year were not included in the study because the study was for beginning readers only.
3. There are no intelligence scores or results from attitude surveys involved; therefore, no look could be taken in terms of mental achievement levels or student attitude toward reading.
4. The first grade class of 1974-1975 was given the Stanford Achievement Test at the end of their first grade instead of the Metropolitan Achievement Test.

Assumptions

1. It is assumed that reading achievement can be measured and that the test used to measure reading achievement will measure what it is intended to measure.

2. It is assumed that all tests were administered according to the specific instructions of the test and that each teacher properly monitored the test so the results would be valid.
3. It is assumed that the teachers followed the instruction manual provided with the basal reading series used by the student.

Organization of the Study

This study was organized into five chapters. Chapter I contains the introduction, state of the problem, purpose of the study, need for the study, definition of terms, limitations of the study, assumptions, and organization of the study.

Chapter II contains a survey of the literature relevant to summer breaks and reading achievement.

Chapter III contains a description of the procedures used in the selection of the population, a description of the population, instructional methods and procedures, how data were collected, and summary.

Chapter IV contains the comparison of the data, tables of comparison, and a description of the findings.

Chapter V contains a general summary of the study and findings, the implications to educators, and some area for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A summary of the limited number of studies failed to reveal anything about reading achievement in relationship to a prolonged midyear break. There were limited studies dealing with the effect of summer vacations and reading and academic achievement in general. The factors investigated included school attendance patterns or absence and reading achievement in elementary school, success or failure and reading achievement in elementary school, interruptions or intervals or summer-winter vacations and reading achievement, and breaks or time factors and reading achievement. The search for related literature included a formal ERIC-CIJE search and a search by the investigator in Dissertation Abstracts and Education Index for the years 1965-1978; however, the ERIC-CIJE search produced studies previous to 1965 which were included, when appropriate.

I. SUMMER VACATIONS AND READING ACHIEVEMENT

In reviewing the literature available on summer vacations and reading achievement, five studies dealt directly with this topic. None of these studies had been conducted during the last four years. Two of the studies, obtained from the ERIC-CIJE search, were done before 1945.

Patrecia A. Ross in her study, Regression Study-Now the Long Hot Summer (1974), argued against using spring achievement test scores

for fall grouping and placement purposes. The three purposes listed for the study were:

to determine which students gain, lose, or maintain reading proficiency over a summer; 2) to investigate whether there is a cluster of characteristics which surround a student who gains or loses; 3) to aid in planning summer reading programs which will maximize gain and minimize loss.

The purposes were applicable, but the grade level of the students, sixth grade, was not applicable to this study. The test used in June and September was the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, Comprehension Subtest. The conclusions were that only the students in the lower reading group lost in skills gained during the year. Average and upper group students gained during the summer months.

A study by Woodrow Mousley (1973) involved three third grade classes. They were given the Stanford Reading Achievement Test in June and September, 1972. Both dates for the test were within a week of the closing and the opening of school for the respective year. Mousley's analysis showed no significant difference in reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, or total reading achievement. In fact, all postsummer scores were slightly higher than the presummer scores. In giving the results, the author gave no indication of the composition of the population, only that they were from the Los Arboles Elementary School. It would be difficult to consider this reliable because the type of population or the method of selection of these students for testing were not given in the study.

In 1942, a study of the Laboratory School at Mankota State Teacher College in Minnesota showed a loss of 0.31 during a summer using the Gates Primary Reading Test and a loss of 0.43 when the

Metropolitan Achievement Test was given in May and again in September. This study was conducted over a four-year period and included more slow-learning children than average or superior children. The age or number of students tested in each grade level was not given. It was discovered that recall was much slower in younger children. Younger children were not identified as to specific age or grade level. Intelligence also appeared to be a factor in this study. No name was given for the instrument used to measure the intelligence of the children involved. The study showed that children with I. Q. scores of one-hundred or above showed some gain and were faithful to the summer work provided for them. Children with I. Q. scores of below one-hundred showed a tendency just to retain their spring scores if they worked more than seven weeks during the summer.

Twelve first grade classes of thirty-eight students each were used in a 1924 study by L. J. Bruechner and H. W. Distad to determine statistically the effect of summer vacations on these students. The two tests used in June and September were the Minneapolis Primary Reading Test and Haggerty Reading Examination, Sigma I. The study is now fifty years old with no mention of the teaching method used for the beginning instruction. The Minneapolis Primary Reading Test is suggested by this study to be a good test for measuring basic beginning reading skills, but too easy for students after a full year of first grade instruction. The applicability of this study comes in the groups tested. The students were grouped according to the number of weeks of instruction they had received. The group which had received only twelve weeks of instruction scored 2.1 points or 22 percent

lower in September than did in June. The group receiving twenty-four weeks of instruction scored 1.5 points or 10 percent lower and the group receiving thirty-six weeks of instruction scored 2.1 points or 14 percent lower. The greatest drop in scores was in the group receiving only twelve weeks on instruction.

The results show that growth, as far as reading achievement is concerned, was a standstill during the summer vacation. The achievement level of the students in each group was not given so we do not know how many below average, average, or above average students were tested. The losses on the Minneapolis Primary Reading Test show that students with low intelligence lost the most in reading achievement, but again there was no mention of the instrument used to measure intelligence.

II. HOME BACKGROUND AND READING ACHIEVEMENT

Home background can be a factor in retention of skills learned. This was brought out in a study conducted in England by E. W. Turner (1972). The students involved were eighty-three municipally-based and one-hundred and forty-three children from owner-occupied property. Again, presummer and postsummer reading tests were given in connection with I. Q. tests. The test used for this study was the Frances Wiseman Educational Guidance Test. In the pilot study conducted in 1969 and again in the main inquiry in 1970, the results showed the same pattern. Children from council houses lost more points, -3.9, and children from supportive homes gained more points, +0.07.

III. SUMMARY

The evidence from these studies seems to show a pattern in children of below average intelligence with little or no support from home suffer the most loss in reading achievement over a summer vacation or extended time without formal inspection. This type student needs constant reinforcement just to retain the skills he has worked to acquire. Children of average or above average intelligence show some gain just from independent work through the summer.

Since there was no specific literature dealing with a break at midyear, the length of time of instruction before summer vacation seems to be another important factor. This factor will be closely watched in connection with this specific study because of the shorter time of formal instruction before the break.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The question being addressed was whether there was any apparent change in the reading scores on the year-end achievement test during the two years of a prolonged break in the middle of the school year. The years of the study are 1973-1974, 1975-1976, 1976-1977, and 1977-1978. During the 1973-1974 school year, only two days before Christmas are on record as being missed because of snow. The 1976-1976 year was when only three days were missed in January due to snow. During these two years there were not more than four days, other than regularly scheduled vacation days, missed because of inclement weather and snow. In 1976-1977, twenty-three days were missed because of snow and inclement weather, with the longest break being from December 21, 1976 through January 31, 1977. These were days missed consecutively and the remaining days were lost in one to three-day spans during the months of November and December, 1976 and February, 1977. In 1977-1978, the pattern was again repeated and twenty-eight days were missed. Oneida Schools were closed from December 22, 1977 through February 7, 1978. There were five days of school attendance during this time, but only in a four-day span and one day alone. Also, additional days were missed later in the month of February, 1978. Thus, for two consecutive years, the first grade students at Oneida Elementary School received no formal instruction for approximately six weeks in the middle of the school year.

I. SELECTION OF THE POPULATION

The students used in this study were first grade students at Oneida Elementary School. The population of the study was relatively small and limited because of the loss of a first grade teacher at the end of the 1975-1976 school year. This left only three first grade teachers who had taught in the same position during the years of the study. These remaining three teachers were designated as Teachers 1, 2, and 3 to insure confidentiality.

The scores of the first grade class of 1974-1975 could not be used because of a change in achievement tests. The Metropolitan Achievement Test, PR1-Form F, was used in all the years of the study, except for 1974-1975 when the Stanford Achievement Test was used. Because of this change, it was necessary to use the scores of students who were first graders during 1973-1974 when the Metropolitan Achievement Test was used.

Students selected were those who were in the rooms of the three teachers previously mentioned. The achievement test scores were collected from the cumulative record folders during the 1978-1979 school year. No additional or special tests were administered by the researcher. Only routine achievement test scores were used.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULATION

There was no formal survey done on economic status or parent occupation in connection with this study. The population of the first grade is compatible with the general population of the overall school. Approximately 60 percent of the families of these students

have been residents of the Oneida or Scott County area for three or more generations. Of this group, about sixty-five percent of the parents, one or both, attended Oneida Elementary and/or Oneida High School. In some instances the parents were employed in other states or counties at the time of the birth of the student, but had returned to employment in the Oneida area by the time the child was ready to enter school.

The total school population is rural, all white, middle to low income (welfare) with a small number of upper income families. During the past ten years, three major industrial developments and the development of oil and coal in the area have added families from an urban background to the community. Families representative of this background have been in the community during all the four years of this study.

Children were placed in the rooms at the beginning of the school year by a random distribution. Each room had approximately the same number of students of equal achievement. This distribution makes it possible to compare scores by achievement groups from all three teachers' rooms.

III. INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

Each of the three teachers used the same methods of teaching beginning reading each year. The two methods used were the analytic phonics approach in combination with sight words. All teachers used the same basal series during all the years of the study. This series was the Holt, Rinehart, Winston Basal Series. In addition to the basal

series, Teachers 1 and 2 used the Lippencott Basal Reader as supplementary instructional material.

IV. COLLECTION OF DATA

The year-end achievement test scores were collected from the cumulative record folders of the students in the rooms of Teachers 1, 2, and 3. Only the reading scores were used, and only the Total Reading scores were used for the percentage and mean comparison. The students were divided into three groups: above average, 2.2 and above; average, 1.8 to 2.1; and below average, 1.7 and below. The rationale for the division of the group was:

1. Below Average. For Title I purposes in the Oneida Special School District, any first grade student scoring 1.7 or below on the year-end achievement test is screened for possible Title I assistance.
2. Average. The achievement tests were given in late April when the students were approximately at the 1.9 - 2.0 period of instruction. The Oneida Special School District begins the new school year the third week in August each year; thus, time was allowed for this period of instruction before the year-end achievement tests were administered. To allow for error, one month above 2.0 and one month below 1.9 were designated as the range for the average achievement group.
3. Above Average. Since 2.1 was the top score used for the average group, any student scoring 2.2 or above was placed in the above average.

Only the Total Reading scores were used to divide the students into these groups. The students in each of the four years of the study were divided in this manner. Tables XVI through XXVII in the Appendix show the student numbers, scores in each reading subheading, and Total Reading scores.

V. SUMMARY

The inclement weather during the winters of 1976-1977 and 1977-1978 forced the closing of elementary and high schools in the Oneida Special School District from Christmas vacation through the month of January each year. For two consecutive years, the first grade students received no formal instruction for six weeks at midyear.

The students used in this study were in the first grade during the years mentioned above and during the years of 1973-1974 and 1975-1976. Student's scores from the rooms of three teachers who had taught first grade consecutively over the five years of the study were the only ones used. The population of the first grade each year was basically the same. The students were from all white, middle to low income families. The children were placed in the first grade rooms at the beginning of the school year at random.

CHAPTER IV

THE DATA COMPARISON AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to compare the year-end achievement test scores of first grade students during two years without a midyear break and two years with a midyear break. To accomplish this purpose, the scores used were divided into three groups, above average, average, and below average.

The four areas of reading achievement which were used were scores for the four subtests found in the reading section of the Metropolitan Achievement Test. These are: Word Knowledge, Word Analysis, Reading, and Total Reading. The three subtests were used only in finding the Total Reading score, which is an average of the three subtests. The Total Reading scores were the only ones used in the comparisons which follow.

The scores were compared in three ways. The first comparison was a look at the percentages in each grouping for all four years of the study. The second comparison was a nonstatistical look at the achievement means for each grouping for all four years of the study. The third method of comparison was a look at the range of achievement test scores of each achievement group for each of the four years of the study. A nonstatistical method of comparison was used because the data used in the study were the year-end achievement test scores which did not meet the necessary assumptions for parametric or nonparametric statistical tests.

I. TEACHER 1

The percentage of students in each achievement group for Teacher 1 (see Table I) shows one-third of the class in 1973, a regular school year, and 1977, a prolonged midyear break year, in the above average group. (Hereafter in the study, the term prolonged midyear break year will be referred to only as break year.) For the regular year of 1975 and the break year of 1976, approximately one-half the class placed in the above average group. The average group for 1973 was approximately one-half the class, while one-third of the class for 1975, 1976, and 1977 were considered average students. The below average groups were small one year of the regular schedule, 1973, and one year of the break year, 1976. The other year of the regular schedule, 1975, saw about one-third in the below average group and about one-third in the break year, 1977, was below average. The percentages for Teacher 1 show no pattern of below average, average, or above average that cannot be considered a normal distribution for a classroom. There is no unusual pattern of percentages for the break years for this teacher's classrooms.

Table II presents the mean scores for the three groups across the four years of the study and shows the above and below average groups have higher mean scores for the two years of the break year. Because of the range of scores used in the average group, the mean score was the same during all four years of the study.

TABLE I
TOTAL STUDENT PERCENTAGES FOR 1973-1975 AND 1976-1977
BY ACHIEVEMENT GROUPS FOR TEACHER 1

	N	1973-74	N	1975-76	N	1976-77	N	1977-78
Above Average	5	23%	10	45%	15	56%	6	28%
Average	10	55%	6	27.5%	9	33%	8	36%
Below Average	3	17%	6	27.5%	3	11%	8	36%

TABLE II
MEAN TEST SCORES OF ACHIEVEMENT GROUPS ON THE
METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT TEST FOR TEACHER 1

	1973-74	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78
Above Average	2.5	2.9	2.9	2.9
Average	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Below Average	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.6

When comparing the above average group scores (see Table III) for all four years, there is no apparent different in the scores. This group was small in 1973 and 1977, a regular year and a break year. The range of scores was wider in the break year and the mean score was higher. This group was large in 1975 and 1976, a regular year and a break year. The largest group with the greatest number of high scores was 1976, a break year.

Table IV presents the range of the individual scores in the average group. It shows half the students in this group scored 1.9 during 1973 and 1975, both regular school years. For the break year 1976, 37 percent of the students in the average group scored 1.9. For all four years, more students in the average group scored 2.1, than they did 1.8.

The below average group (see Table V) was small for three of the four years and large for one year. The lowest score was 1.6 for both years of the break year. A 1.5 and a 1.4 were the lowest scores for the regular years of 1973 and 1975.

The scores for the students in all three achievement groups during all four years of the study show no apparent relationship between lower reading achievement scores and a break in instruction. No specific achievement group appeared to be affected more than the other. The scores for all three achievement groups were generally higher during the break years than they were during the regular school years.

TABLE III

RANGE OF TOTAL READING TEST SCORES FOR THE ABOVE AVERAGE
ACHIEVEMENT GROUPS ON THE METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT
TEST FOR TEACHER 1

N	1974-75	N	1975-76	N	1976-77	N	1977-78
5	3.1 2.5 2.3 2.2 2.2	10	5.0 3.4 3.4 2.7 2.5 2.5 2.4 2.4 2.3 2.3	15	3.7 3.7 3.7 3.7 3.4 3.1 3.1 2.9 2.4 2.3 2.3 2.3 2.3 2.2 2.2	6	5.0 3.4 2.4 2.4 2.2 2.2

TABLE IV
 RANGE OF TOTAL READING TEST SCORES FOR THE AVERAGE
 ACHIEVEMENT GROUPS ON THE METROPOLITAN
ACHIEVEMENT TEST FOR TEACHER 1

N	1973-74	N	1975-76	N	1976-77	N	1977-78
10	2.1	6	2.1	8	2.1	8	2.1
	2.1		2.0		2.1		2.1
	2.0		2.0		2.0		2.0
	2.0		1.9		2.0		1.9
	1.9		1.9		1.9		1.9
	1.9		1.9		1.9		1.9
	1.9				1.9		1.9
	1.9				1.8		1.9
	1.9						
	1.8						

TABLE V

RANGE OF TOTAL READING TEST SCORES FOR THE BELOW AVERAGE
ACHIEVEMENT GROUPS ON THE METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT
TEST FOR TEACHER 1

N	1973-74	N	1975-76	N	1976-77	N	1977-78
3	1.6 1.5 1.5	6	1.6 1.6 1.6 1.5 1.5 1.4	3	1.7 1.7 1.7	8	1.7 1.7 1.7 1.7 1.7 1.6 1.6 1.6

I. TEACHER 2

The largest percentage of students for Teacher 2 (see Table VI) during all four years of the study was in the average group. The range of this group was 43 percent to 57 percent. This was approximately one-half of the class for each of the four years. The above average group was small for 1973 and 1975, regular school years, and 1977, a break year. Thirty-eight percent of the students were in the above average group for the break year 1976. The below average groups were small three of the four years. Two of these years were 1976 and 1977, which were break years. Only 1975, a regular year, had a large percent, 38, of the students in the below average group. The percentage for Teacher 2 show no pattern of below average or above average that cannot be considered normal for a first grade classroom.

The means for Teacher 2 (see Table VII) show the mean score for the above average group higher both years of the break. For the average group, the mean score was the same, 2.0 for 1973 and 1975, regular years, and 1976, a break year. This score was 1.9 for the other break year, 1977. The same pattern is found in the below average group with a mean of 1.5 for the first three years and 1.4 for the last year of the study.

The range of individual scores for the above average group (see Table VIII) for Teacher 2 over the four years show the top scores, 2.5 in the regular years of 1973 and 2.3 in 1975, are lower than the top scores, 5.0 and 3.4, for the break year.

TABLE VI

TOTAL STUDENT PERCENTAGES FOR 1973-1975 AND 1976-1977
BY ACHIEVEMENT GROUPS FOR TEACHER 2

	N	1973-74	N	1975-76	N	1976-77	N	1977-78
Above Average	4	27%	1	4%	8	38%	3	20%
Average	8	53%	13	57%	9	43%	7	47%
Below Average	3	20%	9	39%	4	19%	5	33%

TABLE VII
MEAN TEST SCORES OF ACHIEVEMENT GROUPS ON THE
METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT TEST FOR TEACHER 2

	1973-74	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78
Above Average	2.3	2.3	3.0	2.5
Average	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.9
Below Average	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4

TABLE VIII

RANGE OF TOTAL READING TEST SCORES FOR THE ABOVE AVERAGE
ACHIEVEMENT GROUPS ON THE METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT
TEST FOR TEACHER 2

N	1973-74	N	1975-76	N	1976-77	N	1977-78
4	2.5 2.3 2.3 2.2	1	2.3	8	5.0 3.7 3.4 2.9 2.4 2.3 2.3 2.3	3	3.4 2.3 2.3

The average group (see Table IX) show more scores of 2.0 and 2.1 during the two years of the regular school schedule. The two break years had more scores of 1.8 and 1.9. The below average showed a score of 1.2 as the lowest in a regular school year, 1973 (see Table X). It was also the lowest score for 1977, a break year. Each of the four years had a 1.7 as the highest score in the below average group. In the regular year of 1975, 55 percent of the below average group scored 1.6

The scores for Teacher 2 show no apparent relationship between lower beginning reading scores in a break year as compared to a regular year. The scores were higher during the break years than the regular years. The above average groups during the break years had higher scores than the same groups during the regular years. The students from all three achievement groups showed better scores for the break years.

III. TEACHER 3

A comparison of the percentage of students in each achievement group for Teacher 3 (see Table XI) shows a larger percent of the students in the average or below average groups. The above average group is small for three of the four years. In the regular year of 1975, 35 percent of the students were in the above average group. The other regular year showed no students scoring high enough to be placed in the above average group. Both years of the break, 1976 and 1977, had a small percentage in the above average group. The average group was the largest group in 1976, the first

TABLE IX
 RANGE OF TOTAL READING TEST SCORES FOR THE AVERAGE
 ACHIEVEMENT GROUPS ON THE METROPOLITAN
ACHIEVEMENT TEST FOR TEACHER 2

N	1973-74	N	1975-76	N	1976-77	N	1977-78
8	2.1 2.1 2.1 2.0 2.0 1.9 1.9 1.8	13	2.1 2.1 2.1 2.1 2.1 2.0 2.0 2.0 1.9 1.9 1.9 1.8	9	2.1 2.1 2.1 2.0 1.9 1.9 1.3 1.3 1.8	7	2.1 2.0 2.0 1.9 1.9 1.8 1.3

TABLE X

RANGE OF TOTAL READING TEST SCORES FOR THE BELOW AVERAGE
ACHIEVEMENT GROUPS ON THE METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT
TEST FOR TEACHER 2

N	1973-74	N	1975-76	N	1976-77	N	1977-78
3	1.7 1.4 1.2	9	1.7 1.7 1.6 1.6 1.6 1.6 1.6 1.5 1.4	4	1.7 1.6 1.6 1.3	5	1.7 1.5 1.4 1.4 1.2

TABLE XI
TOTAL STUDENT PERCENTAGES FOR 1973-1975 AND 1976-1977
BY ACHIEVEMENT GROUPS FOR TEACHER 3

	N	1973-74	N	1975-76	N	1976-77	N	1977-78
Above Average	0	0%	6	35%	1	6%	4	19%
Average	5	42%	4	24%	9	53%	3	14%
Below Average	7	58%	7	41%	7	41%	14	66%

year of the break, with 53 percent of the students in this group. The second year of the break, only 14 percent of the students were considered scoring in the average range. The average groups for the two regular school years were also small. The below average groups for the regular school years of 1973, 1975, and 1976, the first year of the break were 58 percent, 41 percent, and 41 percent of the classes. The second year of the break had 66 percent of the class in the below average group. This was the only class that had a larger number of below average scores for a break year.

The mean scores for Teacher 3 (see Table XII) were 2.3 and 2.4 for three years of the study. The first year of a regular school year included in the study, 1973, had no score of 2.2 or above. The average group, like the other two classes compared, had mean scores of 2.0 and 1.9. The 1.9 mean score was for the second year of a regular school schedule, 1975. The below average groups ranged from 1.5 for 1973, 1975, and 1976 to 1.4 for 1977.

The range of individual scores for Teacher 2 for the above average group (see Table XIII) shows no individual scoring in this range in 1973. In 1975, the largest number of students in the above average group had the widest range in scores which were 2.2 to 3.4. The two break years, 1976 and 1977, had small groups with a range from 2.2 to 2.9. The individual scores for the average group (see Table XIV) show approximately the same distribution range of 1.8 through 2.1 for each of the four years of the study.

TABLE XII
MEAN TEST SCORES ON ACHIEVEMENT GROUPS ON THE
METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT TEST FOR TEACHER 3

	1973-74	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78
Above Average	0	2.4	2.3	2.4
Average	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.0
Below Average	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4

TABLE XIII

RANGE OF TOTAL READING TEST SCORES FOR THE ABOVE AVERAGE
 ACHIEVEMENT GROUPS ON THE METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT
TEST FOR TEACHER 3

N	1973-74	N	1975-76	N	1976-77	N	1977-78
0		6	3.4 2.4 2.3 2.3 2.2 2.2	1	2.3	4	2.9 2.3 2.2 2.2

TABLE XIV
 RANGE OF TOTAL READING TEST SCORES FOR THE AVERAGE
 ACHIEVEMENT GROUPS ON THE METROPOLITAN
ACHIEVEMENT TESTS FOR TEACHER 3

N	1973-74	N	1975-76	N	1976-77	N	1977-78
5	2.1 2.0 2.0 1.9 1.8	4	2.1 1.9 1.9 1.8	9	2.1 2.1 2.0 2.0 1.9 1.9 1.9 1.9 1.8	3	2.1 2.0 1.9

The below average group (see Table XV) had a range of 1.2 to 1.7 for the two regular school years and a range of 1.3 to 1.7 for the two break years. The score of 1.4 in 1977 was the below average score of 42 percent.

The scores for Teacher 3 are the only ones which show a larger percent of students scoring in the below average range during a break year. Even though this group is large one year, there is no apparent relationship of the mean scores and the break years. The average and below average groups were larger in this class all four years of the study. The above average groups were smaller all four years of the study, thus, there is no apparent relationship of the break years and lower beginning reading scores in this class.

TABLE XV

RANGE OF TOTAL READING TEST SCORES FOR THE BELOW AVERAGE
ACHIEVEMENT GROUPS ON THE METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT
TEST FOR TEACHER 3

N	1973-74	N	1975-76	N	1976-77	N	1977-78
7	1.7 1.7 1.6 1.5 1.4 1.4 1.2	7	1.7 1.6 1.5 1.5 1.4 1.4 1.2	7	1.7 1.7 1.6 1.5 1.5 1.4 1.3	14	1.7 1.6 1.6 1.6 1.6 1.5 1.4 1.4 1.4 1.4 1.4 1.3 1.3

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

I. SUMMARY

The study compared the year-end achievement test scores of the Metropolitan Achievement Test, Level PR1-Form F, of two groups of first grade students over a five-year time span. There were only three first grade teachers who had taught in a first grade position all the years of the study, which were from the beginning of the school year in 1973 through the end of the school year in 1978. The purpose of this study was to see if a prolonged break of six weeks in the middle of the school year had any apparent effect on the year-end achievement test scores of these first grade students.

The year-end achievement test scores of the students during 1973-1974 and 1975-1976, years of a regular school schedule, were compared with the scores of students during 1976-1977 and 1977-1978, which were the years with a prolonged break at midyear. These scores were compared in three nonstatistical ways. First was a comparison of the total class percentage in each achievement group. Second was a comparison of the mean scores in each achievement group. Third was the range of individual achievement test scores for each achievement group over the four years of the study. These comparisons failed to show any apparent differences in the scores in any of the three classrooms used in the study. The study did reveal that scores were generally higher in the years of the prolonged midyear breaks than the the years

of a regular school schedule. The students rated as above average had higher scores for the years of the prolonged midyear break. Two below average groups had scores that were the same for all four years of the study and one below average group had lower scores for the years of the midyear break.

The findings of this study seem to indicate there is no pattern of low achievement test reading scores and a prolonged midyear break. There were no more students scoring low scores during the two years of a prolonged midyear break than there were in the two years of a prolonged midyear than there were in the two years of regular school attendance. Only one achievement group out of twelve from the below average achievement groups showed lower scores or more student making low scores during one of the two years of the midyear break. There was no such pattern in the other achievement groups used in this study.

II. IMPLICATIONS

The implication of these findings is that a majority of the beginning readers may not be limited or affected by a prolonged break at midyear.

Educators may wish to persue this area of study further to see if any advantages could be found for a midyear break. Students may be found to benefit from rather than be hindered by a prolonged break at midyear. If it became necessary to close school to conserve energy, it could be done without harm to the majority of students if the above findings are true.

III. AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This limited study in no way should be interpreted to mean that schools could be closed for six weeks at midyear with no effect on the students involved. Even though the reading scores were generally higher during the two years of a prolonged break in this study, this may not be true in other schools in other areas. The same type study should be done in all areas of the state that have experienced the problem of closed schools during the month of January. A study should also include a larger number of school systems, if possible. A study of student's I. Q. and reading scores for years of midyear breaks might be useful in indicating which students are most affected in a negative way. The effect of a prolonged midyear break on more mature readers of all grade levels should also be investigated.

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APPENDIX

TABLE XVI
STUDENT READING SCORES FOR 1973-1974 ON THE
METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT TEST
FOR TEACHER 1

Student	Word Knowledge	Word Analysis	Reading	Total Reading
Above Average				
1.	3.0	2.1	3.1	2.1
2.	2.5	3.0	2.7	2.5
3.	2.2	2.1	2.3	2.3
4.	2.0	2.2	2.3	2.2
5.	2.3	2.5	2.1	2.2
Average				
6.	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.1
7.	2.2	2.1	1.9	2.1
8.	1.7	1.7	2.0	2.0
9.	2.5	2.2	1.6	2.0
10.	1.6	2.1	1.9	1.9
11.	2.3	1.9	1.6	1.9
12.	1.9	2.1	1.8	1.9
13.	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.9
14.	1.9	2.0	1.7	1.9
15.	2.2	1.9	1.3	1.8
Below Average				
16.	1.4	1.8	1.6	1.6
17.	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.5
18.	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.5

TABLE XVII
STUDENT READING SCORES FOR 1975-1976 ON THE
METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT TEST
FOR TEACHER 1

Student	Word Knowledge	Word Analysis	Reading	Total Reading
Above Average				
1.	4.1	4.3	4.9	5.0
2.	4.1	3.0	3.1	3.4
3.	4.1	4.3	3.1	3.4
4.	2.3	2.5	3.5	2.7
5.	2.5	2.2	2.7	2.5
6.	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.5
7.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.4
8.	2.3	3.0	2.5	2.4
9.	2.5	4.3	2.2	2.3
10.	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.2
Average				
11.	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.1
12.	2.0	2.0	1.9	2.0
13.	2.0	2.3	1.9	2.0
14.	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.9
15.	2.0	2.0	1.6	1.9
16.	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.9
Below Average				
17.	1.9	2.3	1.3	1.6
18.	1.8	1.8	1.3	1.6
19.	1.7	1.8	1.3	1.6
20.	1.4	1.9	1.6	1.5
21.	1.5	2.0	1.4	1.5
22.	1.3	1.6	1.4	1.4

TABLE XVIII
STUDENT READING SCORES FOR 1976-1977 ON THE
METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT TEST
FOR TEACHER 1

Student	Word Knowledge	Word Analysis	Reading	Total Reading
Above Average				
1.	4.1	4.3	3.5	3.7
2.	4.1	4.3	3.1	3.7
3.	4.1	2.5	3.5	3.7
4.	4.1	4.3	3.1	3.4
5.	3.0	2.3	3.1	3.1
6.	3.0	2.0	4.9	3.7
7.	4.1	2.3	2.8	3.1
8.	4.1	2.3	2.7	2.9
9.	3.0	3.0	2.3	2.4
10.	2.3	2.2	2.4	2.3
11.	2.5	3.0	2.2	2.3
12.	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.3
13.	2.5	2.2	2.2	2.3
14.	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.2
15.	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2
Average				
16.	2.0	2.1	2.0	2.1
17.	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.1
18.	2.3	2.2	1.3	2.0
19.	2.2	1.9	1.8	2.0
20.	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.9
21.	1.9	2.2	1.7	1.9
22.	1.9	2.2	1.7	1.9
23.	1.8	2.2	1.7	1.8
24.	1.6	2.1	1.7	1.7
Below Average				
25.	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.7
26.	1.7	1.3	1.6	1.7
27.	1.8	2.0	1.3	1.6

TABLE XIX
STUDENT READING SCORES FOR 1977-1978 ON THE
METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT TEST
FOR TEACHER 1

Student	Word Knowledge	Word Analysis	Reading	Total Reading
Above Average				
1.	4.1	3.0	4.9	5.0
2.	3.0	2.5	3.5	3.4
3.	2.2	4.3	2.7	2.4
4.	3.0	2.3	2.3	2.4
5.	3.0	2.2	2.0	2.2
6.	2.5	3.0	2.0	2.2
Average				
7.	2.3	2.1	1.9	2.1
8.	2.2	2.2	1.9	2.1
9.	2.0	2.2	1.8	2.0
10.	2.0	2.1	1.7	1.9
11.	1.9	2.1	1.9	1.9
12.	2.0	1.7	1.8	1.9
13.	1.9	2.0	1.7	1.9
14.	1.8	2.0	1.6	1.8
Below Average				
15.	1.7	2.1	1.6	1.7
16.	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7
17.	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.7
18.	1.6	2.2	1.7	1.7
19.	1.5	1.7	1.7	1.7
20.	1.9	2.1	1.3	1.6
21.	1.6	1.9	1.4	1.6
22.	1.5	2.2	1.5	1.6

TABLE XX
STUDENT READING SCORES FOR 1973-1974 ON THE
METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT TEST
FOR TEACHER 2

Student	Word Knowledge	Word Analysis	Reading	Total Reading
Above Average				
1.	2.2	4.3	3.5	2.5
2.	2.5	2.5	2.2	2.3
3.	3.0	2.0	2.1	2.3
4.	2.3	2.3	2.1	2.2
Average				
5.	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.1
6.	2.5	1.9	1.9	2.1
7.	1.8	1.8	2.1	2.1
8.	2.0	2.0	1.9	2.0
9.	2.0	1.7	1.8	2.0
10.	1.8	2.1	1.9	1.9
11.	2.3	3.0	1.4	1.9
12.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.8
Below Average				
13.	1.4	1.5	1.8	1.7
14.	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.4
15.	1.0	1.5	1.3	1.2

TABLE XXI
STUDENT READING SCORES FOR 1975-1976 ON THE
METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT TEST
FOR TEACHER 2

Student	Word Knowledge	Word Analysis	Reading	Total Reading
Above Average				
1.	2.0	2.5	2.4	2.3
Average				
2.	2.5	2.1	2.0	2.1
3.	2.5	2.1	1.9	2.1
4.	2.3	2.3	2.0	2.1
5.	2.0	2.5	2.0	2.1
6.	2.0	2.1	2.0	2.1
7.	2.1	2.0	1.9	2.0
8.	2.0	2.2	1.9	2.0
9.	2.0	1.9	1.8	2.0
10.	1.6	2.2	1.9	1.9
11.	1.6	2.1	2.0	1.9
12.	2.0	2.1	1.7	1.9
13.	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.9
14.	1.9	1.7	1.7	1.8
Below Average				
15.	1.9	2.1	1.4	1.7
16.	1.5	1.9	1.7	1.7
17.	1.7	1.9	1.6	1.6
18.	1.5	1.9	1.6	1.6
19.	1.6	2.0	1.4	1.6
20.	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.6
21.	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.6
22.	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.5
23.	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4

TABLE XXII
STUDENT READING SCORES FOR 1976-1977 ON THE
METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT TEST
FOR TEACHER 2

Student	Word Knowledge	Word Analysis	Reading	Total Reading
Above Average				
1.	4.1	3.0	4.9	5.0
2.	3.0	4.3	4.9	3.7
3.	2.5	4.3	4.9	3.4
4.	2.5	3.0	3.1	2.9
5.	2.3	2.0	2.5	2.4
6.	2.5	2.2	2.3	2.3
7.	2.5	2.1	2.3	2.3
8.	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
Average				
9.	2.2	2.1	2.0	2.1
10.	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.1
11.	2.1	2.2	1.9	2.1
12.	2.0	1.9	1.9	2.0
13.	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9
14.	2.3	2.0	1.4	1.9
15.	2.1	2.0	1.4	1.8
16.	1.7	1.4	1.7	1.8
17.	1.3	1.6	2.1	1.8
Below Average				
18.	1.5	1.9	1.7	1.7
19.	1.7	2.0	1.4	1.6
20.	1.9	1.8	1.3	1.6
21.	1.4	1.8	1.1	1.3

TABLE XXIII
STUDENT READING SCORES FOR 1977-1978 ON THE
METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT TEST
FOR TEACHER 2

Student	Word Knowledge	Word Analysis	Reading	Total Reading
Above Average				
1.	3.4	4.3	3.5	3.4
2.	3.0	2.5	2.1	2.3
3.	2.2	2.3	2.1	2.2
Average				
4.	2.1	2.5	2.1	2.1
5.	2.2	2.2	1.8	2.0
6.	2.3	4.3	1.7	2.0
7.	1.8	1.7	1.9	1.9
8.	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.9
9.	1.9	1.9	1.6	1.8
10.	1.7	1.9	1.7	1.8
Below Average				
11.	2.0	2.0	1.3	1.7
12.	1.4	1.7	1.5	1.5
13.	1.3	1.7	1.5	1.4
14.	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.4
15.	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2

TABLE XXIV
STUDENT READING SCORES FOR 1973-1974 ON THE
METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT TEST
FOR TEACHER 3

Student	Word Knowledge	Word Analysis	Reading	Total Reading
Above Average				
Average				
1.	1.9	1.9	2.1	2.1
2.	2.2	2.5	1.9	2.0
3.	2.3	2.5	1.8	2.0
4.	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.9
5.	1.7	2.1	1.7	1.8
Below Average				
6.	1.6	2.0	1.7	1.7
7.	1.6	2.0	1.6	1.7
8.	1.5	2.0	1.6	1.6
9.	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.5
10.	1.3	1.7	1.4	1.4
11.	1.5	1.9	1.3	1.4
12.	1.2	1.4	1.2	1.2

TABLE XXV
STUDENT READING SCORES FOR 1975-1976 ON THE
METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT TEST
FOR TEACHER 3

Student	Word Knowledge	Word Analysis	Reading	Total Reading
Above Average				
1.	4.1	4.3	3.1	3.4
2.	4.1	2.5	2.3	2.4
3.	2.5	4.3	2.1	2.3
4.	2.5	2.5	2.3	2.3
5.	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2
6.	3.0	2.3	2.0	2.2
Average				
7.	2.5	2.2	1.9	2.1
8.	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.9
9.	1.9	2.5	1.7	1.9
10.	1.7	1.9	1.7	1.8
Below Average				
11.	1.4	1.7	1.9	1.7
12.	1.4	1.9	1.6	1.6
13.	1.5	2.2	1.5	1.5
14.	1.4	2.1	1.5	1.5
15.	1.4	2.0	1.3	1.4
16.	1.4	1.6	1.3	1.4
17.	1.3	1.7	1.1	1.2

TABLE XXVI
STUDENT READING SCORES FOR 1976-1977 ON THE
METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT TEST
FOR TEACHER 3

Student	Word Knowledge	Word Analysis	Reading	Total Reading
Above Average				
1.	3.0	3.0	2.1	2.3
Average				
2.	4.1	2.3	1.8	2.1
3.	2.2	3.0	2.0	2.1
4.	2.1	2.2	1.9	2.0
5.	2.2	2.3	1.4	2.0
6.	2.3	1.9	1.8	1.9
7.	2.1	1.8	1.5	1.9
8.	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.9
9.	2.1	1.7	1.7	1.9
10.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.8
Below Average				
11.	1.7	1.9	1.6	1.7
12.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7
13.	1.5	1.8	1.6	1.6
14.	1.6	1.7	1.4	1.5
15.	1.4	1.8	1.4	1.5
16.	1.4	2.0	1.3	1.4
17.	1.3	1.7	1.3	1.3

TABLE XXVII
STUDENT READING SCORES FOR 1977-1978 ON THE
METROPOLITAN ACHIEVEMENT TEST
FOR TEACHER 3

Student	Word Knowledge	Word Analysis	Reading	Total Reading
Above Average				
1.	4.1	2.5	2.7	2.9
2.	2.0	2.5	2.5	2.3
3.	2.5	2.5	2.1	2.2
4.	2.3	3.0	2.1	2.2
Average				
5.	3.0	2.3	1.9	2.1
6.	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.0
7.	2.0	2.1	1.7	1.9
Below Average				
8.	1.9	2.0	1.5	1.7
9.	1.9	2.1	1.3	1.6
10.	1.7	2.1	1.3	1.6
11.	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.6
12.	1.7	1.8	1.3	1.6
13.	1.6	2.1	1.2	1.4
14.	1.6	1.9	1.2	1.4
15.	1.5	1.8	1.2	1.4
16.	1.4	2.1	1.5	1.5
17.	1.4	1.7	1.3	1.4
18.	1.3	1.8	1.4	1.4
19.	1.3	1.6	1.5	1.4
20.	1.4	1.7	1.1	1.3
21.	1.2	1.7	1.3	1.3

VITA

Nancy Beets Williamson was born in Oneida, Tennessee on June 9, 1943. She attended Oneida Elementary School and graduated from Oneida High School in 1961. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Georgetown College, Georgetown, Kentucky.

Mrs. Williamson was employed as an English and speech teacher in Oneida High School from 1965 to 1970. In 1976, she returned to the Oneida School System as a Title I reading teacher for grades 1, 2, and 3.

The author is a member of the National Education Association, Tennessee Education Association, and the Oneida Education Association.

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