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**First grade children's oral and written retellings**

**Harris, Linda Kay, M.A.**

**The University of Arizona, 1992**

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FIRST GRADE CHILDREN'S ORAL AND WRITTEN RETELLINGS

by

Linda Kay Harris

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE,  
READING AND CULTURE

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

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## STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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## ABSTRACT

This study addressed four questions about first graders' oral and written retellings. First, how did their retellings change over the period of one school year? Second, how did their own written and oral retellings of the same text compare and contrast? Third, did written retellings influence oral retellings? Fourth, did oral retellings influence written retellings? The retellings were scored using a holistic measure.

Twelve students in the same first grade classroom participated in this study. The students were ranked based on teacher observation and were placed in experimental groups. The groups contained a heterogeneous mix of students, and were similar to each other.

The first graders' oral and written retellings improved over the school year. Their oral retellings consistently scored higher than their written retellings. However, the evidence from this study does not indicate an influence of either written retellings on oral retellings or oral retellings on written retellings.

CHAPTER 1  
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the background of the study, the statement of the problem with the research questions, the significance of the study, and the assumptions underlying the study and limitations of the study and the definition of terms.

Background of the Study

The views on reading instruction are constantly changing. Recently there has been a trend away from isolated skills instruction and product orientation toward a holistic, process orientation. To this end research has established the interrelatedness of reading and writing. Tierney and Pearson (1984) view "both reading and writing as acts of composing . . . involving continuous, recurring, and recursive transactions among readers and writers" (p. 43).

This transaction begins early in life. As young children try to make sense of the world around them they are focusing their attention on speech and print. The area of early literacy is another area with changing views. As children learn to read and write in conventional terms they go through stages. It is during this time that they begin to develop

strategies for reading and writing. The work of Clay (1991) suggests that "literacy activities can become self-managed, self-monitored, self-corrected, and self-extending" (p. 345). Teachers need to provide support for the emergent reader.

In order for students to view reading as a valuable activity they must be given the opportunity to read authentic texts. The authentic texts come in the form of children's literature books. "When we provide real, unabridged literature along with opportunities for choice and exploration, we can capture students' interest, challenge them to explore new avenues, and encourage them to read for pleasure" (Freeman, 1990, p. 189). Children then have the opportunity to grow as readers with relevant material.

As young readers discover the pleasure of reading they need to be given the opportunity to present what they have learned to the world around them. There also exists a need for teachers to evaluate the comprehension of young readers. However, this evaluation must be appropriate and authentic. At the first grade level paper-pencil comprehension question tests are not appropriate. An appropriate evaluation activity is retelling.

Retellings are postreading or post listening activities in which readers or listeners tell or write their representation of the text. In retelling the readers present to the world their understanding of what they read. This is

authentic in that it is the reader's own perception of the text. Because retelling invites children to take charge of their comprehension it is an appropriate assessment tool. As emergent readers their potential and creativity should not be stifled by detailed comprehension questions by the teacher.

In addition to being a good assessment tool, retelling also develops a range of critical literacy skills such as reading, writing, listening, talking, thinking, interacting, comparing, matching, organizing information, recalling and comprehending (Brown & Cambourne, 1987). First grade is a critical time for children to continue to develop these strategies. Therefore, retelling is appropriate for emergent readers.

#### Statement of the Problem

This study is designed to assess the oral and written retellings of first graders over the period of one school year.

Specifically, the following research questions will be investigated:

1. How do first graders' retellings change over time with continued practice and opportunities to retell?
2. How do first graders' own written and oral retellings of the same text compare and contrast?

3. What are the differences in first graders' retellings between those children who initially retell a story orally and those children who retell the same story orally following a written retelling?
4. What are the differences in first graders' retellings between those children who initially retell a story in writing and those children who retell the same story in writing following an oral retelling?

#### Significance of the Study

Retellings are postreading or postlistening activities in which readers or listeners tell or write their representation of the text. As children become more proficient in retelling they are able to present their own representation of the story. In retelling readers are involved in thinking and organizing their own comprehension, therefore this process integrates reflection, reaction and response to the entire text (Mitchell & Irwin, 1992).

This study of story retelling is important from the standpoint that it will examine first graders' oral and written story retellings over time with continued practice and opportunities to retell. Furthermore, this study will compare similarities and differences of children's at retelling orally and in writing. Finally, two more dimensions will be

examined. This study will then compare and contrast retellings between children who initially retell a story orally and children who retell the same story orally following a retelling in writing. This study will also compare and contrast retellings between children who initially retell a story in writing and children who retell the same story in writing following an oral retelling.

This study may lead to new insights concerning evaluation of first graders' reading comprehension. In addition, this study may provide insights into the relationship between reading and writing. Comprehension is inherent in the written and oral retellings of students. The relationship between emergent literacy and the transactional models of reading and writing may be demonstrated in this study.

#### Assumptions Underlying the Study

Before beginning the study several assumptions were made.

1. Retelling is an appropriate activity to measure reading and writing comprehension for first graders.
2. The students could learn to retell stories.
3. The students could retell in written and oral form.
4. In retelling, students may not tell or write all that they could remember.
5. The text levels are appropriate for first graders.

6. The text levels as established for the children's books used in this study are scaled according to reading difficulty. For the purposes of this study, these text levels are considered to be representative of the particular levels which have been assigned.
7. The two groups of first grade students in this study were roughly similar in regards to reading ability.

#### Limitations of the Study

The following limitations must be recognized within this study:

1. The students in this study were only from one first grade classroom.
2. The population of students were in an urban school district with a high transiency rate which decreased the number of subjects in the study.
3. There were only four text samples used.
4. The writing ability of first graders is at an early developmental level and understanding of the writing is dependent upon what the student dictates.
5. The story dictations were taken by an instructional assistant and the student teacher.
6. Children are not equally proficient in oral and written expression.

7. The researcher conducting the study was also the classroom teacher who had other experiences with the children. These experiences may have affected the judgment of the researcher concerning the conduct of the study.

#### Definition of Terms

The following definition of terms used often in this study is provided for the reader's benefit.

1. Retelling: A postreading or postlistening activity in which readers or listeners tell or write their representation of the text.
2. Story Transcript: A script of a student's reading of their own writing.
3. Emergence of Literacy: The beginning stages of the gradual process in which reading and writing strategies are acquired.
4. Retelling Profile: A 12 item checklist developed by Mitchell and Irwin (1992, In preparation) for evaluating retellings in three areas: text-based comprehension, response and reaction to the text, and language use.

CHAPTER 2  
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Four major areas of research will be examined to show how they relate to first grade children's oral and written retellings. First, the emergence of literacy will be discussed in order to set a theoretical framework for oral and written retellings. Second, the interrelatedness of reading and writing will be examined in order to present the rationale for instructional programs that develop reading and writing simultaneously. Third, the use of children's literature for reading instruction will be reviewed. Fourth, the use of story retellings as a post-reading activity and as an assessment of reading comprehension will be summarized.

Emergence of Literacy

Recently the research in early childhood education has moved us away from the notion of readiness and moved toward the idea of emergent literacy. In the past it was believed that we must get students ready to read in kindergarten so that the first grade teacher could teach them to read. Through research we have come to learn that readiness programs greatly underestimated the development of the child in terms of language learning and literacy development. It is the

purpose of this section to examine the notion of emergent literacy.

According to Hall (1987) the word emergent is useful on four counts. First, it implies that development takes place from within the child. Second, emergence is a gradual process: it takes place over time. Third, for something to emerge there has to be something there in the first place, for example, the fundamental ability to make sense of the world is inherent to every child. Finally, things only emerge if the conditions are right. That is, there are contexts which support and facilitate enquiry, respect performance and provide opportunities for engagement in real literacy acts. We will examine the third and fourth counts in greater detail, by looking at the relationship of oral language to literacy development and by examining what the emergent reader and writer do given the appropriate setting.

First we will examine three views of how children learn and/or acquire language. The behaviorists believe that language is learned through environmental conditioning and imitation of adult models (Skinner, 1957). The behaviorists believe that children are programmable robots that repeat exactly what they hear; however, this does not take into account that children are curious, inquisitive people. Another view of language acquisition is represented by the nativists who believe that language is native, natural and

innate to human beings. Every child is born with a "built-in" device for acquiring language (Chomsky, 1965). This view takes environment into consideration but language is viewed as inborn.

A third view of language acquisition is represented by the interactionists. These theorists propose that language is a product of both genetic and environmental factors (McCormick and Schiefelbusch, 1984). Furthermore it is Halliday (1973, 1975) who sees language acquisition as an active process. Children acquire language as they need it in order to make their presence known to those around them, to find out about things in their environment, to tell others their ideas, to accomplish goals, or to socialize. It is in Halliday's ideas about language acquisition that we examine emergent literacy.

It is children's ability to acquire language and attempts to make sense of the world that lead us to literacy development. Glazer (1989) views oral language as a vehicle for the development of reading and writing. Teale and Sulzby (1989) examined this relationship and concluded that children's oral language proficiency is related to their growth in reading and to the ways in which they write. Educators have long seen that a strong oral language base facilitates literacy learning.

Literacy learning begins prior to the child's entrance into school. The home environment and experiences therein

determine to a great deal the success of the child in entering the literate world. Strickland and Morrow (1989) state that learning literacy is seen as a continuous process, which begins in infancy with exposure to oral language, written language, books, and stories. It is a process that has its roots in the home, with branches extending to other environments. Because the roots are in the home, early contacts with print can be thought of as the beginning of a lifelong process of learning to read and write. Not only are children exposed to books but also to the print in the environment around them.

Hall (1987) defines environmental print as the items of print inside and outside the home other than books. This definition can be clarified to mean the signs and logos in the environment around the child. Children know the familiar golden arches as "McDonalds," and do not call it "Burger King." It is at this point that reading begins. This is an example of contextualized print. As children develop in their awareness of print they move to the more decontextualized print of books. Several studies by Goodman and Altwerger (1981), and Harste, Burke and Woodward (1982) suggest that experience with environmental print is an intrinsic part of becoming a literate language user, but that such experiences operate in conjunction with many other oral and written experiences. Hall (1987) concludes that the emergence of

literacy is facilitated by environmental print.

The decontextualized print of books is presented to the child by adults. There has been a great deal of research in support of parents reading to their children. Heath (1983), Teale (1984) and Wells (1986a) confirm that children's early experiences in sharing storytimes are significant to their future literacy development. If children enter school without the experiences of listening to stories it becomes the job of the teacher to provide these experiences. It is through listening to written stories that children are introduced to book language and story structures (Gibson, 1989). Furthermore, by listening to written stories children are learning about what readers do and how text works. Hall (1987) concludes that it is this learning which appears to be very helpful in the emergence of an ability to be a reader of continuous and decontextualized print.

Not only is it important for children to learn about what readers do and how text works, but they must also develop a sense of story. This, too, is developed through exposure to the written word. Cullinan (1989) states that children build their storehouse of language from their communicative experiences and develop their concept of story from the stories they hear. Through the repeated exposure to stories children develop the ability to tell their own stories. They borrow what they have learned from the stories read to them to

create their own story. Wells (1986b) states, "that making sense of an experience is . . . to a very great extent being able to construct a plausible story about it" (p. 196). Wells (1986b) further states, "constructing stories in the mind -- or storying, as it has been called -- is one of the most fundamental means of making meaning as such it is an activity that pervades all aspects of learning" (p. 196). Thus it can be concluded that as children acquire language they are making sense of their world and expressing this through storying which is possible due to the exposure to the story given by adults.

As children enter school they begin to apply their experiences to new settings. It is the job of the teacher to help children to perceive themselves as readers (Smith, 1984). This is important because reading is a natural language process involving the reader in linguistic, cognitive, and social strategies in order to process print directly for meaning (Smith, 1971). Thus to be successful the child must be a reader. Clay (1991) states, "As the child becomes familiar with the language of books that are read aloud his attempts at reading will become more 'book-like'" (p. 77). Children are beginning to apply their previous language experiences to the attempt at reading.

This is a stage of early reading behavior according to Clay. The child seems to begin to work toward conventional

reading; however, there are several stages established by Clay (1991, pp. 78-82):

Stage 1: Print can be turned into speech.

Stage 2: There is a special type of talking found in books.

Stage 3: The picture is the guide to the message.

Stage 4: Some sentences are memorized. At this stage a child reads a simple book relying on what his ear remembers of the text, prompted by the pictures, and usually in sentences.

Stage 5: Constructing the sentences. The child combines his ability to produce sentences, his half memories of the text, the picture cues to meaning, and visual cues from letters.

Clay (1991) further states that the child who will search, check, reformulate, correct and obtain some confirmation that he is right is making vital links in early reading and thereby, learning how to process language information.

As children become more aware of how text works they also begin to learn what readers do. They begin to develop strategies for reading. To be successful with these strategies, children must develop concepts about print. Clay (1991) asserts, "In learning to read a child must develop a clear understanding of: (1) the basic concepts such as letter, word, sound, drawing, writing and reading, (2) hierarchial

concepts such as collections of letters which make up words, and collections of words which make up sentences, and (3) terms for position like first and last, beginning or start and end, and next, when they apply within the direction constraints of the printer's code" (p. 141). That is to say that reading moves from left to right and from top to bottom of the page.

Once the concepts about print are internalized the child will be successful with the reading strategies. Clay (1991) has observed that the inner control of reading allows the reader to extract information in the text from any known source and to use such information to prime and guide inner strategic activities. Furthermore, she states, "during the reading acquisition phase the novice reader is not only learning words or letter-sound relationships but is also learning how to use each of the sources of information in texts, how to link these to stored knowledge, and which strategic activities make 'reading' successful" (p.321). Thus the good reader learns to monitor his own reading, to self-correct, to use known information to make approximations. The good reader will use semantic cues to evaluate if the approximation makes sense in the sentence, syntactic cues to see if it sounds correct, and graphophonic cues to see if it looks correct. Thus an emergent reader must have concepts about print, strategies for reading and cuing systems in place

to monitor their reading.

While the majority of this section has focused on reading one must not overlook the development of writing. In some instances, writing in the early grades is often viewed as making the letters correctly. This assumes that children can not write (compose) until they have mastered the mechanics. This, however, is not the view of writing in terms of emerging literacy. In an emergent literacy program children's writing forms and functions are accepted and encouraged. Ferreiro and Teberosky (1983) claim to have identified five stages children pass through as they emerge as writers. The first stage is the intention to create a message. Children at the first stage make marks which may or may not be letters. At stage two the graphic forms of the characters are more clearly defined and resemble conventional forms. Stage three is characterized by the child beginning to assign a sound value to each of the letters that compose a piece of writing. Ferreiro and Teberosky call this the 'syllabic hypothesis' as they claim each letter stands for one syllable. Stage four marks the move to what is called the 'alphabetic hypothesis': "The child abandons the syllabic hypothesis and discovers the need for an analysis that goes beyond the syllable" (p. 204). The child uses aspects of the text such as length and letters. The child also understands that there is a relationship between oral reading of the text and the text. The final

stage is alphabetic writing. "Children understand that each written character corresponds to a sound smaller than a syllable and they systematically analyze the phonemes of the words they are writing" (Ferreiro and Teberosky, 1983, p. 209). At this point children's invented spellings begin to move toward conventional spelling.

Writing has been determined to help reading because it helps children attend to print. Clay (1991) suggests that writing provides extra opportunities for the child to gain control of literacy concepts. Clay (1991) further states, "learning to read and write messages gives children information about common words from slightly different perspectives which seems to help them to understand more about the ways in which written words work" (p. 141). Thus reading and writing are important to the child who is learning in the literate society.

In this section we have examined oral language development and its relationship to emergent literacy, and what the emergent reader and the emergent writer do. We will conclude by examining Hall's (1987) suggestions that a context for the continued emergence of literacy to operate in is to:

- 1) help children understand that literacy is about creating meaning and communicating meaning;
- 2) help children understand that literacy is a distinctly human activity. It enables people to communicate;

- 3) help children see that people engage in literacy acts because such acts are considered important and useful by those people;
- 4) help children recognize that literacy is a means to many kinds of ends -- that it serves a wide range of real functions (p. 81).

And finally a definition of literacy by Scribner and Cole (1981), "Literacy is not simply knowing how to read and write but applying this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use" (p. 236). Children are capable literacy participants given the appropriate opportunities they will blossom and grow to become literate language users.

#### Interrelatedness of Reading and Writing

The views on the relationship between reading and writing have changed a great deal in the last thirty years. At one time reading and writing were viewed as discrete activities in which reading and writing were considered separate, with little in common. Gradually the view changed to a parallel view in which the development of reading and writing progressed in the same manner. While they were both viewed as processes there was not an established relationship. Eventually the reading and writing relationship became viewed as an interactive one in which the development of reading and

writing influenced each other, but were still seen as separate. Current research views the development as one of transactional, in which the development of reading and writing occurs at the same time. Reading and writing develop simultaneously and jointly with overlap, and it is within that area of overlap where literacy is developed.

Literacy development is crucial to the growth of a child, to be successful in the literate world. To participate in the literate world, children must understand the precise connection between reading, writing, and language (Dyson, 1984). Furthermore literacy development, that is reading and writing, is a cognitive activity. Squire (1984) asserts, "as children learn their language, they learn to think."

Students must be actively involved in the attainment of literacy skills which they need to be successful readers and writers. People not only learn to read by reading and write by writing, but they also learn to read by writing and write by reading (Goodman and Goodman, 1984). As literacy development begins children must learn that print is talk written down (Dyson, 1984). The interaction of the reader with the text is the point at which comprehension occurs. This also holds true for the writer. Tierney and Pearson (1984) view reading and writing as essentially similar processes of meaning construction; both are acts of composing. Additionally, meaning is created as a reader uses his

background of experience together with the author's cues to come to grips both with what the writer is getting him to do or think and what the reader decides and creates for himself (Tierney and Pearson, 1984). Furthermore, Stotsky (1984) concludes "The reading experience seems to be a consistent correlate of, or influence on, writing ability" (p. 17). Thus for meaning to be composed the reader must begin to read like a writer.

Because there exists a strong relationship between reading and writing, the reader is influenced by writing. It is only through reading that writers learn all the intangibles that they know (Smith, 1984). This is the beginning of reading like a writer. Goodman and Goodman, (1984) assert that readers, who read like writers may notice characteristics of print in their environment, but it is only when they try to create written language that this observation focuses on how form serves function. Thus students who read like writers see the function, that is communication, is the result of form, that is writing.

Furthermore as children develop as writers, their language is influenced by writing. Dyson (1984) states that through writing, children may refine their understanding of the written language system. The influence of writing on reading was further examined by Dyson (1984) "Writing may be particularly valuable in helping young children to make

explicit their current hypotheses about the written language symbol system and, as a direct result of that process make their ideas explicit" (p. 166). This is accomplished as children attempt to read their own writing. In Dyson's study (1984) she discovered that "in attempting to read their own writing, both independently and in interaction with peers and adults, children may discover the nature of the precise connection between reading, writing, and language" (p. 166). From studies of young children learning to read and write, Clay (1975) emphasizes that in writing, children's attention is directed to the visual details of print, thus providing a valuable complement to early reading.

Therefore the research indicates a strong relationship between reading and writing. They occur simultaneously. This relationship; therefore, directly influences the experiences that teachers provide for children with reading and writing.

#### Using Children's Literature for Reading Instruction

A child's world should include rich language experiences. The wealth of language comes from "real" books which can be widely used in all parts of a school's literacy program. Cullinan (1989) asserts that "children's language development is enriched by exposure to literature" (p. 36). In addition, Tunnell and Jacobs (1989) state, "Immersion in natural text at

an early age has the same effects on reading as immersion in aural and spoken language has on speech" (p. 474).

When children are not reading on their own, and teachers read aloud a great deal to children, then the children begin to tune their ears for the literacy language. Krashen (1990) expresses how reading out loud to children is very beneficial for language development, and further, children who are read to are superior in reading comprehension, vocabulary and in oral language ability. "When children are read to, they begin to acquire the special language of writing, its particular grammar and vocabulary, as well as knowledge about how stories are put together; all this knowledge helps make their own reading much more comprehensible" (Krashen, 1990, p. xii).

In addition to reading aloud to children, reading with children is important. Children and adults reading together can convey the message of how reading is enjoyable. Furthermore, Tunnell and Jacobs (1989) conclude that the process of learning to read naturally begins at home when parents read to their children and the parents let the children handle the books. This process continues into the classroom where books are included naturally in the classroom. The opportunity is present to share a love of reading. During this shared reading time children learn such concepts of print as directionality, what constitutes a word, a letter and the purpose of punctuation (Huck, 1990). It is important that

children get the opportunity to hear and read along with the teacher a story that is familiar to them. Many times they are learning something new from the story each time it is read. "Hearing repeated readings helps boys and girls to develop a sense of story. They learn how stories begin and end; they recognize the story structures" (Huck, 1990, p. 188).

Through shared reading we can provide for children, as adult models, the pleasure of reading. Gradually children join with the adult in reading a story. They become hooked on reading. Bird (1990) shares that "we help them further by talking about literature, sharing our experiences in the literary worlds we've entered as readers, revealing and describing the almost limitless range of experiences that is possible within the pages of a book" (p. 196). By providing the model and showing our pleasure in reading literature we are helping children to bring what they have observed about reading into their realm of experience and to apply it to their own reading. Bird (1990) concludes, "Just as we trust that our youngsters will learn our ways of living in households and communities and become proficient language users in the process, so we must trust that our students will become sensitive, critical readers as they enter and explore, with our help, the world of books" (p. 196).

As children enter school the literacy program which began at home should continue. A literature-based reading program

uses books naturally, introducing them in kindergarten and first grade the way they were shared in the literate home (Huck, 1990).

As children develop as readers, they also begin to see that subjects that interest them are also subjects in books. This shared interest helps children to connect to books. When choosing books for use in the classroom, "good literature is appropriate for any age level assuming there is interest" (Freeman, 1990, p. 189). Books that are of genuine interest to the reader are appropriate and provide children the opportunity to further explore their interests. Krashen (1990) states, "a good literature program is one that deals with topics and themes of both universal and local interest, themes that encourage students to think about basic ethical questions" (p. vii). Furthermore, Krashen (1990) found strong evidence that "reading texts of genuine interest to the reader is the source of reading comprehension" (p. xii). Thus the research indicates strong support for children reading literature that interests them.

When children read books of interest to them they also bring a wealth of background experiences. The process of comprehending a text comes about because of our life experiences. Short (1990) states, "we can understand what we read only because of the connections we make between our current reading and our past experiences" (p. 194). As

children gain a bank of experiences they can compare and contrast the new experiences with the previous experiences to make reading comprehension a more conscious strategy (Short, 1990, p. 194).

As the process becomes conscious, children are simultaneously developing cognitively. Krashen (1990) expresses that "literature is the source of language and cognitive development. If teachers and students focus on the ideas, on the stories and their meanings, language and cognitive development will follow" (p. xiii). As children's language develops they begin to "read more than words and 'extract meaning'; they create their own worlds" (Cairney, 1990, p. 201). Through discussion about the text, the children continue to develop cognitively. Bird (1991) concludes, "as the students enjoy good literature and develop their appreciation of it, they improve their reading ability; and through participation in open ended discussions, they reveal more about their understanding of books than one could ever pull out of them with lists of questions" (p. 196).

Thus the research supports the use of literature in the home and the classroom. By reading aloud and giving children time to read, using books across the curriculum and teaching reading with real books, we are able to create rich literary environments (Huck, 1990). It is up to the teacher to provide this environment "since children are 'language sponges' that

soak up words around them, we want the language in their books to be worthy of emulation" (Cullinan, 1989, p. 37). "An indirect, but very powerful payoff of participating in a literature program . . . is that well-taught literature programs instill in students a love of books and desire to read on their own" (Krashen, 1990, p. x). The ultimate goal of reading in school is for children to develop an awareness that their horizons may be broadened through books.

#### Story Retellings of Children's Literature

Simply assigning pieces of literature for the children to read does not guarantee that the students will find them interesting or enjoyable. What teachers and students do with their reading is the key to successfully translating a literature-based approach into a means of enhancing reading performance and enjoyment. Deeper appreciation for literature will take place by the children once they find it personally meaningful and can relate it to their personal lives. The success of this occurrence depends greatly on the close interaction between the teacher, the book and the child.

Using retelling as a pre and post activity during a book discussion enhances the interaction between the teacher, the book and the child. Retellings are postreading or postlistening recalls in which readers or listeners tell what

they remember either orally or in writing (Morrow, 1989). The retelling procedure involves participants in some intensive reading, writing, talking and listening, around a central theme (Brown and Cambourne, 1987). Retelling allows readers or listeners to structure responses according to personal and individual interpretations of text (Morrow, 1989). Production of individual interpretations of a text is an active procedure that involves children in the construction of text. This reconstruction of story meaning is the primary goal of retelling. "Retelling a story is an opportunity for a reader to present his or her ideas to the world and to have an additional opportunity to rehearse the story again and to integrate it, modify it, and add to its comprehension" (Goodman, 1982, p. 305).

When retelling a story, children are mentally reconstructing events and arranging pictures, therefore, children build an internal representation of the story. A study by Zimiles and Kuhns (1976) found that retelling improved story comprehension in six to eight year olds who were asked to retell a story after it was read to them. Retelling can be used as a way to measure reading comprehension. Retellings of literature provide evidence for, and insights into, better understanding the reader's comprehension process. Retellings after reading provide another opportunity for the reader to continue to construct

text (Goodman, 1982).

In a study done by Morrow (1985), that children who improved most in comprehension also improved in their retellings. This finding suggests that a common factor was responsible for both types of gains and is consistent with the argument that retelling experiences enhance a sense of story structure leading to both improved retelling accuracy and greater comprehension (Morrow, 1985). The common factor may be simply that the children are actively involved with literature. When reading the original text of a story, children concentrate on meaning and the comprehension of meaning; this is what research consistently advocates as the proper focus of any reading act (Brown and Cambourne, 1987). Reconstructing literature involves the process of identifying and labeling story structures. By going through this analysis and synthesis process, the children manipulate sophisticated language structures, and therefore, further develop background knowledge.

Background experience plays an important role in retellings. Goodman (1982) discusses how readers use information from the text for their retellings, but, what causes the differences among readers' retellings is the set of schemata and experiences which readers bring to their reading. Because retelling taps into background knowledge, it has enormous potential and is a powerful learning activity. Brown

and Cambourne (1987) illustrate the use of retelling as incorporating a range of literacy skills such as reading, writing, listening, talking, thinking, interacting, comparing, matching and organizing information, remembering, and comprehending.

Retelling can be used for assessment purposes. "Retelling reveals what a child comprehends, or the product of comprehension, as well as how the child comprehends, or the process of comprehension" (Mitchell, 1992, p. 1). If reading is viewed as a process by which readers construct meaning, then the kind of reading assessment measures that are used to assess reading should be compatible with that view (Mitchell, 1992). Retelling can be an appropriate measure for reading comprehension.

Retelling is a holistic way to evaluate reading because it involves whole texts and natural purposes for reading. The Retelling Profile developed by Mitchell and Irwin (1992) incorporates 12 items, four in each of three areas: reader's text-based comprehension, reader's response and reactions to text, the reader's language use. The three areas in the Retelling Profile reflect a theoretical perspective of reading as an interactive/transactive language process involving both reader and text (Mitchell and Irwin, 1992).

### Summary

In this chapter, the literature on the emergence of literacy, the interrelatedness of reading and writing, using children's literature for reading instruction, and the use of story retellings of children's literature has been reviewed. Emergent literacy is important because the children in the study are beginning readers, and it is a critical time for the development of literacy. A review of the literature on the interrelatedness of reading and writing is included because the study involved children reading and writing. Similarly, because the study involved children reading real literature, the use of children's books for reading instruction is important. The review of the literature on retelling is relevant since this study investigates the use of story retellings of children's literature in the classroom. Taken together, these literature reviews contribute to the understanding of the present study.

CHAPTER 3:  
DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the subjects, materials and procedures used in this study. In addition, the methods used in scoring and analyzing the data will be described.

Selection of Subjects

The subjects for this study were first graders assigned to my classroom in an urban school district in Tucson, Arizona. The students were from low to middle socioeconomic families. The majority of students were on the free or reduced lunch program. Of the original twenty-six participants, twelve completed the study. Two students were dropped from the study after their placement in adaptive education programs. Eight students were dropped due to high absenteeism and four students moved from the district.

Of the twelve students, two were in the gifted program and five were receiving Chapter I services, two of these students were part of the Reading Recovery Program. The remaining students were of average ability.

The students were ranked by teacher observation and placed in two experimental groups. The students who, during

the first six weeks of school, demonstrated an understanding of the following concepts: book handling skills, print carries the message, one-to-one matching, and sound-letter relationships in writing were ranked higher than students who did not demonstrate the same degree of understanding. Each group was a heterogeneous mix of abilities, according to teacher ranking. The two groups were roughly similar in the mixture of students demonstrating the above skills.

#### Teaching Materials and Procedures

Retelling was a part of the daily plans in the classroom from the beginning of the year. The students were introduced to the retelling procedure in a whole group setting. Stories were read to the children and initially the teacher retold the story. Gradually the students joined with the teacher. The next step in the introduction to retelling involved the children retelling in small groups with the teacher present. The final step was to individually retell a story to the teacher. To provide the opportunity for a real audience the children retold to friends who had not heard the story.

Not only was retelling a part of reading instruction but also a part of math, social studies, and science. Retelling was used as an anticipatory set for relating prior knowledge and experiences to the new learning. Retelling was also used

as closure to lessons in which the children rehearsed explanations of what they learned during content area instruction. In these ways children practiced retelling with different text genres as well as their own knowledge and experience -- all of which aided them in learning to retell.

Reading instruction in the classroom used children's literature. Little books and strategy lessons were used to teach reading. The classroom was organized with four reading groups. Reading and writing instruction occurred two hours a day, students participated in silent reading and shared reading daily in addition to the instructional time. The students moved around the room to four different centers. One center was a writing center where students wrote in journals. The second center was a listening center where students listened to tape recorded stories which followed the theme we were studying. The third center involved spelling instruction with the instructional assistant. The students received reading instruction at the fourth center under the direction of the teacher. In general, reading instruction progressed in the following manner: On Monday the students participated in pre-reading activities to activate background knowledge. Some activities include: predictions about the story from the pictures and introduction of new vocabulary. Usually the students left this center with a task, related to the concept in the story, to be completed independently. On Tuesday we

reviewed the previous day's discussion and read the story. At this time the students read and retold the story with a partner. On Wednesday the group discussed the story. We completed a story map focusing on important details and events of the story. This provided an opportunity for the students to retell the story within a framework. On Thursday and Friday the students wrote stories in their journals. The students were encouraged to do written retellings. Writing conferences were also held on Friday. When the students chose to participate in a writing conference the conference included their peers. One activity during the writing conference was to retell the student's story.

The books used for reading instruction were little books. These books were part of the Story Box and Sunshine Series published by the Wright Group. Occasionally trade books from the library were used. The books usually contained 8 to 20 pages. Each book contained an individual story. The illustrations within the book supported understanding of the text. The books for reading instruction and shared reading were teacher selected. Each child had an individual copy of the book for reading instruction. During silent reading time the students choose their own books.

### Testing Materials

The testing materials selected were trade books appropriate for first graders. The following books were used for the testing sessions: *Katie Did It* by Becky McDaniel; *Whose Mouse Are You?* by Robert Kraus; *The Carrot Seed* by Ruth Krauss; and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle.

*Katie Did It* was selected for the first time interval taken in mid October. The story was written by Becky McDaniel and illustrated by Lois Axeman. It was published by Children's Press as part of the Rookie Reader series. The story is a patterned language book in which Katie the main character, the youngest of three children, is blamed for everything bad that happens. At the end of the story Katie gives her mother flowers. The sentence "Katie did it." is repeated several times throughout the story. The book consists of 30 pages total with 20 pages of illustrations, and a total of 96 words. According to the *Reading Recovery Booklist*, this book is a level 7. This level is an approximate indicator of text difficulty. Level 7 is characterized by familiar experiences, repetition of one to two sentence patterns, and concrete ideas. The illustrations provide high support for the understanding of the text.

For the second time interval taken in late November *Whose Mouse Are You?* by Robert Kraus and pictures by Jose Aruego was

used. This story is also a patterned language book with the phrase, "Whose mouse are you?" repeated. The main character is a mouse whose family disappears and the mouse must save each member of its family. The mouse also wishes for a brother. In the end the mouse has its family back and gets a baby brother. The book consists of 28 pages total with 24 pages of illustrations and a total of 105 words. According to the *Reading Recovery Trade Booklist*, this book is a level 11. Level 11 is characterized by: some fantasy as content, pictures illustrating the main ideas and some repetition of phrases.

For the third time interval, taken in mid-February *The Carrot Seed* by Ruth Krauss and pictures by Crockett Johnson was used. This story is about a little boy who plants a carrot seed. His parents and big brother tell him that it won't come up. Yet, he still persists and waters it and pulls the weeds and takes good care of it. Eventually his carrot grows. The book consists of 22 pages total with 12 pages of illustrations and a total of 101 words. According to the *Reading Recovery Trade Booklist* this book is level 12 which is characterized in much the same way as level 11.

The fourth book, sampled in early April, was *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* written and illustrated by Eric Carle. This is the story of a caterpillar and his journey through the days of the week and through many foods. Eventually he goes

through metamorphosis to become a beautiful butterfly. This text is much longer with many more concepts and details. The book consists of 22 pages total with 22 pages of illustration and a total of 224 words. According to the *Reading Recovery Trade Booklist* this book is a level 18 which is characterized by more abstract concepts, literary language, varied syntax with little repetition, and specialized language.

#### Testing Procedures

The students were divided into two experimental groups as previously described. During a testing week, the students received instruction within their regular reading groups for the first two days of the week. On the third day each member of one experimental group orally retold the story which were audio tape recorded by the classroom teacher. These were retold individually. The second experimental group wrote retellings, at the same time, these were then read to the instructional assistant, who recorded the reading by writing the story transcript. On the fourth day the groups switched so that the first group gave written retellings followed by an oral reading to the instructional assistant, and the second group orally retold the story, individually to the classroom teacher.

On the first day of the testing week the story was

introduced through pre-reading activities such as discussion of the key concepts as they related to background experiences and knowledge of the children. Important vocabulary was also introduced. The students skimmed the pictures and made predictions about the story content. The first day's activities concluded with the classroom teacher reading the story to the students to provide a model of fluency and to give the students a sense of story.

The second day began with a review of the first day's activities. Next the students read the story with me in an echo reading format. Then the children read with a partner. The final activity on the second day was a story mapping using detail questions: who, when, where, and what. The children drew pictures of the major events in the story.

On the third day the retelling activities were done. For the first and third time intervals group B gave oral retellings and group A gave written retellings. For the second and fourth time intervals group A gave oral retellings and group B gave written retellings. When the students did the oral retellings they were instructed with the following prompt: "Retell the story in your own words". When the students had difficulty, detail questions were asked as prompts. Comprehension questions were asked as probes.

The written retellings were prompted as follows: "I heard that you read the story (story title). Please retell it for

me". The students then drew pictures and wrote their retellings. These retellings were then read to the instructional assistant who wrote the story transcripts of the children's oral reading for the first, second, and fourth samples. The student teacher, who had been involved with the children since the second month of school, recorded the story transcripts of the children's oral reading of the written retellings for the third time interval.

The fourth day during the testing week progressed the same as the third day except that group B gave written retellings for the first and third time intervals, and group A gave oral retellings. During the second and fourth time intervals group B gave oral retellings and group A gave written retellings.

#### Scoring and Analysis of the Data

The data consisted of 48 oral retellings, 48 written retellings, and 48 story transcripts in which the students read their written retellings to an adult in the classroom after they finished their written retellings. The oral retellings were tape recorded by the researcher and transcribed. Examples of oral retellings, written retellings and story transcripts of the written retellings for two students over all four time intervals can be found in Appendix

## A.

The oral retellings and the written retellings were scored using the Retelling Profile created by Mitchell and Irwin (1992, In preparation). A copy of the profile can be found in Appendix B. The story transcripts were not scored because they were used to support the written retellings by providing clarification of the student's writings. The Retelling Profile contains 12 items, four in each of three areas: reader's text-based comprehension, reader's response and reactions to the text, and reader's language use.

Two raters, the researcher and a knowledgeable teacher colleague, collaboratively determined whether each retelling reflected a high degree, moderate degree, low degree, or no degree of performance for criteria judged in the profile. Prior to the scoring, the raters established the criteria for each of the twelve items on the Reader Retelling Profile. Retellings which scored in the high degree range included rationale and explanation and in general were more elaborate and complete. Retellings that scored in the low degree range contained only mentions with sketchy details and were generally incomplete. Retellings which scored in the moderate range contained more substance than those in the low degree range, but less substance than those in the high degree range.

These moderate degree retellings generally lacked elaboration of ideas.

To analyze the data for this study a descriptive data analysis will be used. Because of the small number of students in the study, a statistical analysis is not appropriate. To answer all four research questions, means and standard deviations of the retelling scores according to the three domains of the retelling profile will be compared. Furthermore, major trends and patterns observed in the retellings will be described.

Specifically, the research questions are presented individually below together with a brief statement relative to the nature of the data analysis of each question.

(1) How do first graders' retellings change over time with continued practice and opportunities to retell?

To answer this question, means and standard deviations for all oral and all written retellings, regardless of order of presentation, will be presented for the three domains over four time intervals comparing the scores from the first interval to the last. General strengths and weaknesses of the children's retellings according to the three domains over the four time intervals will also be described.

(2) How do first graders' own written and oral retellings of the same text compare and contrast?

To answer this question, means and standard deviations for children's own oral and written retellings of the same text will be compared for the pairs of means for the four time

intervals. General strengths and weaknesses of the children's retellings according to the three domains over the four time intervals will also be described.

(3) What are the differences in first graders' retellings between those children who initially retell a story orally and those children who retell the same story orally following a written retelling?

To answer this question, group means and standard deviations will be compared over the four time intervals between retellings of children who initially retold a story orally and retellings of children who retold the same story orally after an initial retelling in writing. Descriptive data from individual retellings will be used to further explain the comparisons and contrasts.

(4) What are the differences in first graders' retellings between those children who initially retell a story in writing and those children who retell the same story in writing following an oral retelling?

To answer this question, group means and standard deviations will be compared over the four time intervals between retellings of children who initially retold a story in writing and retellings of children who retold the same story in writing after an initial oral retelling. Descriptive data from individual retellings will be used to further explain the comparisons and contrasts.

CHAPTER 4  
RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of this study. First, a discussion of the means and standard deviations will be presented, and then the findings will be interpreted as they relate to each of the four research questions.

Research Question #1

How do first graders' retellings change over time with continued practice and opportunities to retell?

This question examined the first graders' progress by finding out if scores on both written and oral retellings increased over time. The rationale was that scores should go up as children demonstrate better comprehension even though the stories increased in level of text difficulty.

Findings for Research Question #1

In Table 1, the means and standard deviations of all the scores on the first domain, text-based comprehension, of the retelling profile are presented for the four time intervals.

Table 1

Text-Based Comprehension Means and Standard Deviations for all  
Written and Oral Retellings Across Four Time Intervals

Mode	I	II	III	IV
Written n = 12	$\bar{X} = 4.67$ s = 1.61	$\bar{X} = 5.33$ s = 1.83	$\bar{X} = 5.08$ s = 1.31	$\bar{X} = 6.75$ s = 1.29
Oral n = 12	$\bar{X} = 9.08$ s = 1.51	$\bar{X} = 10.33$ s = 1.67	$\bar{X} = 9.17$ s = 1.12	$\bar{X} = 10.08$ s = 0.67

According to Table 1, the means of the scores for the written retellings increased from the first interval ( $\bar{X} = 4.67$ ) to the fourth interval ( $\bar{X} = 6.75$ ). Similarly, the mean scores of the oral retellings increased from the first interval ( $\bar{X} = 9.08$ ) to the fourth interval ( $\bar{X} = 10.08$ ). Overall, the students' written and oral retelling scores increased as time progressed, although a slight decrease was noted for time interval III which could perhaps be traced to text effects.

In addition to the means, the standard deviations are presented. With the exception of the second time interval the standard deviations decreased, indicating less variance in the student's scores in terms of text-based comprehension.

At the second time interval the standard deviations for the scores of the written retellings is 1.83, and the standard deviations for the scores of the oral retellings is 1.67 which

are the highest of the four standard deviations in each mode. This indicates the highest variability in the scores on written and oral retellings for text-based comprehension. At this time interval the written retelling scores ranged from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 8 on this domain of the profile. The oral retelling scores ranged from a minimum 7 to a maximum of 12 on this domain of the profile. Such variability is very noticeable with mean scores of small groups and may be due to text effects which will be discussed at the end of this section.

In Table 2, the means and standard deviations of all the scores on the second domain, response and reaction to the text, of the retelling profile are presented for the four time intervals.

Table 2

Response and Reaction to the Text Means and Standard Deviations for all Written and Oral Retellings Across Four Time Intervals

Mode	I	II	III	IV
Written n = 12	$\bar{X} = 0.08$ s = 0.29	$\bar{X} = 0.00$ s = 0.00	$\bar{X} = 0.00$ s = 0.00	$\bar{X} = 0.50$ s = 0.52
Oral n = 12	$\bar{X} = 2.92$ s = 3.55	$\bar{X} = 2.92$ s = 0.90	$\bar{X} = 3.25$ s = 2.22	$\bar{X} = 4.75$ s = 2.01

According to Table 2, the means of the written retelling

scores increased slightly from time interval I ( $\bar{X} = 0.08$ ) to time interval IV ( $\bar{X} = 0.50$ ), with the exceptions of time intervals II and III. The means of the oral retelling scores increased consistently across the four time intervals. In general the mean scores for both the written and oral retellings were substantially lower in this domain in comparison to the other two domains. There is not a consistent trend in the standard deviations of the scores in either mode.

In Table 3, the means and standard deviations of all the scores on the third domain, language use, of the retelling profile are presented for the four time intervals.

Table 3

Language Use Means and Standard Deviations for all Written and Oral Retellings Across Four Time Intervals

Mode	I	II	III	IV
Written n = 12	$\bar{X} = 4.25$ s = 1.66	$\bar{X} = 5.33$ s = 1.44	$\bar{X} = 5.75$ s = 1.77	$\bar{X} = 8.00$ s = 1.95
Oral n = 12	$\bar{X} = 7.25$ s = 1.96	$\bar{X} = 7.17$ s = 2.13	$\bar{X} = 9.25$ s = 1.14	$\bar{X} = 9.75$ s = 1.29

According to Table 3, the means of the written retelling scores consistently increased from time interval I ( $\bar{X} = 4.25$ ) to time interval IV ( $\bar{X} = 8.00$ ), indicating substantial growth. The means of the oral retelling scores for time interval I and

time interval II were very similar. The final two mean scores, time interval III and time interval IV, were similar to each other and higher than the means for the initial two time intervals.

#### Discussion for Research Question #1

Across all three domains, text-based comprehension, response and reaction to the text, and language use, students showed growth in their scores and retelling text. The growth was a result of a combination of variables such as maturation, acquisition of reading and writing strategies, and the use of retellings as an instructional activity which develops literacy strategies. The development of literacy strategies by the children was measurable by the retelling profile. Furthermore, while the text difficulty level, according to Reading Recovery, of the four stories increased over time, the students were able to maintain and/or increase their scores in retellings in both oral and written modes. As time progressed the means increased and the standard deviations decreased which indicated that the lower scores progressed closer to the advancing means. For example, in the first domain Cody scored a 7 at time interval I on the oral retelling, where the mean was 9.08. At time interval IV Cody scored a 10 and the mean was 10.08. In the first domain Jesus scored a 0.00 on the written retelling where the mean was 4.67, and at time

interval IV Jesus scored a 7.00 and the mean was 6.75. Therefore, most children progressed substantially in their retelling scores both in writing and orally.

As previously noted at time interval II there was an inconsistency which may possibly be due to text effects. A major difference in this story as compared to the other three was the narrative style in which the story was written. *Whose Mouse Are You?* is a personal narrative in which the reader participates to create dialogue between the story's main character and the reader. This narrative stance may be responsible for the increased scores in the text-based comprehension domain, and the decreased scores in the language use domain. It was observed that the children attempted to memorize the exact dialogue of the story which aided in the recall of events, yet hindered the language fluency.

The retelling profile measured children's performance in the following domains: text-based comprehension, reader response and reaction to the text, and language use. In general, the children did better in text-based comprehension and language use, and did not perceive reader response and reaction to the text as important to include in a retelling. This may be due to first graders' understanding of reading and retelling in the learning-to-read situation whereby they concentrate more on the message and less on their own response. Additionally, lack of reader response could also be

traced to the use of highly predictable texts as well as limited teacher modeling of this phenomenon. The presence of relatively substantial scores for the oral retellings in the reader response domain may be a result of probe questions asked by the teacher. In general, at the first time interval the students' oral retellings were dialogue between the teacher and the individual students. At the fourth time interval the students' retellings were uninterrupted, complete, comprehensible texts. A surprising finding in the domain of language use was that the written language use mean increased to such a degree that at time interval IV it surpassed the initial oral language use mean.

First graders' retellings demonstrated positive change over time with continued practice and opportunities to retell.

#### Research Question #2

How do first graders' own oral and written retellings of the same text compare and contrast?

This question examined the similarities and differences between the two modes of retelling in this study. The rationale was that children at this level of development are more proficient orally than in writing. Therefore, their oral retelling scores should be higher than their written retelling scores.

Findings for Research Question #2

In the tables below, data from Tables 1, 2, and 3 are presented again as Tables 4, 5, and 6, respectively for the reader's convenience.

In Table 4, the means and standard deviations of all the scores on the first domain, text-based comprehension, of the retelling profile are presented for the four time intervals.

Table 4

Text-Based Comprehension Means and Standard Deviations for all  
Written and Oral Retellings Across Four Time Intervals

Mode	I	II	III	IV
Written n = 12	$\bar{X} = 4.67$ s = 1.61	$\bar{X} = 5.33$ s = 1.83	$\bar{X} = 5.08$ s = 1.31	$\bar{X} = 6.75$ s = 1.29
Oral n = 12	$\bar{X} = 9.08$ s = 1.51	$\bar{X} = 10.33$ s = 1.67	$\bar{X} = 9.17$ s = 1.12	$\bar{X} = 10.08$ s = 0.67

According to Table 4, the means of the oral retelling scores were consistently higher than the means of the written retelling scores. The standard deviations of the oral retelling scores were consistently lower than those of the written retelling scores over all four time intervals. This indicates less variance in the students' oral retelling scores.

In Table 5, the means and standard deviations of all the

scores on the second domain, response and reaction to the text, of the retelling profile are presented for the four time intervals.

Table 5

Response and Reaction to the Text Means and Standard Deviations for all Written and Oral Retellings Across Four Time Intervals

Mode	I	II	III	IV
Written n = 12	$\bar{X} = 0.08$ s = 0.29	$\bar{X} = 0.00$ s = 0.00	$\bar{X} = 0.00$ s = 0.00	$\bar{X} = 0.50$ s = 0.52
Oral n = 12	$\bar{X} = 2.92$ s = 3.55	$\bar{X} = 2.92$ s = 0.90	$\bar{X} = 3.25$ s = 2.22	$\bar{X} = 4.75$ s = 2.01

According to Table 5, the means of the oral retelling scores were consistently higher than the means of the written retelling scores. In general the means of the scores for both the written and oral retellings were substantially lower in this domain in comparison to the other two domains. The standard deviations for the oral retellings are higher than the standard deviations for the written retellings.

In Table 6, the means and standard deviations of all the scores on the third domain, language use, of the retelling profile are presented for the four time intervals.

Table 6

Language Use Means and Standard Deviations for all Written and Oral Retellings Across Four Time Intervals

Mode	I	II	III	IV
Written n = 12	$\bar{X} = 4.25$ s = 1.66	$\bar{X} = 5.33$ s = 1.44	$\bar{X} = 5.75$ s = 1.77	$\bar{X} = 8.00$ s = 1.95
Oral n = 12	$\bar{X} = 7.25$ s = 1.96	$\bar{X} = 7.17$ s = 2.13	$\bar{X} = 9.25$ s = 1.14	$\bar{X} = 9.75$ s = 1.29

According to Table 6, the means of the oral retelling scores were consistently higher than the means of the written retelling scores. The difference between the mean scores of the oral and written retellings at the fourth time interval was less than the difference between the mean scores at the first time interval. There is no consistent trend in the comparison of the standard deviations between the written and oral retelling scores.

Discussion for Research Question #2

Across the three domains, text-based comprehension, response and reaction to the text, and language use, the children demonstrated higher performance on the retelling profile orally than in writing. Children developed their oral expression through the use of retellings. In general, it is to be expected that children at this age level will have higher oral expressive language than written expressive

language.

An example of such growth was observed with Jesus who initially scored a 0 in the written retelling for the third domain, which is called language use. The written retelling scored a 0 because Jesus only drew a picture and refused to write about it. In contrast his initial oral retelling score for language use was 5. For the final interval, Jesus' written retelling score was 7 for the third domain, language use. This written retelling contained formed letters, invented spelling, and some conventional spelling. His oral retelling score for the third domain was 9. Surprisingly, his final written score was higher than his initial oral score. This illustrates how Jesus' written and oral expressive language through retellings were initially dissimilar, yet became more similar at the final time interval.

In general, the students' written retellings were brief. This may be due to the fact that the written retellings were not prompted, and written retellings may be more difficult than oral retellings at this level. The oral retellings were longer. This may be due to two reasons: the prompting done by the teacher, and the fact that oral retellings may be less difficult for children because they are more accustomed to talking about events than writing about them.

First graders' own oral retellings scored higher than their written retellings of the same text. The oral

retellings were generally more complete.

### Research Question #3

What are the differences in first graders' retellings between those children who initially retell a story orally and those children who retell the same story orally following a written retelling?

This question examined the effect of initial written retellings on subsequent oral retellings. Specifically, the mean scores of the initial oral retellings are compared to the mean scores of those subsequent oral retellings. The rationale was that the subsequent oral retelling mean scores should be higher than those of the initial oral retellings. The initial written retellings should serve as a rehearsal for the subsequent oral retellings.

### Findings for Research Question #3

In Table 7, the means and standard deviations of the oral retelling scores in the order of presentation are presented on the first domain, text-based comprehension, of the retelling profile for the four time intervals.

Table 7

Text-Based Comprehension Means and Standard Deviations for Oral Retellings in the Order of Presentation Across Four Time Intervals

Order of Presentation	I	II	III	IV
Oral <sub>1</sub> n = 6	$\bar{X} = 9.00$ s = 1.90	$\bar{X} = 10.50$ s = 1.76	$\bar{X} = 8.83$ s = 0.75	$\bar{X} = 10.17$ s = 0.75
Oral <sub>2</sub> n = 6	$\bar{X} = 9.17$ s = 1.17	$\bar{X} = 10.17$ s = 1.72	$\bar{X} = 9.50$ s = 1.38	$\bar{X} = 10.00$ s = 0.63

According to Table 7, the mean of the scores for the oral retellings given after the written retellings (Oral<sub>2</sub>) were higher at time intervals I and III than those of the initial oral retellings (Oral<sub>1</sub>). Conversely, at time intervals II and IV the mean of the scores for the initial oral retellings was higher than the mean of the scores for the oral retellings following a written retelling. This may be due to group differences which will be discussed further at the end of this section.

There is no consistent trend in the standard deviations of the scores. However, the standard deviation of the scores at time interval IV were less than 1.00, which indicates that there is less variance in the scores within each group, indicating that the scores within the groups became more homogeneous.

In Table 8, the means and standard deviations of the oral retelling scores in the order of presentation are presented on the second domain, response and reaction to the text, of the retelling profile for the four time intervals.

Table 8

Response and Reaction to the Text Means and Standard Deviations for Oral Retellings in the Order of Presentation Across Four Time Intervals

Order of Presentation	I	II	III	IV
Oral <sub>1</sub> n = 6	$\bar{X} = 1.50$ s = 2.75	$\bar{X} = 2.83$ s = 1.17	$\bar{X} = 1.83$ s = 1.33	$\bar{X} = 5.00$ s = 2.28
Oral <sub>2</sub> n = 6	$\bar{X} = 4.33$ s = 3.93	$\bar{X} = 3.00$ s = 0.63	$\bar{X} = 4.67$ s = 2.07	$\bar{X} = 4.50$ s = 0.87

According to Table 8, for time intervals I, II and III the means of the scores of the oral retelling following a written retelling (Oral <sub>2</sub>) were higher than the means of the scores of the initial oral retellings (Oral <sub>1</sub>). At time interval IV, the mean of the scores of the initial oral retelling ( $\bar{X} = 5.00$ ) was slightly higher than the mean of the scores of the oral retellings following an initial written retelling ( $\bar{X} = 4.50$ ).

At time intervals I and III, the standard deviations of the scores of the oral retellings following initial written

retellings were greater than the standard deviations of the scores of the initial oral retellings. At time intervals II and IV, the standard deviations of the scores of the initial oral retellings were greater than the standard deviations of the scores of the oral retellings which followed the written retellings. This indicates greater variability in the scores. This may be due to group differences which will be discussed further at the end of this section.

In Table 9, the means and standard deviations of the oral retelling scores in the order of presentation are presented on the third domain, language use, of the retelling profile for the four time intervals.

Table 9

Language Use Means and Standard Deviations for Oral Retellings in the Order of Presentation Across Four Time Intervals

Order of Presentation	I	II	III	IV
Oral <sub>1</sub> n = 6	$\bar{X} = 7.67$ s = 2.42	$\bar{X} = 7.50$ s = 2.74	$\bar{X} = 9.17$ s = 0.98	$\bar{X} = 9.50$ s = 1.52
Oral <sub>2</sub> n = 6	$\bar{X} = 6.83$ s = 1.47	$\bar{X} = 6.83$ s = 1.47	$\bar{X} = 9.33$ s = 1.37	$\bar{X} = 10.00$ s = 1.10

According to Table 9, at time intervals I and II, the means of the scores of the oral retellings that followed the written retellings (Oral <sub>2</sub>) were lower than the means of the

scores of the initial oral retellings (Oral 1). At time intervals III and IV, the means of the scores of the oral retellings that followed the written retellings were higher than the means of the scores of the initial oral retellings. There is no consistent trend in the standard deviations of the scores.

#### Discussion for Research Question #3

Across the three domains, text-based comprehension, response and reaction to the text, and language use, there was not a consistent trend to indicate that written retellings influenced students' oral retellings. However, group differences became apparent when these findings were examined. The composition of the groups changed throughout the four time intervals of this study.

Although at the beginning of this study both groups contained a heterogeneous mixture of students based on teacher observation, and the two groups appeared to be similar to each other, as the study progressed students were dropped from the study for reasons previously described in Chapter 3. For example, one group lost its two highest ranked readers/writers, while the other group lost its two lowest readers/ writers. Because mean scores are compared in these tables, the loss of certain students could have influenced these means scores either positively or negatively.

According to the mean scores, in the text-based comprehension domain, it appeared that one group's oral retelling scores were consistently higher, regardless of the presence of the written retelling. This is contrary to the rationale that written retellings serve as rehearsals for oral retellings in terms of text-based comprehension for this study.

The only domain which showed a slight trend was reader response and reaction to the text. The second oral retellings scored higher at three of the four time intervals. While the prompting done by the teacher was consistent for both oral retellings, the second oral retellings offered more response. This may be due to the influence of the written retelling; however, the differences in the scores are not large enough to fully support this conclusion.

In the third domain, language use, the second oral retellings are higher than the first oral retellings for the third and fourth time intervals. This may be due to oral proficiency development and maturation. At the final two time intervals it is possible that the experience of the written retelling may have allowed the students to internalize major events in the stories, and then they were able to focus more attention to their oral presentation of the story.

There were no conclusive trends in first graders' retellings between those children who initially retold a story

orally and those children who retold the same story orally following a written retelling. Therefore, in this study written retellings did not influence oral retellings.

#### Research Question #4

What are the differences in first graders' retellings between those children who initially retell a story in writing and those children who retell the same story in writing following an oral retelling?

This question examined the effect of initial oral retellings on subsequent written retellings. Specifically, the mean scores of the initial written retellings are compared to the mean scores of those subsequent written retellings. The rationale was that the subsequent written retelling mean scores should be higher than those of the initial written retellings. The initial oral retellings should serve as a rehearsal for the subsequent written retellings.

#### Findings for Research Question #4

In Table 10, the means and standard deviations of the written retelling scores in the order of presentation are presented on the first domain, text-based comprehension, of the retelling profile for the four time intervals.

Table 10

Text-Based Comprehension Means and Standard Deviations for  
Written Retellings in the Order of Presentation Across Four  
Time Intervals

Order of Presentation	I	II	III	IV
Written <sub>1</sub> n = 6	$\bar{X} = 4.00$ s = 2.00	$\bar{X} = 6.00$ s = 1.55	$\bar{X} = 5.17$ s = 1.47	$\bar{X} = 7.00$ s = 0.63
Written <sub>2</sub> n = 6	$\bar{X} = 5.33$ s = 0.82	$\bar{X} = 4.67$ s = 1.97	$\bar{X} = 5.00$ s = 1.27	$\bar{X} = 6.50$ s = 1.76

According to Table 10, the means of the initial written retelling (Written <sub>1</sub>) scores were higher than the means of the scores of the written retellings following oral retellings (Written <sub>2</sub>) at time intervals II, III and IV. At time interval I, the mean of the scores for the written retelling following the initial oral retelling was higher than the mean of the scores for the initial written retelling. There is no consistent trend in the standard deviations of the scores.

In Table 11, the means and standard deviations of the written retelling scores in the order of presentation are presented on the second domain, response and reaction to the text, of the retelling profile for the four time intervals.

Table 11

Response and Reaction to the Text Means and Standard Deviations for Written Retellings in the Order of Presentation Across Four Time Intervals

Order of Presentation	I	II	III	IV
Written <sub>1</sub> n = 6	$\bar{X} = 0.17$ s = 0.41	$\bar{X} = 0.00$ s = 0.00	$\bar{X} = 0.00$ s = 0.00	$\bar{X} = 0.50$ s = 0.52
Written <sub>2</sub> n = 6	$\bar{X} = 0.00$ s = 0.00	$\bar{X} = 0.00$ s = 0.00	$\bar{X} = 0.00$ s = 0.00	$\bar{X} = 0.50$ s = 0.55

According to Table 11, the children did not include reader response and reaction to the text in their written retellings. For time intervals II and III, the mean scores were zero indicating no degree of response in this domain. Although, at the fourth time interval the mean score was 0.50 for both written retellings. This number is substantially low and will be discussed further at the end of this section. Due to the lack of scores in this domain, the standard deviations do not provide vital information. Few children had scorable data in this domain resulting in standard deviations higher than mean scores.

In Table 12, the means and standard deviations of the written retelling scores in the order of presentation are presented on the third domain, language use, of the retelling profile for the four time intervals.

Table 12

Language Use Means and Standard Deviations for Written Retellings in the Order of Presentation Across Four Time Intervals

Order of Presentation	I	II	III	IV
Written <sub>1</sub> n = 6	$\bar{X} = 4.00$ s = 2.10	$\bar{X} = 5.50$ s = 1.52	$\bar{X} = 6.17$ s = 2.48	$\bar{X} = 7.67$ s = 0.63
Written <sub>2</sub> n = 6	$\bar{X} = 4.50$ s = 1.23	$\bar{X} = 5.17$ s = 1.47	$\bar{X} = 5.33$ s = 0.52	$\bar{X} = 8.33$ s = 2.34

According to Table 12, at time intervals I and IV the means of the scores of the written retellings following the oral retellings (Written <sub>2</sub>) were higher than those of the initial written retellings (Written <sub>1</sub>). Conversely, at time intervals II and III the means of the scores of the initial written retellings were higher than the means of the scores of the written retellings which followed an oral retelling.

The standard deviations of the scores on the written retellings following an oral retelling at time intervals I, II and III were lower than the standard deviations of the scores of the initial written retelling. At time interval IV, the standard deviation of the scores of the initial written retelling showed less spread than the standard deviation of the scores of the written retellings which followed an oral retelling. This narrower standard deviation indicated less

variability in the scores within each of the groups. This may be due to group differences which will be discussed further.

#### Discussion for Research Question #4

Across the three domains, text-based comprehension, response and reaction to the text, and language use, there was no consistent trend to indicate that oral retellings influenced students' written retellings. Contrary to the oral retelling findings discussed in research question #3 the written retellings did not consistently indicate group differences. It appears that the oral retellings did not have an influence on the written retellings.

Contrary to the rationale it appears that oral retellings did not serve as a rehearsal for written retellings. One possible reason is the amount of time, one day, that lapsed between the initial oral retelling and the subsequent written retelling. At this age level it may be true that in order for an oral retelling to be helpful to the student before writing, the written retelling should immediately follow the oral retelling.

On two domains of the retelling profile (text-based comprehension and language use) the standard deviations for one group indicate that one group was more homogeneous in their written retellings than was the other group. This may be due to group differences which were previously described.

With small sample sizes the loss of even one student from a group can have a major influence on the means and standard deviations of the scores. Therefore, for this study it appeared that one group in terms of language use and text-based comprehension was more homogeneous than the other.

There were no conclusive trends in first graders' retellings between those children who initially retold a story in writing and those children who retold the same story in writing following an oral retelling. Therefore, in this study oral retellings did not influence written retellings.

#### Summary

This study was designed to assess the oral and written retellings of first graders over the period of one school year. Over the school year the first graders' retellings, both oral and written, improved. Not surprisingly their oral retelling scores were consistently higher than their written retelling scores. However, the evidence from this study did not indicate an influence of either written retellings on the subsequent oral retellings or oral retellings on the subsequent written retellings on any of the three domains of the retelling profile. Overall, first graders' retellings demonstrated positive results over the school year.

CHAPTER 5  
CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present a restatement of the research problem, give an overview of the relevant literature, review the design and procedures of the study, summarize the findings, and provide conclusions, implications, and suggestions for further study.

Restatement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to assess first graders' retellings over a period of one school year. Retellings are postreading or postlistening activities in which readers or listeners tell or write their representation of the text. As children become more proficient in retelling they are able to present their own representation of the story. In retelling readers are involved in thinking and organizing their own comprehension, therefore this process integrates reflection, reaction, and response to the entire text (Mitchell & Irwin, 1992). This study assessed first graders' written and oral retellings.

These retellings were examined in the research presented here. The four research questions addressed in this study were:

1. How do first graders' retellings change over time with continued practice and opportunities to retell?
2. How do first graders' own written and oral retellings of the same text compare and contrast?
3. What are the differences in first graders' retellings between those children who initially retell a story orally and those children who retell the same story orally following a written retelling?
4. What are the differences in first graders' retellings between those children who initially retell a story in writing and those children who retell the same story in writing following an oral retelling?

#### Literature Reviewed

Four major areas of research related to this study were examined. First, the emergence of literacy was discussed in order to set a theoretical framework for the study. Second, the interrelatedness of reading and writing was discussed in order to present the rationale for instructional programs that develop reading and writing simultaneously. Third, the use of children's literature for reading instruction was reviewed. Fourth, the use of story retelling of children's literature as a postreading activity and as assessment of reading comprehension was summarized.

### Design and Procedures

Twelve students from the same first grade classroom participated in the study. The students were divided into two groups at the beginning of the study. Both groups contained a heterogeneous mix of students based on teacher observation and the two groups were similar to each other.

Initially the students were introduced to retelling in a whole group setting. The teacher read the story to the class and then modeled the retelling procedure several times and the students gradually joined in the retellings.

Retelling was also included during the times the students met in their reading groups. On the first day, the story was introduced, and the students participated in pre-reading activities such as: predictions about the story from the pictures and introduction of new vocabulary. The second day the students read the story, chorally, individually, and/or with a partner. They also retold the story to their partner. On the third day, the group discussed the story and completed a story map focusing on important details and events of the story. On the fourth day the students wrote stories in their journals and were encouraged to do written retellings.

Each of the four time intervals occurred near the end of each quarter. The first was in the middle of October, the second at the end of November, the third in the middle of

February and the fourth in the middle of April. During each time interval, the students received instruction within their regular reading groups for the first two days of the week. On the third day group B orally retold the story for the first and third testing periods. The classroom teacher recorded the individual retellings and then transcribed them for the purpose of the analysis. For the second and fourth time intervals periods group B did written retellings. The second experimental group, group A, wrote retellings for the first and third time intervals. These retellings were read to the instructional assistant who recorded the story transcript for the purpose of the analysis. For the second and fourth time intervals group A gave oral retellings. On the fourth day the groups switched so that the first group, group B, gave written retellings, and the second group, group A, gave oral retellings, for the first and third time intervals. At the second and fourth time intervals the first group, group B, gave oral retellings and the second group, group A, gave written retellings.

The retellings were evaluated using the Retelling Profile developed by Mitchell and Irwin (1992, in preparation). The story transcripts were not scored separately because they were used only to support the written retellings by providing clarification of the students' writings. The profile provides a holistic evaluation of the retellings. Two raters, the

researcher and a knowledgeable teacher colleague, collaboratively determined whether each retelling reflected a high degree, moderate degree, low degree, or no degree of performance for criteria judged in the profile.

To analyze the data for this study a descriptive data analysis was used. Because of the small number of students in the study, a statistical analysis was not appropriate. To answer all four research questions, means and standard deviations of retelling scores according to the three domains of the retelling profile were compared. Major trends and patterns observed in the retellings were described.

#### Summary of the Findings

The oral and written retellings of first graders were assessed over the period of one school year. Over the school year the first graders' retellings, both oral and written, improved with continued practice and opportunities to retell. Their oral retelling scores were consistently higher than their written retelling scores. However, the evidence from this study did not indicate an influence of either written retellings on the subsequent oral retellings or oral retellings on the subsequent written retellings on any of the three domains of the retelling profile. Overall, first graders' demonstrated positive results over the school year.

## Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study conclusions can be made accordingly. Retelling is an appropriate activity to show first graders' growth over the period of one school year. Retelling appeared to be an effective way to document student's progress in reading and writing. Retelling also helped students improve their writing.

Although the findings were inconclusive to show the relationship between reading and writing this may have been due to the small sample size, the task of retelling, and/or text effects.

## Implications for Practice

The results of this study assessing first graders' oral and written retellings indicated that retelling provides new insights concerning evaluation of reading comprehension for children at this age level. There is a need for teachers to evaluate the comprehension of young readers. In addition, children at this age level are developing critical literacy strategies and retelling affords them opportunities to further develop those strategies.

First, as an evaluation activity retelling is appropriate and authentic. The readers present their own perception of

the text. By doing so they must think through the story and thereby take charge of their own comprehension.

Second, retelling develops critical literacy strategies because children are talking about, listening to, writing about, and reading the story. The literacy strategies of reading, writing, listening and talking are developed through books and their literary language and story structures.

An implication for the classroom teach is that retellings provide an insight into the children's comprehension process as they develop literacy strategies. This insight allows the teacher to evaluate young readers and to observe growth in children's strengths as readers and writers. A retelling is appropriate to include in a student's portfolio.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

Although the process of retelling has been utilized in classrooms and although the results have reportedly been positive, further research is needed. Recommendations for further research are:

1. Replicate this study with a larger sample size and a comparable control group.
2. Replicate this study with a group of students at a different age level.
3. Replicate this study and reduce the amount of time

between the oral and written retellings.

4. Conduct a longitudinal study to assess the effects of retelling, on the reading and writing of older students who have experienced retelling as emergent readers/writers.
5. Conduct a retelling study comparing the effects of expository and narrative texts on children's reading and writing.
6. Rescore the oral data without the probes. Reanalyze the answers to the research questions using the rescored data.
7. Do an item analysis of the profile for the four texts to further examine text effects.
8. Consider the results of the study through a qualitative analysis of reading and writing performance and the social and cultural context of the children in the study and the community from which they came, perhaps in a case study format.
9. Consider reflecting on this study as an example of collaborative teacher-as-researcher work, including the project's effects on teachers' views of research and teaching.
10. Examine the language of the children's oral and written texts produced in their retellings.

## APPENDIX A

SAMPLES OF TWO STUDENTS' ORAL RETELLINGS, WRITTEN  
RETELLINGS, AND STORY TRANSCRIPTS FOR ALL FOUR INTERVALS

Sample Oral Retellings for Marinda  
October, 1991  
*Katie Did It*

MRG: Katie did it. Whenever milk was spilled Jenny and Kris would say, "Katie did it." Whenever the ball was left out Jenny and Kris said, "Katie did it." Whenever the door was left open Jenny and Kris said, "Katie did it."

LH: Do you remember what happened at the end of the story?

MRG: Jenny, Kris and Jenny. Jenny, Kris and Katie I meant.

LH: What did they do at the end of the story?

MRG: Their mom called Katie Jenny and Kris inside and asked, "Who gave me these pretty flowers?" And do you what Katie said? Katie said, "Katie did it."

LH: Is there anymore you want to tell about the story?

MRG: I can't remember no more.

LH: You talked a little bit about mother just at the end, can you tell me anymore about Mom?

MRG: <>

LH: Is there anything else about Mom?

MRG: no

LH: What do you think Mother thought about Katie when they were telling on her?

MRG: She didn't really care.

LH: Do you think she believed them?

MRG: no

LH: How do you think Katie felt when they were telling on her?

MRG: sad

LH: Has that ever happened to you?

MRG: <nods>

LH: Tell me about it.

MRG: I think it was a long time ago. I can't remember it.

LH: Do you remember how you felt when you got blamed?

MRG: I felt sad.

LH: Anything else?

MRG: no

November, 1991  
*Whose Mouse Are You?*

LH: I want you to retell the story of *Whose Mouse Are You?*  
MRG: <>  
LH: Who was in the story start with that?  
MRG: There was a momma, and a daddy and a sister and a brother. The brother is going to be new born at the end.  
LH: What happens to the mother in the story?  
MRG: The mother gets swallowed by a cat. The father is caught in a trap. The sister's far from home and he doesn't have a brother.  
LH: So what does he do?  
MRG: He shakes his mother out of the cat. He frees his father from the trap. Finds his sister .  
LH: What does he do with his sister?  
MRG: Brings her back.  
LH: What does his mother do for him after that?  
MRG: <><> She has a baby.  
LH: What does his dad do with him?  
MRG: He lets his son have a race car and racing track.  
LH: What does his sister do?  
MRG: She paints him a little mouse wall for his home to look pretty.  
LH: What happens at the end of the story?  
MRG: The mommy has a baby and um they say they say <><><> Now whose mouse are you? My mom's she loves my dad's he loves me from head to toe, my sister's she loves me too, my brother's. Your brother's? My brother's he's new born.  
LH: How did the little mouse feel when all of his family was gone?  
MRG: Sad. Very sad.  
LH: How do you think he was able to do the things he did?  
MRG: He was strong to shake his mother out of the cat.  
LH: Whose mouse are you?  
MRG: I'm not a mouse.  
LH: Whose little kid are you?  
MRG: My mom's, my dad's and my sister's.  
LH: Why?  
MRG: Because they love me even when they are mad at me.  
LH: Is there anything else you want to tell?  
MRG: (shakes head no)

February, 1992  
*The Carrot Seed*

LH: I want you to retell the story *The Carrot Seed* using your own words.

MRG: One day a little boy planted a carrot seed, and he and his momma and his dad and his big brother said it won't grow and they said that twice but everyday he pulled up the weeds around it and sprinkled the ground with water. One day up came the carrot and the little boy was happy because he thought it was going to come up.

LH: When it came up what did he do with the carrot?

MRG: He put it in his wheelchair (long pause)

LH: His wheelbarrow??

MRG: His wheelbarrow and he took it to his house.

LH: Have you ever planted a seed?

MRG: Yes

LH: Did it grow?

MRG: yes

LH: When they were telling him that it wouldn't grow what did you think?

MRG: I thought it would maybe yes or no

April, 1992

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*

MRG: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* In the night in the light of the moon there layed a tiny egg. And in the egg something was growing. A little caterpillar. The next morning pop out of the egg came an eensy weensy little caterpillar. And he started to look for some food.

LH: Why did he look for some food?

MRG: He was very hungry and on Monday he ate through one apple, on Tuesday he ate through two pears but he was still hungry. On Thursday he ate through three plums, but he was still hungry. On Friday he ate through five oranges but he was still hungry. Then he ate through one piece of chocolate cake, one pickle, one cupcake, one watermelon, one sausage, and after that he had a stomachache. Then next morning he started to look for some more food. He ate some leaf, but then he wasn't hungry anymore, and he wasn't a small, little caterpillar, he was a big fat caterpillar. So he spinned a little house which was a chrysalis, he stayed in there for more than two weeks. And finally he nibbled a little hole in it and he pushed his way out and he was a butterfly.

LH: If you were a little caterpillar and you just came out of the egg what would you do?

MRG: Start looking for food.

LH: What kind of food do you think you would look for?

MRG: oranges, apples, bananas, ice cream.

LH: Which of those foods are good for caterpillar?

MRG: bananas, apples and oranges. On T.V. they show worms that live in apples.

LH: What kind of foods are not good for caterpillars?

MRG: Junk food, like for us, too.

LH: How did he feel after he ate through the chocolate cake and the pickle?

MRG: He felt full.

LH: How did his stomach feel?

MRG: He had a stomachache.

LH: Why would he have a stomachache?

MRG: Because he ate alot.

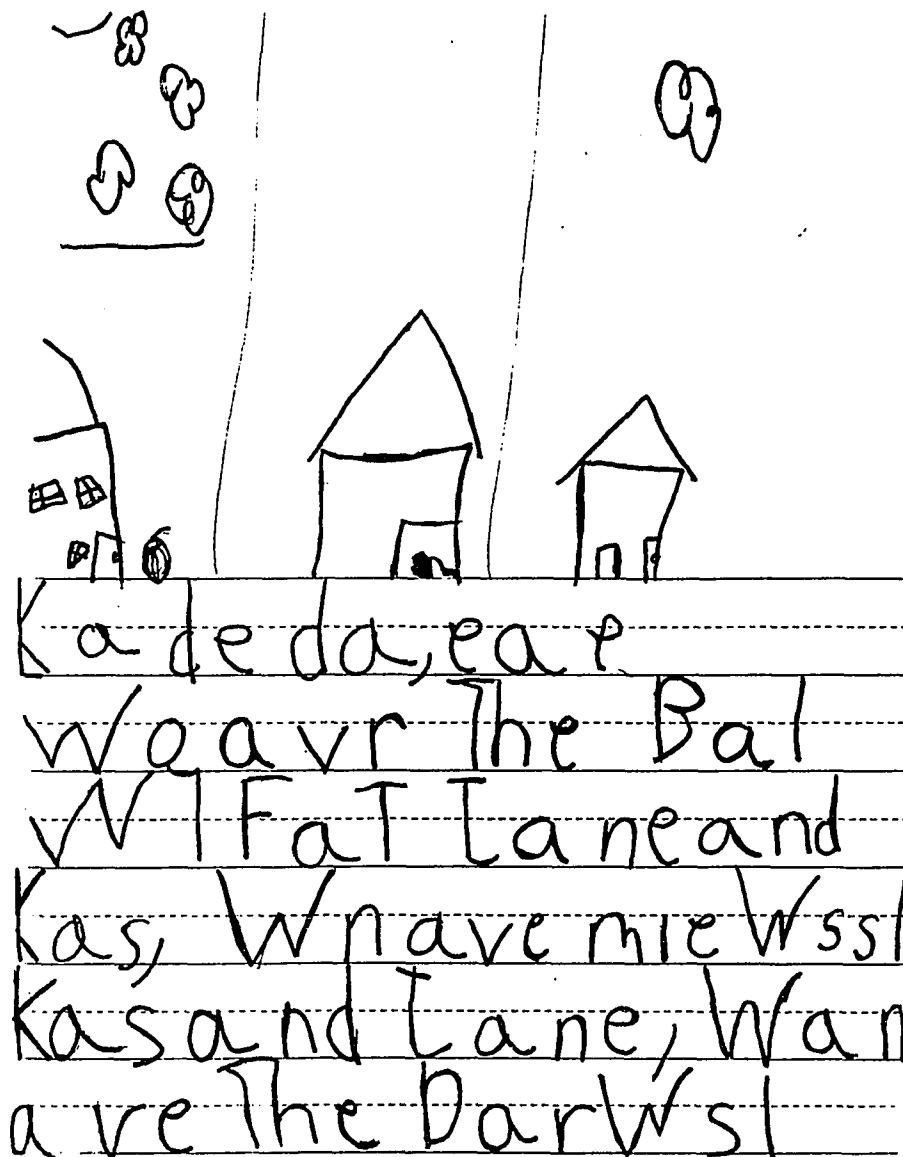
LH: Did he eat the things that were right for him?

MRG: No

Sample Written Retellings for Marinda  
October, 1991

Story Transcript: Katie Did It

Whenever the ball got left out, Kris and Jenny said, "Katie did it". Whenever the milk was spilled Kris and Jenny said, "Katie did it." Whenever the door got left open Kris and Jenny said, "Katie did it." The End.



November, 1991 Page 1 of 2

Story Transcript: Whose Mouse Are You?

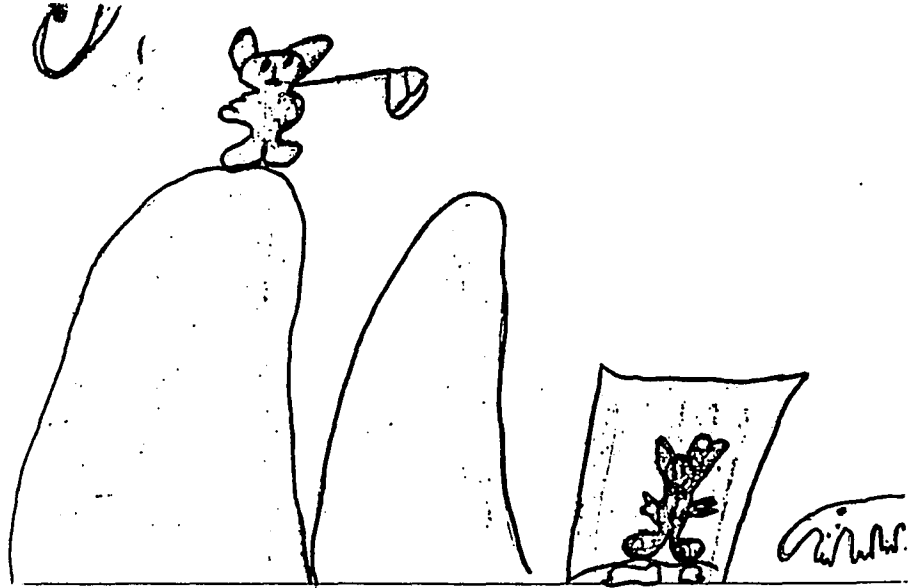
Nobody's mouse. Where is your mom? Where is your Dad? Where is your sister? Where is your brother? I have none. What will you do? I will free my mom from the cat.



Has mas or You  
 No Babes mows  
 Wosr is Your Mom  
 Wosr is your Da  
 Wosr is your sos  
 Wosr is your Bawr i Have No M  
 no I wal FRE MY MOMER Fthe Cat I w GO

November, 1991 Page 2 of 2

Story Transcript: I will get my dad out of the trap. I will find my sister and bring her back. The End.



Dad a ~~WT~~ ~~AT~~ Fo The  
 trap Faen My Sas  
 and BeG tBaC  
 IFel God So bo  
 NaT ForG + The sore

February, 1992 Page 1 of 2

Story Transcript: The Carrot Seed

One day a little boy planted a carrot seed. His family said  
it won't come up. One day a carrot came up.

The carrot seed

one day a little boy

planted a carrot seed

his family said it

won't come up but one

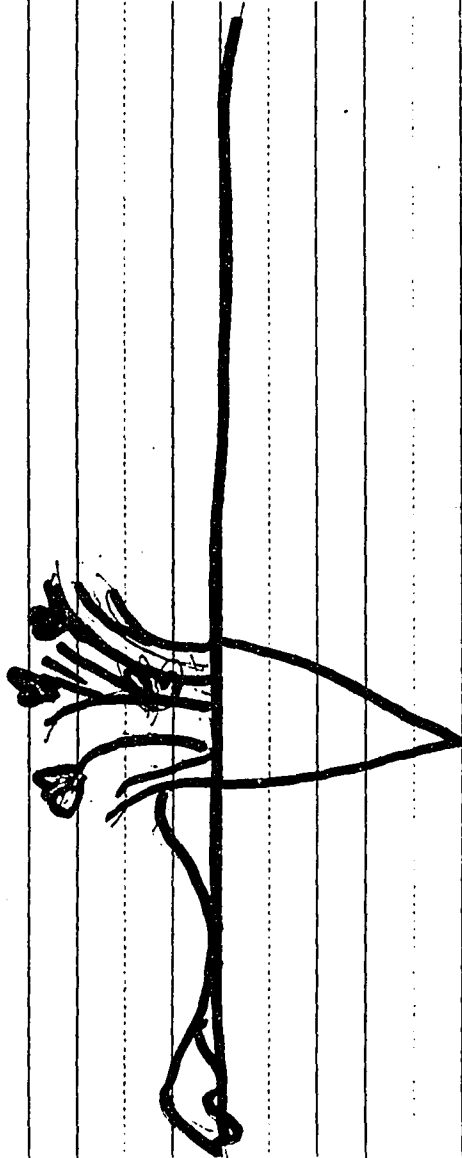
day a carrot came up

February, 1992 Page 2 of 2

Story Transcript: Just as the little boy had knew.

Just as the Little

boy had knew.



April, 1992 Page 1 of 2

Story Transcript: The Very Hungry Caterpillar  
 One day a little caterpillar popped out of an egg and he was very hungry. On Monday he ate through one apple. On Tuesday he ate through two pears. On Thursday he ate through three plums. On Friday he ate through four oranges. On Sunday he ate through one piece of chocolate cake, one ice cream cone, one lollipop, one pickle, one cupcake . . .

by Marina Rogers-G.  
 (W) 4/9/92  
 The Very Hungry Caterpillar  
 One day a little caterpillar  
 popped out of an egg and he was very  
 hungry  
 on Monday he ate through one apple  
 on Tuesday he ate through two pears  
 on Thursday he ate through three  
 plums  
 on Friday he ate through four  
 oranges  
 and on Sunday he ate through  
 one piece of chocolate cake  
 one ice cream cone  
 one lollipop  
 one pickle  
 one cupcake

April, 1992 Page 2 of 2

Story Transcript: . . . a slice of swiss cheese, and jelly  
beans. The End.

Slices of Swascospie Sasig

Laladen

The End

Sample Oral Retellings for Jesus  
October, 1991  
*Katie Did It*

LH: Tell me as much as you can remember of the story *Katie Did It*.

JC: Katie did it.

LH: Who is in the story *Katie Did It* tell it to me like I have never heard this story. I don't know this story you have to help me with it.

JC: Katie is small. Her bigger brother Kris is bigger than her. Her sister is bigger than her. Everytime the milk gets spilled, Kris and Katie I mean Kris and what's the girl's name?

LH: It's o.k. just go on. Is it her sister.

JC: Her sister said, "Katie did it." Whenever the ball was left out Kris and the sister said, "Katie did it." Whenever the door was open Kris and the big sister said, "Katie did it." Whenever the ball was left out, I messed up. Whenever The mom and dad called Kris and Katie inside and said, "Who give me these pretty flowers?" And Katie said, "Katie did it.. Katie did it. Katie did it."

LH: Is there anything else you want to tell about it?

JC: I don't know.

LH: You talked about mom at the very end, can you tell me anymore about Mom?

JC: Her liked the pretty flowers.

LH: What do you think Mom thought about Katie?

JC: Her think she really special.

LH: Why do you think that?

JC: Her didn't did it.

LH: What did she do?

JC: Her smaller than the brother bigger and the sister bigger and they were just telling lies.

LH: What do you think that Katie did, that made Mom think that she was special?

JC: Give her pretty flowers.

LH: How do you think Katie felt?

JC: happy

LH: When did she feel happy in the story?

JC: When she give the mom the flowers.

LH: Did Katie feel anything different during the story?

JC: Those telled a lie on her.

LH: How did she feel then?

JC: sad

LH: Has that ever happened to you?

JC: un Hun (yes)

LH: Can you tell me about it?

JC: When everytime I ride my bike everybody said I get on top

of the car and breaking the windows they were telling lies.  
LH: How did you feel when that happened to you?  
JC: sad  
LH: Anything else you want to tell me?  
JC: That's it.

November, 1991  
*Whose Mouse Are You?*

LH: Now I want you to tell me the story of *Whose Mouse Are You?*  
JC: Whose mouse are you? Whose mouse are you? I don't have any friends. Do you have a mom? Her got eaten by a cat. Do you have a dad? In a mouse trap. What do you call it you got a sister? Far far from home. You got a brother? no. What you gonna do?  
Shake the cat to get my mom free. Cut the trap for my dad. Find my sister and bring her home. I don't have a brother. I wish for a new brother.  
LH: What did his mom do for him after he freed her?  
JC: Her feed him.  
LH: What did his dad do?  
JC: Have a race with him. His sister paint his wall for his mouse.  
LH: What happened at the very end of the story?  
JC: He got a new brother.  
LH: How did the little mouse feel when his family was lost?  
JC: sad  
LH: How do you think he could do all of the things he did?  
JC: He will be happy.  
LH: How could he do that? How could he shake the cat?  
JC: He must be strong.  
LH: Whose mouse are you?  
JC: Teacher's  
LH: Why?  
JC: Because  
LH: Which teacher?  
JC: Miss Harris.  
LH: Why are you my mouse?  
JC: Because you nice.  
LH: Is there anything else you want to add?  
JC: no

February, 1992  
*The Carrot Seed*

LH: I want you to retell the story *The Carrot Seed* using your own words.

JC: This little boy planted a carrot seed. His mom said I'm afraid it won't come up. His father said I afraid it won't come up. His big brother say I afraid it won't come up, too. Everytime he pulled the weeds and sprinkle it with water and all them saying it won't come up. One day the carrot seed comed up and he pulled it out he thought it will come up.

LH: What grew?

JC: The carrot seed.

LH: What did he do with it after it grew?

JC: He eated it.

LH: Have you ever planted a seed?

JC: nod

LH: Did it grow?

JC: (shakes head no)

LH: Tell me about what you planted?

JC: a carrot seed

LH: What did you have to do for the seed?

JC: I put it in soil water it and give it plant food and it never growed and it died.

April, 1992  
*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*

JC: Once upon a time this butterfly layed an egg. One day the sun camed up and pop went the egg and the hungry caterpillar he wanted to find something. He found one food its a apple, and other food its a two pears, and other one food plums, and the other one food four strawberries, and he keep on five oranges, and he found a cake, a ice cream, a pickle, a cheese, a salami, a lollipop, a strawberry cake, a watermelon and a sausage. That night he got stomachache. The next morning he ate one nice juicy leaf and he stomachache feel better. He didn't feel like eat no more. He ain't a little caterpillar he a big fat caterpillar. He spinned his cocoon over him and he stayed in there and more than twelve days. Then one day he nibbled hole and pushed his way out and he turned into a butterfly.

LH: If you were that little caterpillar what would you do?

JC: Look for food and turn into a butterfly.

LH: What kind of food would you look for?

JC: Bread, leaves, grass, and one apple.

LH: You said that he got a stomachache, what do you think gave him the stomachache?

JC: All that food he ate.

LH: Do you think it was the kind of food, or too much food?  
JC: Too much food.

Sample Written Retellings for Jesus

October, 1991

Katie Did It

Story Transcript: Jesus would not write about this story.

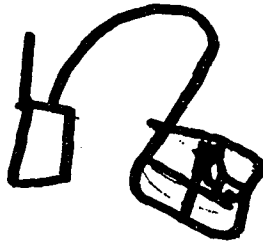


A series of ten horizontal lines for writing, consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline in between.

November, 1991

Story Transcript: His dad got caught in a trap.

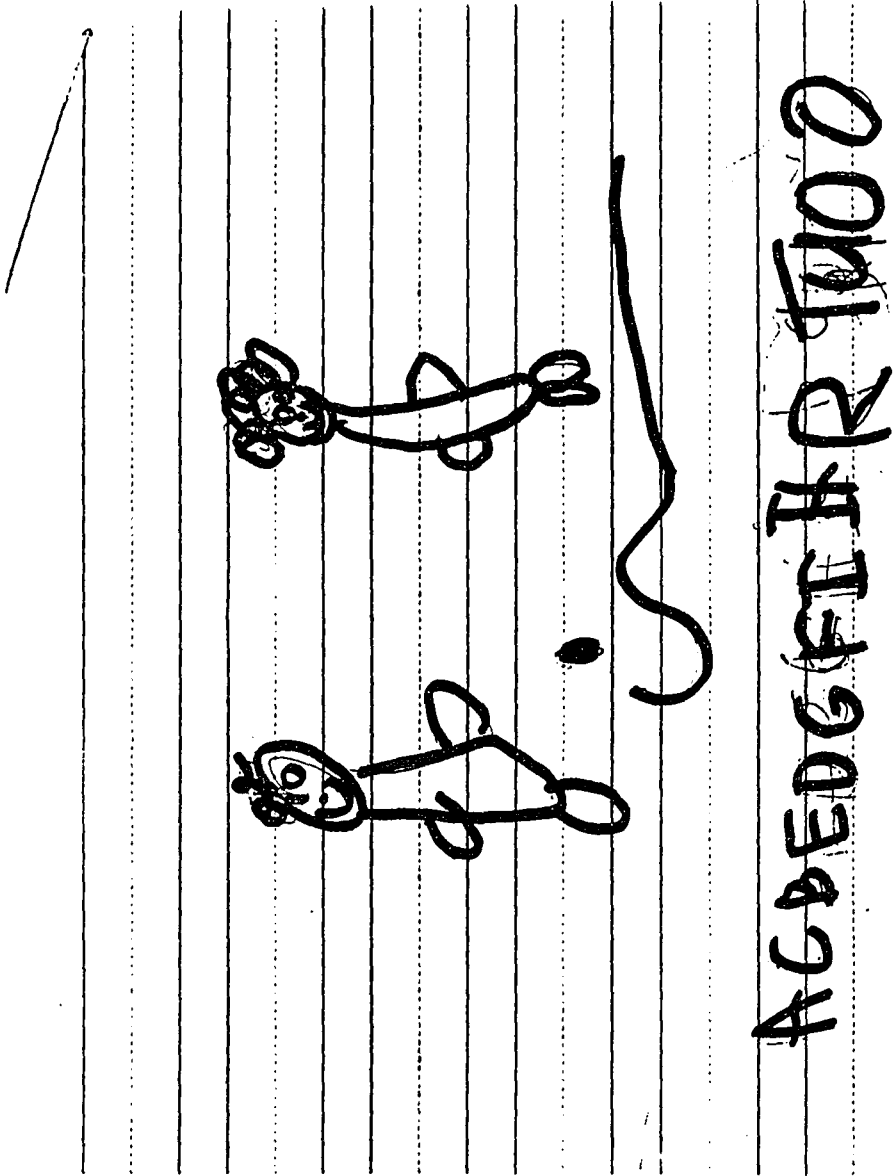
Jesus



Aasy HAPPY.

February, 1992

Story Transcript: The mom said, "It won't come up."



April, 1992

Story Transcript: One day I saw a little egg. It popped and out of the egg came a little caterpillar.

Jesus (D)  
4/9/92

one D I sal a | egg it  
POP L L gee K L I SO  
| L K R. Jeyys

APPENDIX B  
RETELLING PROFILE

RETELLING PROFILE\*

Directions: Indicate with a check ( ) the degree to which the reader's retelling reflects the reader's comprehension in terms of the following criteria:

	none	low degree	moderate degree	high degree
1. Retelling includes information directly stated in text.				
2. Retelling includes information inferred directly or indirectly from text.				
3. Retelling includes what is important to remember from the text.				
4. Retelling provides relevant content, concepts, and context.				
5. Retelling indicates reader's attempts to connect background knowledge with text information.				
6. Retelling indicates reader's attempts to make summary statements or generalizations based on the text and apply them to the real world.				
7. Retelling indicates reader's highly individualistic and creative impressions of or reactions to the text.				
8. Retelling indicates reader's affective involvement with the text.				
9. Retelling demonstrates reader's language fluency (use of vocabulary, sentence structure, language conventions, etc.).				
10. Retelling indicates reader's organization or composition abilities.				
11. Retelling demonstrates the reader's sense of audience or purpose.				
12. Retelling indicates reader's control of the mechanics of speaking or writing.				

Interpretation: Items 1-4 indicate reader's text-based comprehension information;  
Items 5-8 indicate reader's response and reactions to text;  
Items 9-12 indicate reader's language use.

\* from Mitchell, J.N. & Irwin, P.A. (1992). The reader retelling profile: Using retelling to make instructional decisions. In preparation.

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