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SELECTED PARENT-TEACHER FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE
READING IN THE KINDERGARTEN

by

Martha Lelia Larson

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the
DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
In the Graduate College
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

1978

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I hereby recommend that this dissertation prepared under my direction by Martha Lelia Larson entitled Selected Parent-Teacher Factors that Influence Reading in the Kindergarten be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Dissertation Director

Date

As members of the Final Examination Committee, we certify that we have read this dissertation and agree that it may be presented for final defense.

Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent on the candidate's adequate performance and defense thereof at the final oral examination.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The long road to the doctorate is never traveled alone. Many individuals contribute their knowledge, expertise and assistance in order to make the journey successful. To them, The University of Arizona faculties in Elementary Education and Reading, and the members of my family, I extend appreciation and gratitude.

Special appreciation is extended to Dr. Milo Blecha who acted as adviser and dissertation director and to the other members of my doctoral committee: Dr. Roach Van Allen, Dr. Kenneth Goodman, Dr. Amelia Melnik, and Dr. Robert Tierney. Their comments, suggestions and criticisms in initiating and finalizing the dissertation made the end product a much better piece of research.

To my friend Mel (Dr. Melnik), and to my husband, I owe gratitude without bounds. Had they not offered encouragement, unflagging support and faith, I would not have envisioned this goal, nor considered it attainable.

Thanks are also offered to Rita Mikula for her proficiency in dissertation details and cross-country communication, and to Marilyn Kroeger who handled various administrative items with care and dispatch.
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ABSTRACT

In this research, the views and notions held by parents of kindergarten children and kindergarten teachers as well as actual kindergarten instruction were investigated in order to describe selected factors that presently influence kindergarten instruction related to reading. Thirteen research questions addressed: (1) who should make the decisions about initiating reading instruction, (2) what notions are held regarding instructional practices, (3) what print media sources are deemed most useful, (4) which type of article has reading preference, and (5) what reading or reading-related instruction is typical in kindergartens observed?

Multiple data collection strategies were used in gathering information about 112 parents, 19 kindergarten teachers and seven private schools, in Huntsville, Alabama. All subjects completed a 26 item questionnaire, developed after two pilot studies; 15 parents and 15 teachers were interviewed, using a four-part interview guide containing structured and unstructured questions; and instruction was observed in nine classrooms and noted on the "Check List for Kindergarten Learning Environment," an instrument representing Three Strands of a language experience approach.
Quantitative analysis for questionnaires included frequencies, means, standard deviations and chi-square, used to determine significant differences between parents' and teachers' responses; and for observations included means, total means and rankings. Classification was employed in the qualitative analysis of interview responses.

Detailed findings from questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations are reported in 51 tables and six figures. Chi-square analysis revealed significant differences between parents' and teachers' responses to seven questionnaire items (rejected at .05 level). Data from questionnaires and interviews suggest:

1. Most parents want teachers to make decisions about initiating reading instruction, but a large group advocated parent-teacher cooperation. Teachers, on the other hand, assigned these responsibilities to teachers, professional educators and researchers. Both groups recognized children's readiness and maturity as key factors in instructional decisions.

2. On instructional practices, parents and teachers shared these views—reading activities should be started in the kindergarten when children are ready, letter shapes and sounds should be taught, learning to read should be an enjoyable experience, and children learn best when active and involved. They valued developing interest and curiosity in books, listening to stories and personal
dictation. Differing views were also noted—parents gave reading a higher priority than did teachers, parents favored using a published series and teachers did not, and parents believed more strongly that learning and intellectual development can be speeded up. Responding negatively, neither parents nor teachers saw value in a meaning-centered approach.

3. The most useful print media sources were identified as educational journals and materials published by parent or teacher organizations. Of all sources, parents named personal contacts with teachers the most useful, while teachers named professionally directed instructional situations.

4. From five annotated titles, parents and teachers selected "The Child's Development of Intelligence," and "Parents—What Role in Reading," as the type of article they would most frequently read.

5. From observations, kindergartens typically provided a child-centered program that included structured and unstructured characteristics—acceptance of each child's personal language, book collections for browsing or reading aloud, responding to symbol and non-symbol systems, and opportunities for personal expression. All classrooms lacked some basic characteristics of a language experience approach.
Recommendations for further research included: additional studies utilizing multiple data collection strategies, a similar study involving public kindergartens, and studies investigating parent-teacher communication factors.
CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

The desire that children be granted a favorable start in reading seems a common goal: parents and teachers strive towards that end. This initial reading instruction has customarily been the province of the first grade; however, Dolores Durkin's (1977, p. 9) statement, "most kindergartens are attempting to teach reading," suggests a new trend and a new responsibility for the kindergarten. In assuming this responsibility, what factors are influencing the development of the reading program?

Background and Need for the Study

Information from three sources highlights concern for the existing or evolving kindergarten reading program. First, the Interorganizational Committee (1977, pp. 459-461), a group of 16 esteemed, professional educators representing seven professional organizations, focused attention through the product of its joint effort: "Reading and Pre-First Grade: A Joint Statement of Concerns about Present Practices in Pre-First Grade Reading Instruction and Recommendations for Improvement." Two of the Committee's six concerns are related to this investigation: (1) a growing number of children are enrolled in highly structured pre-reading
and reading programs, and (2) decisions related to the teaching of reading are being made on bases other than the knowledge of how children learn best.

Revelations by experienced kindergarten teachers, in Arizona and Alabama, provided a second source. These teachers justify that, because of parental insistence, their reading programs emphasize the use of published workbooks and the "sounds of letters."

A third source, the mass media, keeps the public informed about developments in the field of reading. Unfortunately, the tendency is toward newspaper articles and television news-views that alarm rather than inform the public.

The issue is this: research-based concepts of beginning reading instruction, formulated by knowledgeable teacher-educators in the fields of reading, elementary education and early childhood education, are possibly not being realized in actual practice. Instead, the views of parents and teachers may be the major influence on the development of kindergarten instruction related to reading. Recognizing this possibility, what views do parents and teachers hold regarding reading in the kindergarten and what sources contribute to the evolution of these views?

**Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this study was to identify, analyze and describe selected factors that presently influence kindergarten instruction related to reading. This was accomplished by
investigating the views and notions of two concerned groups of individuals: parents of kindergarten children and teachers of kindergarten children, as well as the actual classroom instruction. The questions considered included: who do parents and teachers feel should make the decisions about initiating reading instruction; what notions do parents and teachers have regarding instructional practices for beginning reading; which type of print media do parents and teachers deem a useful source of information about the teaching of reading; which types of informative article would parents and teachers prefer to read; are there significant differences between the views, notions and preferences of parents and those of teachers; and what reading or reading-related instruction is typical in the kindergartens observed?

Research Questions

Items related to each of the five numbered research questions are identified by letter in order to indicate their relationship. This will facilitate the collection, organization and description of data obtained for this study.

1-A. According to parents of kindergarten children, who should determine when and how reading will be taught in the kindergarten?

1-B. According to teachers of kindergarten children, who should determine when and how reading will be taught in the kindergarten?
1-C. Is there a significant difference between the views of parents and teachers regarding who should determine when and how reading will be taught in the kindergarten?

2-A. What notions regarding instructional practices for beginning reading are most frequently held by parents of kindergarten children?

2-B. What notions regarding instructional practices for beginning reading are most frequently held by teachers of kindergarten children?

2-C. Is there a significant difference between the notions of parents and teachers regarding instructional practices for beginning reading in the kindergarten?

3-A. In which type of print media do parents most frequently find useful information about the teaching of reading?

3-B. In which type of print media do teachers most frequently find useful information about the teaching of reading?

3-C. Is there a significant difference between the indications from parents and teachers of the type of print media in which they most frequently find useful information about the teaching of reading?

4-A. Given a group of annotated titles, all relevant to the topics of children in kindergarten or to beginning reading instruction, which title will most frequently be selected by parents as a source of information?
4-B. Given a group of annotated titles, all relevant to the topics of children in kindergarten or to beginning reading instruction, which title will most frequently be selected by teachers as a source of information.

4-C. Is there a significant difference between the annotated title most frequently selected by parents and the annotated title most frequently selected by teachers, with titles representing information on children in kindergarten, or on beginning reading?

5. Based on classroom observations by the researcher, what is happening during reading instruction in the private kindergartens observed?

Significance of the Problem

During the past decade, early childhood and parent education have been cited as top priorities by academics and citizens alike. Both converge on the increasingly important role of kindergarten within the educational spectrum.

A hundred years ago a man could be illiterate and self-respecting, a successful craftsman or skilled laborer. Today illiteracy consigns a man to the lower depths. Hence the Right to Read effort; hence, the pressure every teacher feels to teach reading first and foremost, even at the risk of squelching all creativity, and even desire to read (Early 1974, p. 708).

Two well-known individuals, both researchers, authors and educators, have commented on the lack of research on pre-first grade reading and characteristics of parents. Dolores Durkin
(1977, p. 10), in discussing facts about pre-first grade reading, said, "There really aren't many facts because relatively little research on the topic has been done." Jeanne Chall (1976, p. 11) in her keynote address before the Twentieth Annual Convention of the International Reading Association, admitted: "I do not know whether I can substantiate it but I have a growing fear that we may not have been paying sufficient attention to our remedial parent. If so, it is unfortunate, since it is one of our most glorious areas—in research, in practice."

Addressing two previously slighted areas of research, reading in the kindergarten and parental views, this research investigated selected parent-teacher factors that appear to be influencing the type of reading instruction that children are receiving in kindergarten.

Assumptions

One assumption is relevant to this study: that the views and notions held by parents and teachers will influence the reading program in kindergarten.

Definitions

1. **Beginning reading instruction**: "the reading activities that occur first in teaching children to read (Good 1973, p. 472)."

2. **Instructional practices**: the actual teaching procedures that the teacher uses during instruction; a broad term
including methods, materials and approaches used in teaching.

3. **Notion:** "(a) conception; (b) mental image; (c) a vague thought (Webster 1965, p. 1225)."

4. **Parent:** "An adult legally responsible for a minor (Good 1973, p. 408)."

5. **Reading program:** the planned instructional system for teaching reading, as opposed to that which is unplanned or incidental.

6. **Teacher:** "a person employed in an official capacity for the purpose of guiding and directing the learning experiences of pupils in an educational institution, whether public or private (Good 1973, p. 586)."

**Limitations of the Study**

1. The study was limited to the information received from instruments and techniques described herein.

2. The sample, because of its volunteer nature, may not reflect the population of Alabama or the United States according to census.

3. The subjects of this study were kindergarten teachers and parents of kindergarten children from private kindergartens in Huntsville, Alabama. The findings, therefore, may not be applicable to other populations.

4. The kindergartens in this study were private kindergartens who volunteered to participate. Because of their
volunteer nature, they may be different from other pri-
vate kindergartens in Huntsville, Alabama. They may also
be different from the limited number of public kindergar-
tens that were operating on a pilot-study basis.

5. It is possible that the presence of the researcher, as a
classroom observer, may have altered the conduct or con-
tent of instruction.

6. The review of the literature was not a complete survey of
all printed media, but was instead representative of that
which is published. For this reason, the types of media
were limited to those cited and reviewed.

7. The study did not seek an answer to the question of
whether reading should or should not be taught in the kin-
dergarten, nor to which is the best way of teaching begin-
ning reading; instead, the study was limited to an
examination of the views of parents and teachers and the
influence of these views upon reading.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

There has been a remarkable growth of professional interest in young children during the preschool years. The importance of these years for social, emotional and intellectual growth, has been indicated by research in recent years. Recognition of this importance has resulted in two consequences: first, some states (California, Massachusetts, New York) provide preschool for all whose parents request it, and second, the character of the preschool is changing (Elkind 1972). The factors that influence the ways in which it changes, like the wind, come from many directions.

In this chapter, the sources of influence on the development of the kindergarten will be surveyed and related literature reviewed. This review will attempt to describe historical influences, past and present, also differing views on the kindergarten curriculum, on how the kindergarten child learns, on how reading should be taught, on the roles and relationships of parents and teachers, and on popular resources.

One of the first difficulties encountered in reading and writing about the education of young children is the need for clarification of terminology. Based on the literature, "Early
Childhood Education" is the broadest term, including children from ages 2 to 8 or 9, or through the primary grades. "Pre-school" is the second broadest category, including children from ages 2 to 6 or 7, and referring to the period when children are not required by law to attend school. "Pre-kindergarten" and "Nursery School" include children ages 2, 3, 4, and 5. "Pre-first Grade" includes children from 4 to 6, and refers to the two-year period prior to first grade. "Kindergarten" refers to the year of public or private school that precedes first grade, with children ranging in age from 4 to 6, but mostly 5. This study is primarily concerned with the "kindergarten," but because of overlapping age ranges some literature using the described terms will also be cited.

Influences on the Development of the Kindergarten

Influences from the Past

Elizabeth Peabody is usually recognized as the founder of America's first kindergarten, in Boston, in 1860. Twenty years later the number had increased to 400 with kindergartens located in 30 states. At first, kindergartens were associated with private schools, but by 1900 there were 131,000 children attending public school kindergarten (Durkin 1972). One factor accounting for the rapid growth was concern for the children of the poor: "The mere fact that the children of the slums were kept off the
streets, and that they were made clean and happy by the kind and motherly young women—all this appealed to the heart of America, and America gave freely to make these kindergartens possible (Vandewalker 1908, pp. 19-20)."

Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852), a German educator, strongly influenced the development of the kindergarten in America. Froebel’s didactic approach utilized "occupations" (11 different activities), and "gifts" (instructional activities), in highly prescribed ways that allowed little freedom. Froebel believed that the meanings he assigned to these gifts and occupations would also be realized by children. This belief illustrates Froebel’s concept of children as miniature adults (Rippa 1971).

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, education in America was greatly influenced by a complex set of theories described as "progressive education." Although it meant different things to different people, its most prominent connotation was "child centeredness" (Woodring 1975, p. 11). Dewey, often called "the father of progressive education," pleaded for a child centered program that would bring nature and society into the schools, that would initiate instruction with the child’s experiences. This "child centeredness" carried over into normal schools and teacher’s colleges where teachers were encouraged to be more permissive and less authoritarian and to accept responsibility for the social and personality development as well as the academic growth of their charges.
During this same period of time, a group of psychologists, guided by the influence of G. Stanley Hall, focused attention on theories of mind development and maturation. They fostered a view of the first six years as the formative period of a child's life, a view that resulted in several significant changes: the kindergarten teacher became more like a mother, filling a role different from that of the first grade teacher; and teacher training became different, with kindergarten teachers studying psychological concepts and child development, while elementary school teachers studied teaching methods and academics. The result of this development was a schism between kindergarten and first grade (Durkin 1972).

Embracing the "progressive" curriculum of free and organized play, the kindergarten changed little over the next 50 years. The usual program included play, music, art, stories, crafts, snacks and rest. Historically, the kindergarten was expected to provide custodial care for the children of poverty, and to compensate for emotional problems and deficiencies in the home environment. The element of change was notably absent from kindergarten and early childhood education until the period of the 1960's.

Influences Today: 1960 to the Present

In the 1960's, conception of early childhood education was influenced by Jerome Bruner, J. McVicker Hunt, and Benjamin Bloom. Bruner (1960), in The Process of Education, examined the
importance of the "structure of a discipline." In his chapter on "Readiness for Learning" is found the now famous quotation: "We begin with the hypothesis that any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development (Bruner 1960, p. 33). Then Hunt (1961), like Bruner a psychologist, wrote Intelligence and Experience, in which he reinterpreted previous research to emphasize the crucial importance of learning opportunities on the development of intelligence. The third, Bloom's (1964) Stability and Change in Human Characteristics, reexamined earlier longitudinal studies concerned with measurable characteristics including intelligence and achievement. These writings emphasized the importance of the child's early years.

In the mid-1960's, President Johnson's "War on Poverty" focused national interest on children from disadvantaged homes, and on the need to provide opportunities for their intellectual growth. This interest led to the development of special programs of amelioration. Federal funds initiated "Head Start," in 1965, and "Follow Through," in 1967. Cartwright and Seaver (1977, p. 23) have described the effect of Head Start on the field of early childhood education: "There can be no doubt that the rebirth of the field of early childhood education is very tightly bound up with the Head Start experience . . . . It provided the forum for debate about theory and programming for young children and changed our conception of the typical experiences of
Disappointing long-term results, however, led to an interest in earlier intervention. The outcome of Head Start programs, McGraw (1973, p. 37) said, "led to the claim that even the pre-kindergarten period is too late--education begins in the cradle." Further need for not only an earlier start but an improvement in the child's general environment were emphasized by the conclusions of a government-sponsored study, supervised by James Coleman (in Biehler 1976, pp. 407-408). This study reported that an enriched early environment will not necessarily lead to permanent gains, that a poor general environment will in effect cancel our early gains.

The Office of Education project "Follow Through" allowed the comparison of 17 different models of schooling, a program of "planned variation." This program was designed to provide comprehensive health and social services as well as educational services for children of primary age who had participated in a Head Start or similar preschool. Emrick, Sorensen, and Sterns (1973) evaluated the effectiveness of Follow Through and concluded that a substantial number of impacts were evident. Some of these successes went beyond "basics" to include parent involvement and student attitude toward school. Guthrie (1977) also reported on the effectiveness of models that involved parents in teaching their children.

Another federally funded project, the USOE Cooperative Reading Studies, although it involved first and second grade
reading, may have influenced the reading program in kindergarten. Fraught with problems which have been enumerated elsewhere (Sipay 1968; Bond and Dykstra 1967), the findings revealed that no one method of instruction proved to be superior for all children. In spite of the inconclusive evidence, some researchers reported that code-emphasis phonics-first programs produced better reading achievement (Chall 1967 and Dykstra 1968).

One of the most highly publicized and under-financed federal efforts in educational history is the Right to Read program. Former U. S. Commissioner of Education James E. Allen set an historic goal for the U. S. Office of Education and the nation's schools; "we should immediately set for ourselves the goal of assuring that by the end of the 1970's the right to read shall be a reality for all . . . (National School Public Relations Association 1974, p. 8)." With 106 projects in schools K-12, the Right to Read program has been accepted by 31 state education agencies, and has been declared a statewide school priority by 20 governors. The targets of these efforts are more than 1,200 districts enrolling more than 37 million children (National School Public Relations Association 1974, p. 14).

Reading instruction and education have become a popular subject in the nation's print media. Publications on educational topics, written for parents and the general public, have been widely read and may influence thinking about children and reading. Some of these writings suggest that the educational system
is inadequate and that parents should take over the role of "teacher." For example, Rudolph Flesch's (1955) *Why Johnny Can't Read--And What You Can Do about It* explained that Johnny could not read because he lacked phonics instruction, that the schools no longer taught phonics. Flesch's solution was to follow his program and teach children phonics at home. Another source, *How to Teach Your Baby to Read* (Doman 1964), promised parents that they could teach their toddlers to read. Publications like "Why Waste Our Five-Year Olds" (Simmons 1960), and "Can Our Children Learn Faster?" (Morris 1961) encouraged parents to pressure children to learn earlier and faster, while others like *Give Your Child a Superior Mind* (Englemann and Englemann 1966), and *How to Raise a Brighter Child* (Beck 1967) led parents to believe that they could enhance their child's intelligence.

Newspapers have assailed the efforts of educators with frequent negative comments. Articles like "All that New-Fangled Teaching Has Flunked Out" (Armbruster 1977) and "Declining Quality of Education: SAT Scores Confirmed Suspicions" (Broder 1977), cause the public to question educators' judgment; while, editorials like "Back to Uncertainty" (Simms 1977), heralding the fall opening of school, and "Education Game" (Woodward 1977), suggesting that taxpayers are being cheated by dropping school enrollments and still-rising expenses, generate enthusiasm for a return to "basic education." It seems that:
Many citizens, often intelligent and openminded about other issues, thoughtlessly parrot opinions about educational issues which they have picked up from newspapers and popular magazines. Frequently, little consideration is given to the competence of the writers who deal with these issues (Chasnoff 1964, p. 533).

In a recent attitude poll, George Gallup (1977) found that 83% of respondents favored a "back-to-basics" instructional program, regarding the basics largely in terms of reading, writing and arithmetic; however, many respondents considered the "basics" as "politeness," "structured classrooms," and the "old ways of teaching." Gallup's attitude poll may reflect that most adults grew up in an autocratic society, with parents directing their lives at home, and teachers directing their lives at school. It is possible that this background makes it more difficult to accept or to develop skill in democratic techniques, to accept different learning environments, and to appreciate that there are different needs and different ways of learning.

The Kindergarten and Reading

Views on Kindergarten

There are those who strongly adhere to the belief that kindergarten should provide an academic, structured program, while others defend the child's need for an unstructured social-play school. Elizabeth Peabody's appealing analogy, written in 1888, espouses one view of the kindergarten:

A kindergarten means a guarded company of children, who are to be treated as a gardener treats his plants;
. . . studied to see what they are, and what conditions they require for the fullest and most beautiful growth; . . . supplied with these conditions, with as little handling of their individuality as possible . . . . It is because they are living organisms that they are to be cultivated—not drilled (in Mayer 1966, pp. 125-126).

Peabody's suggested treatment is still recognized by those who advocate that five-year old children need a play-school environment.

Several well-known educators have described their views on appropriate elements of the kindergarten curriculum. Advocating the need for play, David Elkind (1972) characterized the preschooler as a child who develops both cognitive and motor skills through play. Also seeing the benefit in play, Maria Montessori (1967) expressed the belief that play is a child's work, that through play the child practices actions eventually internalized as thought. Arguing against formal, structured instruction, Elkind (1972) suggested a program that includes dramatic and creative play, listening to stories, learning the alphabet, and becoming familiar with numbers and quantitative relations. The aid of early childhood education, according to Millie Almy (1975, p. 53), "is not to fit the four- or five-year old into a program that has been simplified from the first or second grade, but rather to capitalize on his four- and five-year old powers in ways that are appropriate to his present level of development."

Advocates of a more structured academic program (Sava 1968) use four arguments: (1) the earlier start will allow an earlier finish and less total cost for education; (2) take
advantage of the young child's facility and eagerness to learn; (3) maximize growth rather than risk the child's failure to reach potential, because of failure to provide stimulation; and (4) traditional programs are more concerned with emotional well-being and less concerned with cognitive stimulation.

How does the five-year old child learn? The work of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1969) has provided some answers through the description of children's stages of development. Between the ages of two and five, Piaget explained, the child moves from the preoperational stage and begins to engage in concrete operational thought. The child's actions on things are what facilitate his or her thinking. These actions are progressively miniaturized and interiorized until the child is finally able to do in his or her head what he or she could previously do only with his or her hands. According to Piaget's theory, young children are not able to comprehend an abstract principle of hypothetical situation, nor are they able to internalize rules. Robert Biehler (1976, p. 424) summarized Piaget's observations on the intellectual development of the five-year old child:

Children can decenter their thinking, concentrate on actions rather than just states, and mentally reverse actions. However they can do this only if they have had concrete experiences of a particular type. They are able to put together objects which have similarities and are capable of a rudimentary form of classification.

Is it possible to speed up the child's development? Herbert Ginsburg and Sylvia Opper (1969, p. 176), interpreting Piaget, described what happens if the child is pushed too fast:
If there is great difference between the type of experience presented and the child's current level of cognitive structure, the child transforms the experience, not learning what is intended, or "he merely learns a specific response which has no strength or stability, cannot be generalized and will probably disappear soon."

Piaget's works helped educators understand what is appropriate instruction for children at certain levels of development. The educator, thus informed, recognizes that a five-year old child learns best through manipulation of concrete materials within his environment, through engaging in real actions involving tangible objects, and through play.

Educators who accept Piaget's view on child development criticize instructional programs like Distar Instructional Systems because they are highly structured, teacher-centered, directive and restrictive. Developed by Siegrfried Engelmann and Associates, the publisher, Science Research Associates, claimed they teach basic learning skills to young children. Engelmann, who saw the aim of education as conformity, has rejected criticism explaining that children do not learn—they are taught (Aukerman 1971; Science Research Associates Catalog 1976).

Views on Reading

Should reading be taught in kindergarten? As with many complex questions, there are differing views regarding the question of whether reading should be taught in kindergarten.
Miles Tinker and Constance McCullough (1962) have described two widely held views on this question: one, that kindergarten children should not be exposed to visual symbols, but instead to activities related to reading, and to objects rather than visual word forms; and the other, that basal reader programs should be used to provide as much beginning reading as the child can master. Tinker and McCullough have rejected both views, the first because it lacks realistic assessment of visual symbols within the child's environment, and the second because it utilized materials designed for older children, ignoring important research findings that a half year or later a child can learn the same things faster. Rather than either view, they felt it is necessary to consider the development and needs of the individual child and to discover what kinds of experiences and language facility the child brings to school.

Predicated on the experience gained in her six-year study of early readers, Dolores Durkin (1972, p. 11) has argued that "some five-year olds are more than ready to read" and kindergarten should offer that opportunity. Durkin's research included conversations with kindergarten teachers, visits to classrooms, interviews of five-year old children, and then with their parents. This study in combination with others she had conducted led Durkin (1976a) to form two tentative conclusions: (1) that pre-first grade starts do not appear to have negative effects on future reading achievement, and (2) that future effect will be
influenced by what is done in later years to extend the early advantage.

Brzeinski (1964) reported successes for reading instruction in the kindergarten. Referring to the Denver study, Brzeinski described significantly superior reading performance at the end of first grade for the control kindergarten classes who had been given 20 minutes of daily instruction in reading. Particular progress was noted in children's ability to recognize letter forms and to associate letter sounds and names.

From a Virginia study, Marjorie Scherwitsky (1974) reported that 50% of the 144 kindergarten teachers surveyed thought reading should be taught in kindergarten, while 50% felt it should not. When taught, most reported teaching reading the second half of the year. Written comments by teachers revealed concerns that the responsibility for making this decision should remain with the teachers, that parents need to understand the program that is offered, and that valuable contributions of the kindergarten year would be lost in attempting a "watered-down" version of first grade.

Are kindergarten children taught beginning reading skills? Spache and Spache (1973) summarized some of the research related to this question, reporting that one-third of the teachers in a large survey believed their children were ready to read; 29% to 40% reported teaching letter names, writing letters, sounds of letters, and likenesses and differences between words. On
another survey, Spache and Spache (1973, p. 53) reported that 31% teach reading using language experience charts, classroom libraries, readiness workbooks, or dittoed worksheets.

The teacher's conception of reading's place in education and the way he or she talks about it will be a major influence on children (Reid 1972, p. 203). That conception of reading is revealed by the kind of instruction offered as well as the emphasis and amount of time devoted to reading.

Notions about Reading

Jesse Reid (1972) investigated the notions that a group of five-year old children had about reading. Structured interviews revealed that these children had little precise notion of the activity called reading. Reid (1972, p. 211) also found that these children were unaware "that written words were composed of letters which stood for sounds." Reid reported that these children exhibited certain linguistic and conceptual uncertainties which were due in part to their need to discover that language, written or spoken, is comprised of words.

John Downing (1972) replicated Reid's interviews and his findings supported those of Reid (1972) and Vygotsky (1962). L. S. Vygotsky had investigated the tremendous difference between a child's spoken and written language, sometimes as much as eight years. Vygotsky's research led him to conclude that it is the abstract quality of language which causes the stumbling block, and that children initially have only a vague idea of the need
or usefulness of writing. These findings plus new experimental evidence led Downing (1972, p. 224) to conclude: (1) that children have only a vague notion of how people read and have difficulty with its abstract terminology, and (2) that children have difficulty understanding the purposes of written language.

Phonics in Reading

Controversies abound on the subject of phonics. In fact, "For much of this century there has been a running argument between those who seem to believe that a phonetic approach alone should be employed in teaching beginning reading and others who are extremely dubious about using such an approach too early and too exclusively (Alice Miel 1968, p. v)."

Recognizing the existence of both views, Theodore Harris (1962) has suggested that terminology is a major source of confusion for professional educators and the public. Harris has recommended that beginning reading methods be distinguished by their relative emphasis on meaning of whole words or on the discrimination of word parts. The basic difference appears to lie in what is taught first; in synthetic programs, letter discrimination is taught early; in analytic programs, letter discrimination is delayed.

Approaches to reading instruction which utilize "synthetic phonics" theorize (1) that the English language is phonemically regular, and (2) that once the child has mastered the phonemic elements of a word, the child can pronounce that word by blending
the sounds in sequence (Aukerman 1971). Most of the systems termed "phonic," "code-breaking," or "synthetic phonics," start with the sounds of individual letters and follow with the blending of these letter sounds into words. This type of approach has been recommended by Flesch (1955), McCracken (1965), and Bereiter and Englemann (1966).

_Beginning to Read, Write and Listen_, developed by the Boston Educational Research Company for J. B. Lippincott, is an example of a kindergarten program that introduces synthetic phonics. Author Pleasant Rowland (1971, p. 1), who described the materials as a comprehensive reading-language arts program, said, "In Beginning, the child learns about the alphabet: the letter names, how to write them, what sounds they represent, and what function they serve as they are blended to form words."

Learning theorist Gagne has presented a hierarchy for the early stages of decoding in beginning reading, using mastery of the pronunciation rules for regularly spelled words. In reviewing behavioral theories and models of "learning to read," for _Reading Research Quarterly_, Joanna Williams (1973, p. 127) has described the most basic abilities of Gagne's essentially phonemic approach: "The most basic ability required is that of reproducing single-letter sounds. Built on that is the identifying of single letters by their sounds, and built on that, pronouncing consonant and vowel combinations."
Although phonics techniques are included in many current reading programs, the method has fallen into disfavor for at least four reasons: (1) each letter in English does not regularly represent a sound; (2) many capable readers do not appear to use a letter-by-letter analysis; (3) phonics "rules," generalizations, have many exceptions and are unscientific; and (4) differences in dialect prevent standard sounding of elements (Smith, Goodman, and Meredith 1976, pp. 265-266).

Indicating that phonic information is only a part of the process, Goodman and Niles (1970) described three types of information that the reader uses simultaneously: (1) **Grapho-Phonic Information**, which includes graphic, phonological, and phonic information; (2) **Syntactic Information**, which includes sentence patterns, pattern markers, inflections, and punctuation; and (3) **Semantic Information**, which includes the reader's experience, existing concepts, and vocabulary. Apparently agreeing with this view, Durkin (1976a, p. 63) has suggested that children need strategies that combine graphophonics, structural and contextual cues.

In their research, Barton and Wilder (1962) found that the analytic approach was most widely used in first grade. From a random sample of schools in the United States, Barton and Wilder reported that 90% of first grade teachers use basal reading materials with an analytic approach. Half of the participants also revealed some interest in synthetic phonics: 51%
reported they believed children should be taught the "sounds of letters" and "letter combinations" either before they start learning about words or at the same time.

Rather than beginning with the alphabet and isolated sounds, most reading authorities have advocated introducing meaningful wholes first—words, phrases and sentences that communicate meaning (Stauffer 1970, p. 21; Nerbovig and Klausmeier 1974, p. 158). There are, however, public school teachers and administrators plus elements of the public who do not agree on the value of a meaning-centered program, and who favor synthetic phonics.

One outspoken member of the public is Bettina Rubicam, founder and President of the Reading Reform Foundation, who urged the teaching of synthetic phonics. With members in 42 states, the Foundation's avowed purpose is to restore the alphabetic (phonic) method to its proper place as the basis for reading instruction (Fisk 1977). Toward this end the Foundation sponsors workshops and publishes a quarterly, The Reading Informer.

Language Experiences in Reading

The Interorganizational Committee (1977, p. 460), a group of 16 esteemed, professional educators representing seven professional organizations, identified concerns and recommendations in their "Joint Statement of Concerns about Present Practices in Pre-First Grade Reading Instruction and Recommendations for Improvement." The first recommendation of this committee is as follows: "Provide reading experiences as an integrated part of
the broader communication process that includes listening, speaking, and writing. A language experience approach is an example of such integration."

R. V. Allen (1976) has developed a Curriculum Rationale for a Language Experience Approach that reflects a broad, communication-based approach to learning. The curriculum is developed around three strands: experiencing communication, studying communication, and relating communication of others to self. Twenty substrands represent those language experiences considered to have the most potential for promoting communications abilities. Allen explained that these 20 substrands are interpretations of the rationale developed from the research results of the San Diego County Reading Study Project. Continued through 1965, the study became a part of the U. S. Office of Education First Grade Reading Studies (Bond and Dykstra 1967).

Using this approach, children have opportunities to succeed in a variety of experiences. R. V. Allen (1968, p. 3) described the classroom as a language laboratory that extends all day: "Language skills are extended and ideas are refined as children listen to stories and recordings, view films and filmstrips, make individual and class books . . . study words . . . and begin to record their ideas in writing independently."

A language experience approach to beginning reading utilizes the integration of reading and the language arts—reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In this approach, the
reading materials are, to a large extent, determined by the child's oral language and his or her experiences. It is this feature, the utilization of the natural language of the learner, that leads psycholinguists like Kenneth Goodman (1967) to advocate more extensive use of language-experience techniques.

The advantages in using the language experience approach are numerous: there is a high level of personal involvement for the child; the material produced is current and relevant to the child; it stresses the relationship between oral language and written language; it is appropriate for children of differing abilities, and from different cultural or economic backgrounds; it is naturally individualized; success is stressed; it provides opportunities for self-expression and creativity; and it is relatively inexpensive.

Purposes of a Reading Program

The differing views on kindergarten, on the five-year old learner, and on kindergarten reading may be given perspective by examining the purposes of a reading program. These purposes can be described in terms of three learning theories: Behavioristic, Nativistic and Cognitive Field. Canady (1976, pp. 44-45) has summarized these theories as they relate to a reading program: (1) reflecting Behavioristic Theory, the purpose of a reading program is to develop the skills and mechanics of reading; (2) reflecting Nativistic Theory, the purpose of a reading program is to develop positive interests and attitudes toward reading,
and to develop skills through the child's discovering, selecting, and exploring a wide variety of material; (3) reflecting Cognitive Field Theory, the purpose of a reading program is to extend the use of the language arts—reading, writing, listening, speaking—by using the child's personal thoughts, ideas, and experiences in language activities.

Parents and Teachers

A child's success in reading and in school depends to a great extent on the attitude of parents and the home environment. One important responsibility for teachers is to enlist and encourage support from parents so the home provides a helpful rather than a hindering influence (Larrick 1964, p. 375). If parents have shared books with a child, encouraged and responded to questions, shared a variety of experiences at home, in the community and beyond, the child brings more to the school-learning situation. This is of particular importance if one accepts Frank Smith's (1971, p. 3) thesis that prior knowledge of the world "contributes more information to reading than the visual symbols on the printed page."

The Parent's Role

Research assures that parents can help. Of the 17 models of schooling of disadvantaged children in the U. S. Office of Education Follow Through project, Parent Education was one of three deemed most successful (Guthrie 1977, p. 242). The Parent
Education approach focused on teaching parents to be primary educators of their children.

In another research study, the Denver Public Schools determined how effectively parents can prepare their preschoolers. Results indicated that parents could teach their children beginning reading techniques and that the children who had this help made significantly greater progress than those in the control group who did not (Brzeinski 1964).

What can parents do at home? Judging from the profusion of print media offering advice—books, pamphlets, journal and magazine articles, as well as advertisements—a great deal! Books like Ruth Strang's (1962a) *Helping Your Child Improve His Reading* and Nancy Larrick's (1964) *A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading*, however, provide professionally written but easily read suggestions for parents who seek guidance. James Schiavone's (1977) newly published *Help Your Child to Read Better* also provides special resource lists for parents seeking additional references for their children.

Nineteen organizations, including the International Reading Association, National Council of Teachers of English, Association for Childhood Education, and National Parent Teacher Association, have provided a host of services and resources for parents. These groups have published journals, bulletins, quarterlies, pamphlets, books, films, records, tapes, cassettes and bibliographies. They attempt to develop closer relationships
between home and educational agencies, conduct seminars and workshops, present programs at conventions, compile statistics, offer paraprofessional training, try to overcome bias, and plan home-television activities (Fisk 1977).

Houghton Mifflin is one publisher who has recognized that parents need information about reading. At little or no cost to the parent, they have widely distributed three well-written booklets: Primer for Parents by Paul McKee and William J. Durr (1975), The What and Why of Beginning Reading by Robert Hillerich (n.d.), and Your Child and Reading adapted by Houghton Mifflin Company (1973) from the work of David Rubin and Elizabeth Shrobe. Although written for parents, these resources can also help teachers to communicate with parents. Written in direct, easily understood language, the materials provide examples of simpler ways to explain complex processes.

The Teacher's Role

In contemplating the teacher's role, dilemmas abound (Fuller and Bown 1975). During their professional preparation, teachers are encouraged to be flexible, creative and innovative; but school boards, directors, and principals expect them to conform to guidelines, to rules, or to the status quo. While parents believe the major function of a teacher is teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic—the "basics," teachers recognize the need for social skills as well. In addition, teachers are expected to live up to high personal standards, to direct the
educational program of a large group of children, but to remain responsive to the needs and values of the community.

In the kindergarten classroom as well, the teacher's role seems multi-faceted. This is evidenced in the four functions Lillian Katz (1972) attributed to the teacher of young children: caretaking, providing emotional support and guidance, instructing and facilitating. Most will give considerable time to each function, but some teachers will give more to instruction and facilitating. Undoubtedly the kindergarten teacher gives less time to instructing than the first grade teacher who is responsible for a child's initiation into academic work. Instead, the so-called "traditional" preschool teacher extends considerable time and effort in "arranging the environment in such a way as to encourage the child's exploration and discovery (Almy 1975, p. 21)," in facilitating. Interest in the teacher as facilitator has been heightened in recent years by noteworthy reports on the British Primary School.

The role of the kindergarten teacher is developed in infinitely varied ways, but some appear more effective than others. Based on her observations in many kindergarten classrooms, Dolores Durkin (1976b) described qualities that appeared to be present in good teachers of the young: the ability to take into account the characteristics of young children, the ability to use common sense, the diagnostic ability that allows a maximum of individualized instruction, the ability to select appropriate
instructional goals, the ability to be flexible, the ability to recognize when an activity should be terminated, and the ability to be knowledgeable on subject matter as well as child development.

Popular Resources for Parents and Teachers

For parents and teachers, magazines have been a continuing, readily available source of information on topics related to education. Attempting to evaluate the type of information generated for the public, a survey of the popular magazines provided at the local public library was conducted. Seventeen popular magazines, which can be classified as general, home, parent, education or news, published during a one-month period of time, November 1977, were examined. All 17 magazines were openly displayed for public use at the Huntsville City Library, Huntsville, Alabama.

Articles, monthly columns and advertisements that might attract the reader-parent of a kindergarten child or a teacher of kindergarten children were scrutinized and topics relating to young children, schooling, reading, and education were noted. Three of the magazines surveyed contained no information on these topics, while 14 contained some type of information on the related topics. Within this group of 14 magazines there were 15 articles, five monthly columns or departments, 10 full-page advertisements (educational toys excluded), and two school directories.
This group of articles was evaluated in terms of negative, positive, or neutral attitudes toward education, educators, or schooling. The nine articles considered neutral presented unbiased views or attempted merely to inform the reader. Of the remaining group, two exhibited positive attitudes and four exhibited negative attitudes. Two quotations from Mary Susan Miller's (1977, p. 60) "The Battle for the Little Red Schoolhouse" in the Ladies Home Journal illustrate negative attitude:

There's a tug of war raging in our schools between "no frills" education and "open learning."

Parents--frustrated and angry over having their children's lives manipulated by the faddism of professional educators--feel guilty at having lost control and are determined to make up for their past neglect.

In reading the content of these articles, an unexpected relationship was noted between Down's explanation for the "basics" movement and the content of a popular education journal. A. Graham Down (1977, p. 3), in "Why Basic Education," explained that the proliferation of educational innovations in the 1960's and 1970's placed too little emphasis on primary skills and too much on developing self-concept. A subsequent review of the features and articles in Today's Education (1977), the journal of the National Education Association, revealed the following content: special features on teaching values, on moral sensibility, and on energy use in the school; articles on integrating the handicapped, interest in family history, the unspoiled child, exploring the exotic East, child abuse, students tuning off the
teacher as easily as the television, and continuing education. Although they are all worthy topics, it was surprising to find that no special feature or article presented information related to academic subjects.

In the magazines examined, the most frequently appearing advertisement was "The Sound Way to Easy Reading" (McCalls 1977), a series of phonic lessons on records, produced by the Bremner-Davis Company. According to reports (Aukerman 1971), 80,000 sets of these materials have been sold to parents.

Chapter 2 has presented a review of literature that is related to the topics under investigation. In the following chapter, the subjects, instruments and techniques, and analysis of data will be described.
CHAPTER 3

THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

In this study, multiple data collection strategies were used in gathering data from parents, teachers and kindergarten classrooms: (1) questionnaire, (2) interview, and (3) observation.

Subjects

Description of the Population

The research population included the parents and teachers of the 47 private kindergartens listed in the 1976 Huntsville, Alabama, South Central Bell Telephone Directory. Huntsville, a city in Madison County, located in the northern part of Alabama, has a population of 145,000 people. Adjoining this city is a large military facility: the Redstone Arsenal and Marshall Space Flight Center. Because of its location relative to this complex, Huntsville is not a typical southern town. Instead, the city's population tends to represent a broader geographical area of the United States. Although some kindergartens receive federal or state aid, most of Huntsville's kindergartens were, at the time of this study, privately owned and managed. Ownership was not a
factor that was considered. Neither Head Start kindergartens nor city-sponsored pilot programs were included in this population.

Selection of Subjects

The subjects of this research were the parents of kindergarten children and the teachers of kindergarten children who volunteered to participate in this investigation. Subjects were selected in the following manner:

1. A numbered, alphabetically arranged list of the 47 private kindergartens in the 1976 Huntsville, Alabama, South Central Bell Telephone Directory was compiled.

2. Using a table of random numbers (Downie and Heath 1970, pp. 328-329), the names of 21 private kindergartens were selected.

3. Letters of invitation (see Appendix B) to participate in this research plus response cards (see Appendix B) were mailed to the 21 private kindergartens.

4. Of the nine responses, seven indicated a desire to participate, while two declined. Each kindergarten agreeing to participate was from a different neighborhood, and from six directional areas: north, northeast, northwest, central, south and southeast, thereby providing a satisfactory geographical distribution.

6. All questionnaires were distributed during the last two weeks of April 1978. The first follow-up letter was distributed 10 days later and the second follow-up letter
two weeks later than the first (see letters in Appendix B).

7. The 131 completed and returned questionnaires, 112 parents and 19 teachers, were sorted into groups: teacher respondents and parent respondents, with each group tabulated for statistical treatment.

8. Parents and teachers completing questionnaires were asked to indicate a willingness to be interviewed. From those parents and teachers who agreed to be interviewed, 15 parents and 15 teachers were randomly selected and interviewed.

9. Questionnaires had been letter coded before distribution, allowing identification by school. The returned questionnaires were resorted and tabulated by school, for statistical treatment.

Description of Subjects

A total of 112 parents of kindergarten children and 19 teachers of kindergarten children participated in this research. As subjects indicated on their questionnaires, 19 of the parents were male, and 93 of the parents and all of the kindergarten teachers were female. A broad geographical distribution was revealed by the 126 subjects who named birthplaces in 27 states and nine countries: Alabama (47), Tennessee (12), Kentucky (7), New York (5), Louisiana (5), Michigan (4), Georgia (4), Ohio (4),
Missouri (4), Mississippi (4), Texas (3), Florida (2), Massachusetts (2), and one each from Oklahoma, Virginia, West Virginia, California, Nebraska, Kansas, Illinois, Arkansas, Iowa, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Arizona, and South Carolina. The countries represented other than the United States included two from Germany and one each from Newfoundland, Canada, Puerto Rico, Guam, Italy, China, and Columbia, South America.

Included in the teacher sample were 16 classroom teachers plus three teaching-directors who shared daily responsibilities in the classrooms. Each of the participating teaching-directors spent at least one hour daily working with the kindergarten children.

Description of Schools

There were seven private kindergartens, 16 classes in all, that participated in this research. They are represented in this research by the letters A through G, in order to protect their anonymity. These schools cooperated in this study by providing information about their instructional program, by allowing observations in their classrooms, by distributing questionnaires to their parents and teachers, and by allowing the conduct of interviews. The participating schools shared these common characteristics: all classes of children observed had a white majority, but all included some minorities; all schools met in the morning for a two and one-half to three hour session; all schools also had kindergarten classes for four-year old children and most had
nursery school classes for three-year olds; most schools offered one or more scholarships to children whose parents could not afford tuition, and one also offered scholarships for foster children; most schools served their neighborhood populations, but many children attended schools that were in close proximity to their parent's employment, and some attended schools in other areas of the city because of the school's reputation. Additional information was gained by interviewing the school directors: the number and size of their kindergarten classes, the geographical location and population served, the major emphasis of the instructional program, the professional preparation of teachers, and the means used to communicate with parents. This additional information is provided for each kindergarten (K). Letter coding is used to identify each kindergarten school as it is represented in the following five categories of data:

I. The Number and Size of Kindergarten Classes

K-A: 5 classes, total enrollment 90 children
K-B: 6 classes, total enrollment 115 children
K-C: 1 class, 21 children
K-D: 1 class, 19 children
K-E: 1 class, 19 children
K-F: 1 class, 17 children
K-G: 1 class, 17 children
II. Geographical Location and Population Served

K-A: Located in the southeast section of city, serving "middle to upper middle class" population of city residents

K-B: Located in the south section of city, serving a diverse but primarily "middle class" population of city residents

K-C: Located in the central section of city, serving a highly diverse population from all sections of the city

K-D: Located in the far north section of city, serving a diverse population from all sections of the city, but mostly "middle class"

K-E: Located in the northwest section of city, serving a diverse but mostly "middle class" population from primarily but not exclusively the northwest section of city

K-F: Located in the northeast section of city, serving a "middle class" population of city and rural residents

K-G: Located in the north section of the city, serving a "middle class" population of city residents

III. Major Emphasis of Instructional Program

K-A: Developing a high self-concept for children attending school
K-B: Developing and maintaining a healthy self-concept in children
K-C: Providing all kinds of learning experiences and opportunities to make social and emotional adjustments to a group
K-D: Getting children ready for first grade
K-E: Preparing children for first grade
K-F: Providing wholesome atmosphere as preparation for school
K-G: Preparing the child for the next level

IV. Professional Preparation of Teachers

K-A: Of the five teachers, only two had undergraduate degrees in education; all had some training in early childhood education through university courses or conferences; none had state certification
K-B: All six teachers had undergraduate degrees in education and state certification
K-C: The one teacher had undergraduate degree in education, but lacked state certification
K-D: The one teacher had undergraduate degree in education and held state certification
K-E: The one teacher had undergraduate degree in education and held state certification
K-F: The one teacher had undergraduate degree and state certification
K-G: The one teacher had undergraduate degree and state certification

V. Means Used to Communicate with Parents

K-A: Personal letter in August, open house in the fall, three programs during the year and frequent conferences

K-B: Newsletters every six weeks, home visitation, two conferences, face-to-face progress report and spring program

K-C: Newsletter bimonthly, parent workshops, greet children and parents daily, frequent notes home and conferences when needed

K-D: Newsletter weekly or monthly as needed, conferences three times a year, frequent telephone calls, two programs

K-E: An occasional letter but nothing regularly

K-F: Monthly newsletter, parent orientation session in fall, two conferences and personal contacts when needed

K-G: An occasional letter, but mostly face-to-face contact when parents pick up children

Instruments and Techniques

Editors (Wolf and Timitz 1976-1977, p. 6) of the Reading Research Quarterly have cited the need for "broad, descriptive, exploratory research." Further, editors (Farr and Weintraub
1974-1975, p. 551) have asked researchers to incorporate such characteristics as the following in their designs: interaction between teachers and the researcher, a doctoral dissertation that is more than "statistically neat and clean," the use of qualitative ways of knowing, and the inclusion of natural settings rather than ignoring their complexities. In an attempt to adhere to their recommendations, multiple data collection strategies were utilized: a questionnaire, interviews and observations.

The questionnaire has been used as a data-gathering instrument by many researchers and it has also been used in combination with other research techniques. Robert L. Thorndike (1973) used the questionnaire in combination with other tests in conducting cross-national studies on reading. Thorndike's questionnaires were used to investigate environmental influences, including instructional practices. The questionnaire was used in combination with classroom observations by Austin and Morrison (1963) in undertaking a comprehensive nationwide study of reading instruction in the elementary schools. Roger Farr (1969) indicated that studies, like Austin's and Morrison's, that are based on questionnaires and classroom observations, can provide reliable insights.

Unlike the structured questionnaire, interviews offer the possibility of discovering unanticipated responses. Ruth Strang (1962b) advocated the use of research techniques, like interviews, that allow the researcher to work more closely with subjects, in
order to discover uniqueness as well as commonness. Tuckman (1972, p. 188) has stated that interviews offer opportunities to ask additional information and to follow leads as they occur. Others (Borg and Gall 1974) have suggested a procedure for educational research that helps the interviewer to focus the dialogue by using some structured questions but primarily using a semi-structured level. The interviewer usually asks a series of structured questions and then probes more deeply using open-ended questions (Borg and Gall 1974, p. 214).

The Questionnaire

A 26 item questionnaire (see Appendix C) was distributed to all subjects in the study. They were distributed over a two-week period during the spring of 1978. The content of the questionnaire was based primarily on selected ideas drawn from Chapter 2, the review of the literature. It was not intended that the questionnaire be a comprehensive reflection of all ideas presented in the review; it was, instead, intended to investigate only selected ideas.

The questionnaire was organized into two parts, with all items providing a five-category response. In 1 through 15, subjects were asked to select a response on a five-point Likert scale: SA = strongly agree, A = agree, U = undecided, D = disagree, and SD = strongly disagree. This scale was used to register the extent of agreement or disagreement with a particular statement (Tuckman 1972). Items 16 through 26 employed a
numerical rating scale, with numbers assigned to five categories. N. L. Gage (1963, p. 331) has indicated that in such a procedure the investigator assumes without empirical proof that the intervals on this kind of a priori scale represent equal psychological intervals between adjacent numbers. Halpin (1966) through his instrument "Organizational Climate Descriptive Questionnaire," asked respondents to indicate the frequency with which certain teacher and principal behaviors occurred. The response choices in Part 2 of the present research questionnaire are similar to those used by Halpin: 5 = very frequently, 4 = often, 3 = sometimes, two = rarely, and 1 = never. Although a variety of response words may be used, all scaled responses measured degree of either frequency or agreement, and are based on the assumption that a scale is a quantitative measure of judgment or feeling (Tuckman 1972, p. 181).

**Content of the questionnaire.** The questionnaire items were an outgrowth of the review of the literature, Chapter 2, and the data collected was related to specific research questions. The relationship of the 26 questionnaire items to the research questions, as well as the origin of each item, will be described.

**Items 9, 12 and 14:** Questionnaire items 9, 12 and 14 were related to three research questions.

1-A: According to parents of kindergarten children, who should determine when and how reading will be taught in the kindergarten?
1-B: According to teachers of kindergarten children, who should determine when and how reading will be taught in the kindergarten?

1-C: Is there a significant difference between parent's and teacher's views regarding who should determine when and how reading will be taught in the kindergarten?

These research questions focus on the issue of who makes the decisions: who should determine the time when reading instruction will be initiated, and who will decide the best or most appropriate way for each child to learn? Do parents feel as Miller (1977, p. 60) described, "guilty at having lost control— and determined to make up for past neglect?" On the other hand, do teachers feel they have, by virtue of their training, earned the right to make these decisions? This attitude was borne out by Scherwitsky (1974) who reported that teachers surveyed felt the responsibility for the decision, of when reading would be taught and how it would be taught, should remain with them. And what of the child? Do the subjects of this research feel like Tinker and McCullough (1962), who suggested that the development and needs of the individual child should be the basis for decision.

Three questionnaire items focused on these views: item 9—a parent knows the true ability of a child and should decide what the child can learn and when; item 12—teachers are trained
educators and should decide how reading will be taught in their classes; and item 14—maturity and readiness are the key factors in determining when a child starts instruction in reading.

Items 1-8, 10-11, 13 and 15: 12 questionnaire items were related to this group of three research questions.

2-A: What notions regarding instructional practices for beginning reading are most frequently held by parents of kindergarten children?

2-B: What notions regarding instructional practices for beginning reading are most frequently held by teachers of kindergarten children?

2-C: Is there a significant difference between parents' and teachers' notions regarding instructional practices for beginning reading in the kindergarten?

Items related to these research questions were concerned with: Purpose, Priorities, Meaning versus Sounds, and Learning.

What is the purpose of the reading program in the kindergarten? What theoretical positions were revealed by parents and teachers as subjects of this research? Several items were related to descriptive statements that reflect three theoretical positions: the Behavioristic Theory, the Nativistic Theory, and the Cognitive Field Theory (Canady 1976). Two items represented the Behavioristic Theory: item 7—a published series of lessons should be used so children can master some beginning reading materials; item 15—kindergarten reading should mainly develop
skills like identifying letter shapes and letter sounds; two items represented the Nativistic Theory: item 2--developing a child's interest and curiosity in books is the important goal in kindergarten, item 4--children will develop reading skills as they discover and explore a variety of materials; and two items represented the Cognitive Field Theory: item 1--listening to stories read out loud is important because it helps a child understand what written language is like, item 6--dictating their own stories and making their own books helps children learn to read.

In terms of priorities within the kindergarten program, where do parents and teachers place reading instruction? Do teachers feel the pressure that Margaret Early (1974, p. 708) indicated, "to teach reading first and foremost?" Do parents want "basics" like reading given first priority, as indicated by the Gallup (1977) poll? Reid (1972) has suggested that the teacher's conception of reading and its place in education will have an influence on the degree of emphasis and the time devoted to reading. One item, number 8, was related to priority: reading is the most important thing taught in school and deserves the most time.

Two items address the controversy of meaning versus sounds. Do parents or teachers endorse the view of Flesch (1955) and Bettina Rubicam (in Fisk 1977) regarding the essential nature of learning letter sounds? Or do parents and teachers recognize the position of many reading authorities who have advocated a
meaning-centered instruction (Smith, Goodman, and Meredith 1976, Smith 1971; Stauffer 1970; Nerbovig and Klausmeier 1974—all cited in Chapter 2)? One item reflected the first view, and a second the other view: item 10—if a child cannot read it's because the child has not learned phonics; item 13—children get a better start in reading by working with words and sentences that have meaning, rather than the letter sounds.

Proponents of highly-structured, teacher-centered, directive programs like Englemann's Distar (Aukerman 1971) have advocated another view. How do parents and teachers react to this more structured view: item 5—most learning occurs when the teacher strictly directs and controls the children and the lessons?

Several popular books and articles (Morris 1961; Englemann and Englemann 1966; Beck 1967) have suggested it is possible to increase a child's rate of learning and intellectual development. Others (Ginsburg and Opper 1969) have felt, however, that children who are presented experiences greatly beyond their level of cognitive development, simply transform the experience and do not really learn what is intended. How do parents and teachers feel regarding a child's rate of learning? This question was represented in item 11—a child's learning and intellectual development can be speeded up.

Items 16-26: Part 2 of the questionnaire was related to six research questions.
3-A: In which type of print media do parents most frequently find useful information about the teaching of reading?

3-B: In which type of print media do teachers most frequently find useful information about the teaching of reading?

3-C: Is there a significant difference between the indications of parents and teachers of the type of print media in which they most frequently find useful information about the teaching of reading?

4-A: Given a group of annotated titles, all relevant to the topics of children in kindergarten or to beginning reading instruction, which title will most frequently be selected by parents as a source of information?

4-B: Given a group of annotated titles, all relevant to the topics of children in kindergarten or to beginning reading instruction, which title will most frequently be selected by teachers as a source of information?

4-C: Is there a significant difference between the annotated title most frequently selected by parents, and the annotated title most frequently selected by teachers, with titles representing information on children in kindergarten, or on beginning reading.

Items 16 through 21 on the questionnaire represented the types of print media that parents and teachers might read, and the possible sources of useful information about the teaching of reading that they might consult:
16. In the daily or Sunday newspaper, how often do you find useful information about the teaching of reading?

17. In a parent or homemaker magazine (like Parent or Good Housekeeping), how often do you find useful information about the teaching of reading?

18. In an education journal or digest (like Childhood or Education Digest), how often do you find useful information about the teaching of reading?

20. In a book, booklet or pamphlet that is published by a national parent or teacher organization, how often do you find useful information about the teaching of reading?

21. Do you gain useful information about the teaching of reading from other sources?

Being open-ended, item 21 allowed subjects to identify any other source of useful information about the teaching of reading.

These questionnaire items, 16 to 21, were related to research questions 3-A, 3-B, and 3-C.

Items 22 to 26 on the questionnaire presented titles and annotated descriptions of articles. This type of item was previously used by Ruth Strang (1942, pp. 146-152) in the "Test of Interest in Magazine Titles." It was intended that these five items reveal the type of article most or least appealing to parents and teachers, and whether they might read the same things. The sources of these items will be described in the following paragraphs.
Item 22 suggested content related to understanding the child’s development of intelligence:

"The Child's Development of Intelligence" helps us to understand how children see the world at different ages, what to expect of them, and why they ask odd questions. This item was drawn from the work of Piaget (1969).

Item 23 suggested content explaining the development of language skills for reading:

"The Classroom Is a Language Lab" explains that language skills for reading are developed as children listen to stories, view films, study words, or write. This item was drawn from the work of R. V. Allen (1976) reflecting the Language Experience Approach.

Item 24 suggested somewhat of a "get tough" attitude by insisting that certain reading skills be taught, rather than accept remedies on readiness:

"Most Children Can Succeed" tells us to reject remedies involving time to mature or to develop readiness, when a child is not succeeding. Instead, insist that reading skills be taught. This item reflected the writing of Siegfried Englemann (1975) in Your Child Can Succeed.
Item 25 of the questionnaire described a learning kit of records for teaching phonics. This item reflected the advertisements found in the magazines reviewed:

"Listen and Learn with Phonics" describes a learning kit that reportedly makes reading easy. The child hears the letters or sounds on a record, sees them in a book, and repeats them.

Addressing the parent's role in reading, item 26 of the questionnaire portrayed an "expert's view" on the negative aspects of parents teaching children to read early, at home:

"Parents--What Role in Reading?" Experts say rushing into reading lessons can kill a child's interest. Instead, read and talk to the child and encourage curiosity. This item reflected the content of Geraldine Carro's (1977) column on "Preschoolers and Reading: What Role Should Parents Play in Reading" in the Ladies Home Journal, one of the magazines reviewed.

Pilot studies. In order to discover any difficulty subjects might find in understanding the directions or the items on the questionnaire, the instrument was evaluated in a pilot study. Twenty individuals, parents and teachers, participated in a critical reading of the instrument. Their comments and suggestions were fully considered, when the directions and many of the items were rewritten. Since numerous changes were made, a second
pilot was initiated with 10 individuals participating. Several additional changes were still required to clarify items and directions.

**Distribution and letters of approval.** After consulting the directors and kindergarten teachers regarding the best distribution method, the questionnaires were sent home with the children, as recommended. Assurances were granted by the directors and teachers that the children take messages home often, without experiencing losses. In order to facilitate returns, stamped, addressed envelopes accompanied the questionnaire, with parents given the option of returning completed questionnaires to their child's teacher, or putting them in the mail.

Directors of each of the participating kindergartens prepared a letter of approval, assuring parents that this research had their sanction. Therefore, all questionnaires were accompanied by such a letter, written and prepared by an administrator from each school.

Each home and each teacher received a packet containing these items: a subject's consent form which also included a description of this research, a letter of approval from the school, a questionnaire and a stamped envelope addressed to the researcher.

**The Interviews**

Fifteen parents and 15 teachers who had indicated consent were interviewed. The Subject's Consent form that accompanied
the questionnaire had a space provided to indicate such consent. The interview consisted of a set of questions that were intended to guide interaction between the researcher and the subjects. The interview was developed through structured and unstructured questions with responses noted in the Interview Guide (Appendix D).

The purpose of the interviews was to seek additional information besides that gained through the questionnaire. The interview as a research method is unique, according to Borg and Gall (1974), because it involves the collection of data which is the direct verbal interaction between two individuals. The interview allows the researcher to follow-up leads and obtain more data and greater clarity. Jackson and Rothney (1961) found two major advantages in using interviews as follow-up for questionnaires that had been mailed to 890 high school students. They found their subsample of 50 interviews to be particularly useful because: (1) a higher proportion of the sample completed the interview; and (2) the mean number of counseling problems identified from interview data was 8.82, as compared to 2.82 from questionnaire data.

Four sets of questions were included on the Interview Guide. An introductory sentence and in some instances questions were used to focus on a topic. The content of the set of questions that followed was drawn from ideas presented in the review of the literature, Chapter 2, and was directed toward gathering
data for specific research questions. These relationships are
described in the following passages.

Content of the interview. There were four sets of ques-
tions in the interview. In Question Set 1, the researcher con-
sidered the notions that parents and teachers have regarding
starting some reading activities prior to first grade. Do these
subjects indicate whether it is a good idea and whether reading
should have a high priority, as reported in the Gallup (1977)
poll? This content contributed data for research questions 2-A
and 2-B.

2-A. What notions regarding instructional practices for be-
   ginning reading are most frequently held by parents of
   kindergarten children?

2-B. What notions regarding instructional practices for be-
   ginning reading are most frequently held by teachers of
   kindergarten children?

Question Set 2 of the interview was developed around the
decision of when reading will be taught and how it will be
taught: who should make that decision, why should that individ-
ual decide, and how does the child enter into the decision? Do
the subjects hold the view that it is necessary to consider the
development, needs and experiences of the individual child
(Tinker and McCullough 1962), or do parents and teachers feel as
the teachers in Scherwitsky's (1974) research, that the respon-
sibility for making this decision should remain with the
teacher? And what are subjects' explanations for accepting or delegating this responsibility? The data gathered in this part of the interview were related to research questions 1-A and 1-B.

1-A. According to parents of kindergarten children, who should determine when and how reading will be taught in the kindergarten?

1-B. According to teachers of kindergarten children, who should determine when and how reading will be taught in the kindergarten?

In Question Set 3, subjects were first asked two introductory questions: what do you remember about learning to read; or, if they remembered nothing, a somewhat different question was posed: what is the earliest school experience that you remember? With this background, subjects were then asked: do you want similar experiences for today's children? These responses were intended to reveal whether parents or teachers want a return to "basic education" and the "good old ways of teaching," as several writers have indicated (Chasnoff 1964, Gallup 1977), or whether they want something "better" or "different" for today's children. Question Set 3 was related to research questions 2-A and 2-B.

2-A. What notions regarding instructional practices for beginning reading are most frequently held by parents of kindergarten children?
2-B. What notions regarding instructional practices for beginning reading are most frequently held by teachers of kindergarten children?

Question Set 4 of the interview asked subjects whether they remembered an article about reading that had made an impression on them, what the article was about, and whether they recalled the name of the publication. Further, subjects were asked where they find the most helpful information about the teaching of reading. Much has been written about education and reading, but what, if anything, has had a remaining impact on parents and teachers? Would the subjects be able to recall a specific reference? Of the media reviewed at the local library, which type of print media would be mentioned most often? The last question in the set, where do you find the most helpful information about the teaching of reading, allowed subjects to name a print media or some other source. This set of questions was related to research questions 3-A and 3-B.

3-A. In which type of print media do parents most frequently find useful information about the teaching of reading?

3-B. In which type of print media do teachers most frequently find useful information about the teaching of reading?

Classroom Observations

Observations of nine kindergarten classrooms were carried out by the researcher: one observation from each of the small
schools and two observations selected at random from each of the two large schools. Classrooms were observed for a minimum of 30 minutes. Following each observation, specific information was noted on an observation schedule. As indicated by Borg and Gall (1974), a researcher may choose to use an observation schedule that has been developed by another educational researcher. This is of particular advantage if the schedule has been used previously in other research. One such instrument was located and used: the "Check List for Kindergarten Learning Environment" (see Appendix A), developed by R. V. Allen (1976) who generously granted permission for its use in this research. The instrument was used previously by Vivian Cox (1971), in her doctoral research on: "Reciprocal Oracy-Literacy Recognition Skills in the Language Production of Language Experience Approach Children."

The "Check List for Kindergarten Learning Environment" was used in rating the extent to which the learning environment in each classroom had visible evidence that the Three Strands of a Language Experience Approach were being used. The Check List does not assess the non-visible aspects of the program. In fact, the descriptive variables on the Check List require little inference on the part of the observer. Instruments with this characteristic generally yield more reliable data, according to Borg and Gall (1974, p. 227). The Check List has three sections, with each section devoted to a set of observations related to one strand: Strand One, Experiencing Communication; Strand Two,
Studying Communication; and Strand Three, Relating Communication of Others to Self. Ten behaviors are listed for each of the Three Strands. Notations were indicated on the five-point scale, with the numbers representing the following:

0. Did not exist at time of observation.
1. Present, but on a restricted basis.
3. Present during observation. Continuing part of program.
4. Superior performance of part observed. Essential part of program.

Scores on each strand indicated to what degree the classroom environment was satisfying the basic requirements of a Language Experience Approach. Data collected on this Check List were related to research question 5.

5. Based on classroom observations by the researcher, what is happening during reading instruction in the private kindergartens observed?

Analysis of the Data

Both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data were used.

Quantitative Analysis

When the questionnaires were completed by the subjects and returned to the researcher, they were sorted into two groups:
parent respondents and teacher respondents. Data from the 26 items were treated individually. Items in Part 1 of the questionnaire had lettered response choices which were converted to numerical data: SA = 5, A = 4, U = 3, D = 2, and SD = 1. Items in Part 2 of the questionnaire had numerical response choices and were tabulated as indicated: 5, 4, 3, 2, or 1. The completed questionnaires from the parent subjects and the teacher subjects were treated in this manner: (1) frequencies of parent responses and frequencies of teacher responses were tabulated in order to determine the most frequently occurring responses; (2) means of parent subjects' responses and teacher subjects' responses were calculated and reported to indicate central tendency; (3) standard deviations were determined for parent responses and teacher responses in order to describe the distribution about the mean; and (4) chi square was used to determine the significant differences between parents' and teachers' responses.

In order to meet the requirements for a meaningful chi square when degrees of freedom are greater than 1, described by Sidney Siegel (1956, pp. 104-111), adjacent response categories were combined to increase the expected frequencies. Cells were only combined in instances where fewer than 20% of the cells had an expected frequency of less than 5 or if any cell had an expected frequency of less than 1, a procedure recommended by Siegel (1956, p. 110) and others (Downie and Heath 1970, p. 207).
On many items a whole category received no response which automatically reduced the number of cells and the degrees of freedom.

Scored notations on the observation instrument, the "Check List for Kindergarten Learning Environment" (Allen 1976, pp. 485-489), provided a mean score for each Strand and a total mean score. These were calculated and reported for each school. Using the 0 to 5 point scale provided on the instrument, a raw score total was calculated for each variable included in Strand I, Strand II and Strand III. The 10 variables in each Strand were then ranked from 1 to 10. These rankings allowed description of what was most prevalent and what was not.

Qualitative Analysis

Data gathered through 15 parent and 15 teacher interviews and questionnaire item 21 were described through classification, a process described by Good and Scates (1954, pp. 493-547). Classification was employed both in the sense of forming categories and in the sense of placing individual responses into classes or subclasses. Those responses which appeared to represent the same general notion were grouped together, and statements were then formulated that incorporated those elements of sameness. When a subject's response included several key ideas, each key idea was classified. Where a logical division could be discovered, subclasses were formed and where useful, frequencies were reported. This process of grouping responses reduced the
number of individual items to be considered, and, in essence, revealed common properties and facilitated description.

This research primarily appraised existing status or conditions by describing selected factors related to reading in the kindergarten. The research procedures used to gather data from parents, teachers and kindergarten classrooms, as well as the treatment of that data, have been described in this chapter. In Chapter 4, the results of this research will be described.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The findings which resulted from questionnaires, interviews and observations are reported in this chapter. Research questions, posed originally in Chapter 1, form the organizational structure of the content. The 13 research questions are grouped according to related topics: 1-A, 1-B and 1-C are concerned with who makes the decisions regarding when and how reading will be taught in the kindergarten; 2-A, 2-B and 2-C incorporate notions related to instructional practices for beginning reading; 3-A, 3-B and 3-C deal with print media as a useful source of information about the teaching of reading; 4-A, 4-B and 4-C involve the selection of annotated titles; and 5 concerns classroom observations of reading instruction.

Data were gathered through quantitative and qualitative measures, the latter needing further introduction. In order to describe groups of diverse and sometimes lengthy responses, individual parent and teacher responses were classified, a process described by Good and Scates (1954, pp. 493-547). Those responses which seemed to deal with the same general notion were grouped together, and statements were then formulated to incorporate those essential elements of sameness. When responses
included more than one major idea, each major idea was classified. Further, where a logical division could be determined, subclasses were formed.

**Research Questions 1-A, 1-B and 1-C**

1-A. According to parents of kindergarten children, who should determine when and how reading will be taught in the kindergarten?

Data on parent views related to this research question were gathered through three questionnaire items and interviews. Data gained from the questionnaires are presented in Table 1.

As shown in Table 1, parents in this sample most frequently responded "disagree" to item 9, "agree" to item 12 and "agree" to item 14. Stating these findings another way, 61% "disagreed" with the statement that "a parent knows the true ability of a child and should decide what the child can learn and when." Of the respondents, 42% "agreed" that "teachers are trained educators and should decide how reading will be taught in their classes," but a large group, 28%, indicated they were "undecided." With an apparent strong sense of agreement, 52% "agreed" and 25% "strongly agreed" that "maturity and readiness are the key factors in determining when a child starts instruction in reading." From these data, it seems possible to conclude that most parents want teachers to make the decisions about
Table 1. Statistical Data from Parent Responses to Questionnaire Items 9, 12 and 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Frequency of Response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. A parent knows the true ability of a child and should decide what the child can learn and when.</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>1 9 22 68 12</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Teachers are trained educators and should decide how reading will be taught in their classes.</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>14 47 31 17 2</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>.962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Maturity and readiness are the key factors in determining when a child starts instruction in reading.</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>28 58 12 11 2</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>.957</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
reading instruction and to base those decisions on a child's maturity and readiness.

Further data related to this research question were gained through Question Set 2 of the parent interviews. When 15 parents were asked: Who do you think should decide when reading will be taught and how it will be taught? nine answered "teachers" and six answered "parents and teachers." Two follow-up questions were posed: Why should that person decide, and how should the child enter into the decision?, with parents' classified responses presented in Table 2 and Table 3.

As noted in Table 2, 60% of the parents interviewed were willing to let teachers make the decision about starting reading instruction, while 40% expressed a desire for cooperation between parents and teachers.

When the content of the responses, presented in Table 2, is examined, there is evidence that eight responses, 53%, reveal a desire for parents' views to be considered. Parents' full responses are listed in Appendix H.

Parents were also asked about how the child should participate in the decision regarding the initiation of reading instruction. Their responses were classified and are presented in Table 3.

In Table 3, parents' responses were classified into two categories: 50% seem to reflect a child-centered approach, while 50% reflect what might be called a child-directed approach, and 10% did not know how the child should participate in the decision.
Table 2. Classification of Parent Interview Responses to: Why Should that Person Decide?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>N = 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers observe and compare individual children to determine readiness.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents lack realistic understanding of their child's capabilities.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers should also consider parents' views.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents lack knowledge of the learning-to-read process.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers have professional background.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents and Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is need for a cooperative decision and effort.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Classification of Parent Interview Responses to: How Should the Child Enter into the Decision?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The child exhibits readiness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When ready, the child will show interest and eagerness for learning to read.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readiness is not dependent on a birthday.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults should determine readiness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test and evaluate child's readiness.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child should not have the power of decision.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N = 15.

1-B. According to teachers of kindergarten children, who should determine when and how reading will be taught in the kindergarten?

As with parents' views, those of teachers were investigated through three questionnaire items, with the results presented in Table 4.

Data presented in Table 4 reveal a nearly unanimous 95% of the teachers who participated "disagreed" with the statement that "a parent knows the true ability of a child and should decide what the child can learn and when." Teachers' views appear somewhat divided, however, when considering "teachers are trained
Table 4. Statistical Data from Teacher Responses to Questionnaire Items 9, 12 and 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. A parent knows the true ability of a child and should decide what the child can learn and when</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>0.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Teachers are trained educators and should decide how reading will be taught in their classes.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>1.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Maturity and readiness are the key factors in determining when a child starts instruction in reading.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>0.976</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
educators and should decide how reading will be taught in their classes," with 44% "agreeing" and 32% "disagreeing." Teachers reacted very positively to the idea that "maturity and readiness are the key factors in determining when a child starts instruction in reading," by "strongly agreeing" with this statement 47% of the time and "agreeing" 37% of the time.

The data suggest that the kindergarten teachers in this study are unsure about making the decision regarding when and how reading instruction will be taught, but are sure that parents should not make the decision. They do seem confident, however, that a child's maturity and readiness are the key factors in this decision.

Teachers' responses to Question Set 2 of the interview are also relevant to this research question. The resultant data are presented in three tables: Table 5 reports the frequency of responses to a structured question--who should decide when and how reading will be taught? Table 6 and Table 7 present a classification of responses to the two open-ended questions that followed--why should that person decide, and how should the child enter into the decision of when and how reading will be taught?

As noted in Table 5, 47% of the teachers indicated "teachers" should make the decisions about reading instruction, but 47% indicated the decisions should be made by others--"parents" or "somebody else." Only one individual indicated it should be a joint decision of "parents and teachers."
Table 5. Frequency Data from Teacher Responses to Interview Question Set 2: Who Do You Think Should Decide When Reading Will Be Taught and How It Will Be Taught?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents and Teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somebody Else</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N = 15.

Individual explanations of why that person should decide were classified, in the same manner as were responses by parents, with Table 6 presenting the data.

Data in Table 6 indicate that 47% of the teachers interviewed felt teachers should make the decisions regarding reading instruction, for reasons that are generally related to teachers' professional preparation and experience, but 27% of the responses suggest these teachers would have other professional educators and researchers make the decisions. Only a few, 13%, recognized that parents make the decision when selecting a particular kindergarten.

Table 7 presents classified responses to the question of how the child enters into the decision of when and how reading will be taught.
Table 6. Classification of Teacher Responses to Follow-Up Question: Why Should that Person Decide?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>N = 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents make that decision when selecting a kindergarten and its reading program.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers observe and compare individual children to determine readiness.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents lack realistic understanding of a child's capability.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents are the most concerned but teachers have professional training.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents and Teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is need for a cooperative decision and effort.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somebody Else</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional educators and researchers have experience with children and knowledge of reading.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child does it. We don't teach them to read, we merely help.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7. Classification of Teacher Interview Responses to the Follow-Up Question: How Should the Child Enter into the Decision?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The child exhibits readiness.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When ready, the child will show interest and eagerness for learning to read.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults should determine readiness.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test and evaluate child's readiness.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N = 15.

Data in Table 7 suggest a general agreement among the group of teachers interviewed, 93%, that the child will enter into the decision by demonstrating his/her readiness through interest and eagerness for learning to read.

1-C. Is there a significant difference between parents' and teachers' views regarding who should determine when and how reading will be taught in the kindergarten?

Chi-square analysis was used to test the significance of differences between parent and teacher responses. In order to meet the requirements for a meaningful chi-square (Siegel 1956, p. 10), cells were combined, where feasible, if more than 20% of the cells had an expected frequency of less than five, or if any cell had an expected frequency of less than one. The only
combinations included: tallying "strongly agree" with "agree," tallying "strongly disagree" with "disagree," the adjoining groups.

Data from parent and teacher responses to three pertinent questionnaire items are presented in Table 8.

As shown in Table 8, the differences between parents' and teachers' views on these three questionnaire items were not significant.

Research Questions 2-A, 2-B and 2-C

2-A. What notions regarding instructional practices for beginning reading are most frequently held by parents of kindergarten children?

A high priority question which must be considered in planning a kindergarten reading program is: what is the purpose of the reading program? Six questionnaire items address this question and reflect three theoretical positions, as described by Canady (1976): items 9 and 15 are related to Behavioristic Theory, items 2 and 4 reflect Nativistic Theory, and items 1 and 6 represent Cognitive Field Theory. Data from these six items are featured in Table 9 and Table 10.

As described in Tables 9 and 10, the most frequent response to each of these six questionnaire items was either "agree" or "strongly agree." However, the most positive response was given to item 1, with 67% of the parents indicating they
Table 8. Chi-Square Analysis of Parents' and Teachers' Responses to Questionnaire Items 9, 12 and 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item Number</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Significance (Rejected at .05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"strongly agree" and 29% "agreeing" with the importance that listening to stories plays in learning to read. A high mean of 4.62 and a narrow standard deviation of .603 illustrate further their consensus.

The weakest argument was found in item 15, suggesting that parents are less sure about kindergarten reading emphasizing letters and sounds. In item 15, the most frequent response, "agree," claimed 50% of the responses and "strongly agree" received 13%. Those who marked "undecided," "disagree" or "strongly disagree" comprised 37% of the responses.

Their agreement with all six statements suggests that parents' notions about instructional purposes are eclectic rather than tied to a given theoretical position.

Instructional priorities were a second notion investigated in this research. The question of where parents place reading among kindergarten priorities was assessed through
Table 9. Statistical Data from Parent Responses to Questionnaire Items 7, 15, 2 and 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Frequency of Response</th>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. A published series of lessons should be used so children can master some beginning reading materials.*</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>38 46 19 18 1</td>
<td>4.00 0.940</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Kindergarten reading should mainly develop skills like identifying letter shapes and letter sounds.*</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>15 56 14 23 4</td>
<td>3.49 1.074</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Developing a child's interest and curiosity in books is the important goal in kindergarten.**</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>48 43 5 14</td>
<td>4.08 1.135</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Children will develop reading skills as they discover and explore a variety of materials.**</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>40 51 15 4 1</td>
<td>4.13 0.843</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Items 7 and 15 reflect Behavioristic Theory.

**Items 2 and 4 reflect Nativistic Theory.
Table 10. Statistical Data from Parent Responses to Questionnaire Items 1 and 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Listening to stories read out loud is important because it helps a child understand what written language is like.*</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>.603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Dictating their own stories and making their own books helps children learn to read.*</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.880</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These items reflect Cognitive Field Theory.
questionnaire item 8. Data related to that notion are presented in Table 11.

The parents in this study appear to give reading a very high priority, with 37% indicating they "strongly agree" and 31% indicating they "agree" that reading is the most important subject and deserving of the most time.

The third notion investigated is related to the controversy of meaning versus sounds. What notion do parents hold regarding the essential nature of phonics in reading and the value of a meaning-centered approach? Data related to these views are presented in Table 12.

Perhaps recognizing the presence of other important factors, 44% of the parents "disagreed" that a deficiency in phonics is the reason some children cannot read. Parents' notions seem largely undecided or negative, 75% of the responses, toward the value of working with words and sentences in beginning reading.

How children learn was the fourth notion researched. Parents' notions about the way children learn were investigated through three questionnaire items. Data on these items are presented in Table 13.

As responses indicate in Table 13, these parents have apparently accepted Piaget's tenet of a child's active involvement for better learning, with 77% indicating a positive response to item 3. A structured view was not endorsed by a large number of parents in this study, since 40% "disagreed" and 10% "strongly
Table 11. Statistical Data from Parent Responses to Questionnaire Item 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. Reading is the most important thing taught in school and deserves the most time.</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.425</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12. Statistical Data from Parent Responses to Questionnaire Items 10 and 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Frequency of Response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. If a child cannot read it's because the child has not learned phonics.</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2  20  26  49  15</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>.995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Children get a better start in reading by working with words and sentences that have meaning, rather than the letter sounds.</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>6  14  42  41  7</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>.955</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13. Statistical Data from Parent Responses to Questionnaire Items 3, 5 and 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Frequency of Response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Children learn better when active and involved than when sitting still and listening.</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>44 42 15 10</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>.945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Most learning occurs when the teacher strictly directs and controls the children and the lessons.</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>8 20 28 45 11</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>1.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. A child's learning and intellectual development can be speeded up.</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>20 61 21 9 1</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>.858</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
disagreed" that most learning occurs in a teacher-controlled situation. Parents most frequently "agreed" with the popularly held notion that learning and intellectual development can be speeded up.

Question Sets 1 and 3 of the parent interviews add further data toward describing parental notions about beginning reading in the kindergarten. Question Set 1 invited views on starting reading activities in the kindergarten and views on the most important thing children learn in kindergarten. Question Set 3 investigated the notions parents have regarding their personal learning experiences and whether today's children should have similar experiences.

Asked how they felt about initiating beginning reading activities in the kindergarten, 73% of the parents interviewed said it was a good idea and 27% expressed uncertainty. Frequencies of these interview responses as well as a classification of parents' reasons for their position are presented in Table 14.

As noted in Table 14, parents who indicated the early start in reading was a good idea felt so for reasons that were primarily classified into two categories: they felt children should start when ready for it, and they viewed it as academic preparation for first grade. Many of the responses expressed concern for the child to possess "readiness skills" or to simply be "ready." Parents appeared to lack concern for any harmful effects related to a too early start. One overall concern,
Table 14. Classification of Parent Interview Responses to: How Do You Feel about the Idea of Starting Beginning Reading Activities in the Kindergarten? Why Do You Feel that Way?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>N = 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It's a good idea.</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Viewed as academic preparation for first grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First grade teachers expect children to have readiness skills.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better prepared for first grade.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puts them ahead in first grade.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some unregimented preparation is good.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Start reading as children are ready for it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child is sounding out letters and forming words.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child has learned in kindergarten.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child is anxious to read.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If child has readiness skills, it may be wrong to hold them back.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some children are ready to develop reading concepts.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test children and start when ready.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those who are ready will start without pressing skills development.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided or don't know.</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Depends on maturity and readiness of child.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Sought a kindergarten with unstructured reading program.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--No experience with reading in kindergarten.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
revealed in both positive and uncertain responses, was parental awareness of individual differences.

Responding to an interview question, parents named those things that children learn in kindergarten which they considered most important. Their responses were classified and are presented in Table 15, while a full listing of their responses will be found in Appendix D.

Parents' categorized responses, noted in Table 15, suggest the most important things children learn in kindergarten are related to personal attitudes and social behavior. Their most frequent response within that category suggests parents saw learning to get along with others in the school environment—other children and teachers—as the most important experience children gained from kindergarten.

Question Set 3 of the interview provided additional information about the notions parents in the study have about instructional practices for beginning reading. The interview questions were directed toward this inquiry: do parents want today's kindergarten children to have the kind of educational experiences they had as children, possibly a return to "basic education," or do they want something "better" or at least "different" for their children? Of the 15 parents interviewed, 60% responded "yes," indicating they want similar experiences for today's children, 20% responded "no" and 20% were undecided or did not know. A follow-up question asked for an explanation of
### Table 15. Classification of Parent Interview Responses to: What Is the Most Important Thing that Children Learn in Kindergarten?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop personal attitudes and social behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn to get along with others in a school environment</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn to listen and follow directions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The desire to read</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realize their capability</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a positive self-concept</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a love for learning and school</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain educational experiences and academic skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonics</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some basics</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readiness</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shapes and configuration</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N = 15.
their response: why is that? Parents' single or multiple responses were classified and are presented in Table 16, with their full responses listed in Appendix D.

The information presented in Table 16 suggests that most parents in this study want instructional practices that will lead their beginning readers to enjoy learning to read and to find pleasure in reading thereafter. Their concern was not for a return to stricter, more demanding classroom situations. The conclusion might also be drawn from parents' comments that they expect today's reading instruction to be superior to that which they received as children.

2-B. What notions regarding instructional practices for beginning reading are most frequently held by teachers of kindergarten children?

Teachers' notions on four topics related to instructional practices, previously reported for parents, were investigated: the purpose of a kindergarten reading program, the priority of reading within the instructional program, the value of phonics or a meaning-centered approach in beginning reading instruction, and the way that kindergarten-age children learn.

Six questionnaire items attempt to describe teachers' notions about the purpose of a kindergarten reading program, with items related to three theoretical positions: Behaviorist, Nativistic and Cognitive Field Theories. Data from teachers' responses are presented in Table 17.
### Table 16. Classification of Parent Interview Responses to: Do You Want Today's Children to Have Similar Experiences (in Learning to Read)? Why Is that?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>N = 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--View reading and learning to read with warm, positive attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was an enjoyable experience.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want them to find joy and pleasure in reading.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--See the need for present-day changes or additions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Today's children don't seem to love reading.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And more things like Sesame Street.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be in small groups with less regimentation.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--View their early reading experiences negatively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn't look forward to going to school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want my children to enjoy school and be eager to learn.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see faults in the way I learned.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word association is better than memorization like I had.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Don't know or undecided</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--It should be better, easier and quicker for today's children.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--My first grade wasn't good, but second was fantastic.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17. Statistical Data from Teacher Responses to Questionnaire Items 7, 15, 2 and 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Frequency of Response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. A published series of lessons should be used so children can master some beginning reading materials.*</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3 4 1 10 0</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Kindergarten reading should mainly develop skills like identifying letter shapes and letter sounds.*</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5 10 - 3 1</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>1.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Developing a child's interest and curiosity in books is the important goal in kindergarten.**</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4 3 3 8 -</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Children will develop reading skills as they discover and explore a variety of materials.**</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7 9 3 - -</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>0.713</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Items 7 and 15 reflect Behavioristic Theory.

**Items 2 and 4 reflect Nativistic Theory.
Unlike parent respondents, teachers showed disagreement with two items: 67% indicated they "disagree" with item 7, the need for a published series of lessons, and 53% "disagreed" with the statement that the important goal in kindergarten is the development of interest and curiosity about books. Teachers gave their most positive responses to item 1, with 74% indicating "strong agreement" with the value of reading stories aloud to children.

Although somewhat eclectic, according to the findings reported in Tables 17 and 18, the teachers who participated in this study agreed with both items that were intended to reflect Cognitive Field Theory, items 1 and 6, represented in Table 18. These teachers appear to recognize that listening to stories read aloud helps children understand concepts related to written language; and also, that dictating stories and making personal books play a role in helping children learn to read. Their agreement is illustrated by a mean of 4.74 and a standard deviation of .592 for item 1, as well as a mean of 3.94 and a standard deviation of .872 for item 6.

What priority will teachers assign to reading in their kindergarten program? Data from item 8, related to this question, are described in Table 19.

As noted in Table 19, teachers appear not as willing to assign a high priority to reading, as parents are. Although the most frequent response was "disagree," 33% of responses, the
Table 18. Statistical Data from Teacher Responses to Questionnaire Items 1 and 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Listening to stories read out loud is important because it helps a child understand what written language is like.*</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>.592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Dictating their own stories and making their own books helps children learn to read.*</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.872</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These items reflect Cognitive Field Theory.
Table 19. Statistical Data from Teacher Responses to Questionnaire Item 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>Frequency of Response</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. Reading is the most important thing taught in school and deserves the most time.</td>
<td>18 5 5 2 6 -</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.248</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
combined agreement categories account for 55% of teacher choices, as reflected in the mean of 3.50.

How do teachers stand on the controversy of meaning versus sound in beginning reading? Data were gathered reflecting the two views and are presented in Table 20.

As shown in Table 20, the majority of participating teachers, 84% of respondents, disagreed with the statement which cites a lack of phonics as the cause if a child cannot read. Disagreement was also registered on item 13, suggesting that these teachers fail to recognize the value of a meaning-centered approach.

As part of their professional preparation, teachers study various theories of learning. With classroom experience, do their notions on children's learning reflect Piaget, Englemann, or popular publications that tout the idea of increasing a child's intelligence? Data gained from three questionnaire items that touch on the three views are presented in Table 21.

More than half of the teachers, 53%, responded with strong agreement to item 3, suggesting they believe "children learn better when active and involved." Thinking along the same line, disagreement, 47%, was shown toward the need for the teacher to strictly direct and control the lesson; however, respondents seemed indecisive on the issue of whether a child's learning and development can be speeded up.
Table 20. Statistical Data from Teacher Responses to Questionnaire Items 10 and 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>Frequency of Response</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. If a child cannot read it's because the child has not learned phonics.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Children get a better start in reading by working with words and sentences that have meaning, rather than the letter sounds.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>.820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>s.d.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Children learn better when active and involved than when sitting still and listening.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>.933</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Most learning occurs when the teacher strictly directs and controls the children and the lessons.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>1.216</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. A child's learning and intellectual development can be speeded up.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>.976</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional information, of a qualitative nature, was sought through Question Sets 1 and 3 of the teacher interviews. In Question Set 1, the 15 teachers interviewed were asked how they felt about the idea of starting beginning reading activities in the kindergarten. Eighty percent said it was a good idea, 13% said it was not a good idea, and 7% said they were undecided or didn't know. In Table 22, frequencies are reported following these responses, along with classified responses to the follow-up question: "why do you feel that way?"

The classified responses presented in Table 22 suggest that the teachers who participated in the interviews view the reading activities in the kindergarten favorably. They do so for reasons that can be categorized into three groups: they view it as academic preparation for first grade, they see it as an opportunity to capitalize on the young child's facility with learning, but the largest number of responses indicate they see the need to start because most children are ready to start instruction or will start reading by themselves.

Teachers were also asked to cite the most important thing they felt children learned in kindergarten. Their diverse responses have been classified and are presented in Table 23; however, teachers' complete responses are included in Appendix D.

As shown in Table 23, the teachers in this study view learning to listen and follow directions, and learning to get along with others in a school environment as the most important
Table 22. Classification of Teacher Responses to: How Do You Feel about the Idea of Starting Beginning Reading Activities in the Kindergarten? Why Do You Feel that Way?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It's a good idea</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Viewed as academic preparation for first grade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. It introduces child to phonics and other first grade reading skills.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because children are grouped at the beginning of first grade.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Start reading as children are ready for it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most children are ready for it</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children can handle readiness concepts and beginning activities.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children who are ready will start without pressing skill development.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reason to limit what children are exposed to or hold them back.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Take advantage of young child's facility with learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The earlier children are exposed, the easier it is to learn.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's not a good idea</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--All right if a child starts reading himself, but no program of instruction.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Other instruction can be more helpful than specific skills and regular program.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided or don't know</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Some but not all children are ready.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 23. Classification of Teacher Interview Responses to: What Is the Most Important Thing that Children Learn in Kindergarten?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop personal attitudes and social behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn to listen and follow directions.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn to get along with others in a school environment.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a good self-concept.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aids maturity.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation from parents for a short period of time.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing religious convictions.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining a sense of learning as fun.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain educational background and academic skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamentals of reading.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-reading skills.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter recognition and sounds.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widen experiences through field trips.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N = 15.
things a child learns in kindergarten. Eight-four percent of teachers' responses cited attitudinal factors as most important, while 16% cited factors related to educational background and academic skills as the most important.

The classification of teachers' responses, in Table 24, lends additional information, helpful in describing teachers' notions regarding instructional practices for beginning reading. Teachers were asked to comment on whether they would like today's children to have similar learning experiences to their own, and why.

Eight of their comments reflect teachers' warm, positive attitudes toward learning to read and reading: to have the same kind of enjoyable experience, to learn without pressure, and to find joy and pleasure in reading. This group of teachers also indicated in four responses that they would like phonics to be included in the instructional program, while two responses touched on the need for a creative, imaginative environment. From the group of teachers interviewed in this study, there seems little evidence that kindergarten teachers are rejecting present instructional practices for a "return to basics." Only one comment expresses a need for "some of the traditional--basic math, English and rules," and even this comment adds the proviso: but with "some of the new freedom and creativity." A listing of teachers' full responses is included in Appendix D.
Table 24. Classification of Teacher Interview Responses to:
Do You Want Today's Children to Have Similar Experiences to Your Own (in Learning to Read)?
Why Is that?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>N = 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--View reading and learning to read with warm, positive attitude</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was an enjoyable experience.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want children to find joy and pleasure in reading.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was no pressure.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--See the need for present day changes or additions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They can learn phonics, too.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But teachers can do more creative things.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--view their early reading experiences negatively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was cold and unimaginative.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want children to have different experiences.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--See the need for certain types of learning experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They need a good phonics program.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know or undecided</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--A pleasant experience, but with phonics.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Some of the traditional--basic math, rules and English--but some of the new freedom and creativity.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2-C. Is there a significant difference between parents' and teachers' notions regarding instructional practices for beginning reading?

Chi-square analysis of questionnaire items related to this research is reported in Table 25.

It will be noted in Table 25 that significant differences between parents' and teachers' notions about instructional practices were indicated on four questionnaire items. There were highly significant (.001) differences on two items related to the purpose of a kindergarten reading program: parents tended to agree and teachers to disagree with the need for a published series of lessons to aid children in mastering some beginning reading materials (item 2), an item reflecting Behavioristic Theory; while teachers tended to disagree and parents to agree that developing a child's interest and curiosity in books is the important goal in kindergarten reading instruction (item 7), an item reflecting Nativistic Theory.

A very significant difference (.01) was noted between parents' and teachers' responses to the statement: if a child cannot read it's because the child has not learned phonics (item 10). Although both groups tended to disagree with this statement, teachers disagreed more strongly.

Also significant (.02) were the differences between parents' and teachers' responses to item 11: a child's learning and
Table 25. Chi-Square Analysis of Parent and Teacher Questionnaire Responses Regarding Instructional Practices for Beginning Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>$X^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Significance (Rejected at .05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27.813</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.038</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.654</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.380</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.803</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.747</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.750</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning versus Sounds</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.875</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.990</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.194</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.857</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.341</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
intellectual development can be speeded up. A significantly
larger group of parents agreed with this item than did teachers.

Further investigation of these significant differences
was conducted through additional chi-square analysis. The ques­
tion was posed: where chi-square analysis has indicated a sig­
nificant difference between parent and teacher responses, are
there significant differences between parents' responses when
grouped by school's geographical area? The parents were grouped
as follows:

1. Parents from kindergarten A, one school located south­
east (N = 40).
2. Parents from kindergarten B, one school located south
   (N = 34).
3. Parents from kindergartens C, D, E, F and G, five small
   schools located north, northeast and northwest (N = 38).

These findings are reported in Table 26.

When chi-square analysis was used to test the differences
between the responses of three groups, the data reported in Table
26 were realized. The differences between parents' responses,
when they are grouped according to school and geographical area,
appear insignificant.

Research Questions 3-A, 3-B and 3-C

3-A. In which type of print media do parents most frequently
find useful information about the teaching of reading?
Table 26. Chi-Square Analysis of Differences between Parent Responses to Questionnaire Items 2, 7, 10 and 11, when Grouped According to School and Geographical Location (Three Groups)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>$X^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Significance (Rejected at .05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.035</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.734</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>.362</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.227</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where do parents read about reading instruction? In order to gather this information, parents were asked to indicate on six questionnaire items how often they might find useful information about the teaching of reading in selected types of print media. The findings are reported in Table 27 and Table 28.

Tables 27 and 28 reveal that in terms of finding useful information on the teaching of reading, the two most frequent responses by parents were: they rarely find it in newspapers and they sometimes find it in parent or homemaker magazines.

Since the responses to these six questionnaire items are not normally distributed, the frequencies have been illustrated graphically and are presented in Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

It seems apparent in the six figures that the parents in this study identify no single type of print media or other...
Table 27. Statistical Data from Parent Responses to Questionnaire Items 16, 17 and 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Frequency of Response*</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16. In the daily or Sunday newspaper how often do you find useful information about the teaching of reading?</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>.650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. In a parent or homemaker magazine (like Parent or Good Housekeeping), how often do you find useful information about the teaching of reading?</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>2 12 54 28 12</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>.886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. In an education journal or digest (like Childhood or Education Digest), how often do you find useful information about the teaching of reading?</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>7 26 24 11 27</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>1.330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response mode: 5 = very frequently, 4 = often, 3 = sometimes, 2 = rarely, 1 = never.
Table 28. Statistical Data from Parent Responses to Questionnaire Items 19, 20 and 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19. In a general interest magazine (like People, Ebony, or Reader's Digest), how often do you find useful information about the teaching of reading?</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>.917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. In a book, booklet or pamphlet that is published by a national parent or teacher organization, how often do you find useful information about the teaching of reading?</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Do you gain useful information about the teaching of reading from other sources?</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.248</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response mode: 5 = very frequently, 4 = often, 3 = sometimes, 2 - rarely, 1 = never.
source where they will frequently find useful information about the teaching of reading. As can be seen, the distribution in Figure 3 (item 18) and in Figure 5 (item 20), is bimodal; however, three graphs—Figure 1 (item 16), Figure 2 (item 17) and Figure 4 (item 19)—picture a distribution that is skewed to the right. Only the distribution that is portrayed in Figure 6 (item 21) approximates symmetry.

Do parents gain useful information about the teaching of reading from sources other than the types named in questionnaire items 16-20? Recognizing this as a possibility, questionnaire item 21 included provision for a write-in response. Thus, in addition to indicating the frequency with which they might use other sources, space was provided to name any additional sources which they used. Thirty-four parents named one or more sources they found useful. A classification of those write-in responses is presented in Table 29.

Of the four categories, print media is the largest category of classified responses presented in Table 29, and of that group books are the most frequent source cited. Further, the type of book most often listed was a textbook from previous university courses. Why Johnny Can't Read (Flesch 1955) was the only book specifically named. The second most popular source listed was personal contacts and personal experiences, with 12 parents indicating they get useful information by talking with teachers. In that same category, six revealed "other parents" as
Figure 1. Frequency of Parent Responses to Questionnaire Item 16: In the Daily or Sunday Newspaper, How Often Do You Find Useful Information about the Teaching of Reading? (N = 112)
Figure 2. Frequency of Parent Responses to Questionnaire Item 17: In a Parent or Homemaker Magazine How Often Do You Find Useful Information about the Teaching of Reading? (N = 108)
Figure 3. Frequency of Parent Responses to Questionnaire Item 18: In an Education Journal or Digest, How Often Do You Find Useful Information about the Teaching of Reading? (N = 95)
Figure 4. Frequency of Parent Responses to Questionnaire Item 19: In a General Interest Magazine, How Often Do You Find Useful Information about the Teaching of Reading? (N = 109)
Figure 5. Frequency of Parent Responses to Questionnaire Item 20: In a Book, Booklet or Pamphlet that is Published by a National Parent or Teacher Organization, How Often Do You Find Useful Information about the Teaching of Reading? (N = 94)
Figure 6. Frequency of Parent Responses to Questionnaire Item 21: Do You Gain Useful Information about the Teaching of Reading from Other Sources? (N = 97)
Table 29. Classification of Parent Write-In Responses to Questionnaire Item 21: Other Sources of Useful Information about the Teaching of Reading*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Print media</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books from university courses</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library and personal book collection</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's books and magazines</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional materials from organizations</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology and child development books</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Johnny Can't Read</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal contacts and experiences</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with teachers</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with other parents</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences with own children</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other people</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching experiences</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional situations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School meetings</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectures and workshops</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training in education</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-print media</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read-along records</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N = 34.*
a useful source, and five described experiences with their own children as a source of information.

Auxiliary data, related to this research question, were gathered through a series of four interview questions. Question Set 4 investigated what subjects recalled reading about reading—subject matter that impressed them and specific information about that publication. It also investigated what subjects considered their most helpful source of information on the teaching of reading.

During the interviews, 15 parents were asked whether they recalled something about reading that had made an impression on them. The 10 parents who responded "yes" were then asked to recall the subject matter and to explain what the article was about. The responses of the seven parents recalling reading content were classified and are presented in Table 30. Of those seven, four parents were able to provide additional information about the name of the publication. This specific information was classified and is noted in Table 31.

As noted in Table 30, parents' descriptions of reading content that had made an impression on them was classified into five nearly equal categories: that related to the way children learn, that reporting success in early reading, that focusing concern on reading, that related to instructional practices, and that addressing some phase of reading readiness.
Table 30. Classification of Parent Interview Responses to: What Was that Article About (Something About Reading that Made an Impression on You)?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Related to the way children learn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That maybe we're pushing kids too early.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Montessori schools.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting success in early reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding that pre-first grade reading works very well</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood preschool finds reading success with lettered blocks.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing concern on reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter reversals may be a sign of dyslexia.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report on the poor reading abilities of older children.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related to instructional practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonics.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pros and cons about phonics.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some phase of reading readiness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read aloud to children because it helps them learn to read.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N = 9.*
Table 31. Classification of Parent Interview Responses to: Do You Recall the Name of the Publication (that Made an Impression on You)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Books</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phonics in Proper Perspective</strong> <em>(Heilman 1965)</em></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Montessori, A Modern Approach</strong> <em>(Lillard 1972)</em></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Secret of Childhood</strong> <em>(Montessori 1963)</em></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Periodicals</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ladies Home Journal</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Life</strong> <em>(a church publication)</em></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>News Publications and Features</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parade</strong> <em>(the magazine section of the newspaper)</em></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N = 4.*
Noted in Table 31, parents recalled seven sources of reading content that had had an impression on them: three books, three periodicals and one newspaper magazine section.

Where they find "the most useful information about the teaching of reading" was the subject of the last interview question in Set 4. The responses of 14 parents were classified and are presented in Table 32. One parent's response, while interesting, was not classified. To the question regarding the finding of useful information, this parent responded: "I don't look for it! Parents depend on the teachers knowing what's best. Really, it's the teacher's responsibility."

The data presented in Table 32 suggest that the parents in this study gain the most helpful information about reading from their child's teacher, from a friend who teaches, from other mothers, or from visiting and observing in the classroom—from these and other named sources that involve personal contacts and personal experiences. Print media, the second largest category of responses, accounted for only 17% of the sources stipulated.

It seems appropriate to conclude that parents gain some information about reading from print media and very little from non-print media. The bulk of their information on the teaching of reading appears to come from situations in which there is personal contact and interaction.
Table 32. Classification of Parent Interview Responses to: Where Do You Find the Most Helpful Information about the Teaching of Reading?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal contacts and experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child's teacher</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A friend who teaches</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other mothers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting and observing in the classroom</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A relative who teaches reading</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher conferences</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellow workers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with children</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-to-Read information from the State Department of Education</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education journals</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionally directed instructional situations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses in school</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-print media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N = 14.
3-B. In which type of print media do teachers most frequently find useful information about the teaching of reading?

On items 16-21 of the questionnaire, the kindergarten teachers were also asked to indicate how useful they found several types of print media, useful in terms of providing information about the teaching of reading. Data from teachers' responses are presented in Table 33 and Table 34.

As might be anticipated, the participating kindergarten teachers indicated they most frequently find useful information about the teaching of reading in "an education journal or digest." Of the types of print media cited, their least useful source appears to be "a book, booklet or pamphlet" that is published by a national parent or teacher organization.

In questionnaire item 21, respondents were given the option of naming another source of information they found useful. Only three teachers provided this additional information. Their responses were classified and are presented in Table 35.

As noted in Table 35, the three teachers who named "other sources" they found useful mentioned three types of print media and one instructional situation. Additional data on this research question and specific sources, more representative of the kindergarten teachers in the study, was gained through the interviews.

Further data, related to research question 3-B, were gathered through teacher interviews. As previously described for
Table 33. Statistical Data for Teacher Responses to Questionnaire Items 16, 17 and 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16. In the daily or Sunday Newspaper, how often do you find useful information about the teaching of reading?</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>.548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. In a parent or homemake magazine (like Parent or Good Housekeeping), how often do you find useful information about the teaching of reading?</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. In an education journal or digest (like Childhood or Education Digest), how often do you find useful information about the teaching of reading?</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response mode: 5 = very frequently, 4 = often, 3 = sometimes, 2 = rarely, 1 = never.*
Table 34. Statistical Data for Teacher Responses to Questionnaire Items 19, 20 and 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Frequency of Response*</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. In a general interest magazine (like People, Ebony, or Reader's Digest), how</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>often do you find useful information about the teaching of reading?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. In a book, booklet or pamphlet that is published by a national parent or</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher organization, how often do you find useful information about the teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of reading?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Do you gain useful information about the teaching of reading from other</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sources?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response mode: 5 = very frequently, 4 = often, 3 = sometimes, 2 = rarely, 1 = never.
Table 35. Classification of Teacher Responses to Questionnaire

Item 21: Other Sources of Useful Information about
the Teaching of Reading*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Print media</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library references</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher's Guide from readiness program</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books from university courses</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional situations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading conferences</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N = 3.

parents, 15 teachers were interviewed, and the series of four questions in Set 4 posed. Of 15 teachers, 13 indicated having read something about reading that made an impression on them. A query investigating the content of the recalled article, netted a group of varied responses which were classified and are described in Table 36.

As indicated in Table 36, teachers most frequently recalled content which was classified within three categories: that related to the way children learn, that concerning some phase of reading readiness, and that related to instructional practices.
Table 36. Classification of Teacher Interview Responses to:
What Was that Article about? (Something about Reading that Made an Impression on You)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Related to the way children learn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every child does not learn the same way.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children need concrete experiences.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Piaget's work.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children are different at different stages of development.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting success in early reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young children can be taught to read.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing concern on reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some high school graduates cannot read.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related to instructional practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonics.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight vocabulary.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's literature.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modular teaching and individualization.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some phase of reading readiness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without pressure, children will read when ready.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When children should start to read.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading stories aloud helps children learn to read.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete experiences help preschoolers learn to read.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N = 13.
Twelve of the teachers interviewed were able to identify the name or the type of print media in which they had read the specific selection. These data are presented in Table 37, and reveal that the recalled items were most often from a daily publication—either the newspaper or its magazine section, Parade, while the remaining 62% were evenly divided between books and periodicals.

Continuing the investigation of sources that teachers find useful, the final question of the interview asked where they find "the most helpful information about the teaching of reading." Teachers' responses were classified and are presented in Table 38.

The data in Table 38 show that teachers most frequently name useful sources of information that can be categorized as "professionally directed instructional situations." Within that category, workshops and college or university courses were the most frequently named. Two large categories shared almost equally in the remaining 60% of teacher responses. Teachers indicated that talking with other teachers as well as teaching and working with children were the most helpful "personal contacts and experiences," while the Lippincott Teacher's Guide and special newspaper articles appear the most helpful "print media."

It seems possible to conclude that the teachers in this study tap a variety of resources in finding helpful information about the teaching of reading, but their preferred source is a workshop or college and university courses.
Table 37. Classification of Teacher Responses to: Do You Recall the Name of the Publication(s) (that Made an Impression on You)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Books</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dare to Discipline (Dobson 1970)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's books</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A book on Piaget</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Periodicals</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology Today</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader's Digest</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>News Publications and Features</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parade (the magazine section of the newspaper)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N = 10.
Table 38. Classification of Teacher Responses to: Where Do You Find the Most Helpful Information about the Teaching of Reading?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professionally directed instructional situations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or university courses</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University reading conferences</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student teaching</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal contacts and experiences</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with other teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and working with children</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A friend who teaches reading</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching materials that have been collected</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten consultant</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations in classroom situations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Print media</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lippincott Teacher's Guide</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special newspaper articles</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books about early childhood education</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher magazines</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education journals</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-print media</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tapes from the Lippincott program</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* N = 15.
3-C. Is there a significant difference between parents' and teachers' indications of the type of print media in which they most frequently find useful information about the teaching of reading?

Chi-square analysis of parents' and teachers' responses to the six related questionnaire items, items 16-21, produced the results presented in Table 39.

As indicated in Table 39, chi-square analysis revealed that the differences between parents' and teachers' responses, regarding the usefulness of certain types of print media as sources of information about the teaching of reading, were significant on two items: item 16, the daily or Sunday newspaper, and item 21, other sources.

When the frequencies of parent responses (Table 26) and teacher responses (Table 33) to item 16 are compared, it seems possible to conclude that the teachers in this study considered the daily or Sunday newspaper more useful than did parents. Likewise, when the frequencies of parent responses (Table 27) and teacher responses (Table 34) to item 21 are compared, it appears that a significant number of teachers considered "other sources of information" more useful than did parents.

Research Questions 4-A, 4-B and 4-C

4-A. Given a group of annotated titles, all relevant to the topics of children in kindergarten or to beginning
Table 39. Chi-Square Analysis of Parent and Teacher Responses to Questionnaire Items 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21: in Certain Types of Print Media, How Often Do You Find Useful Information about the Teaching of Reading?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Significance (rejected at .05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16. In the daily or Sunday newspaper . . . ?</td>
<td>6.498</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. In a parent or homemaker magazine . . . ?</td>
<td>2.173</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. In an education journal or digest . . . ?</td>
<td>6.777</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. In a general interest magazine . . . ?</td>
<td>2.463</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. In a book, booklet or pamphlet that is published by a national parent or teacher organization . . . ?</td>
<td>2.583</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Do you gain useful information about the teaching of reading from other sources?</td>
<td>12.254</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
reading instruction, which titles will most frequently be selected by parents as a source of information?

On five such items, parents were asked to indicate how frequently they would read each kind of article, with articles represented by a title and annotation. Data gathered from these five questionnaire items, items 22-26, are presented in Table 40 and Table 41.

As noted in Tables 40 and 41, parents indicated they would most frequently read the kind of article represented in item 22, "The Child's Development of Intelligence." The second most frequent choice was that entitled "Parents--What Role in Reading?" It seems interesting to note that parents indicated more interest in an article on intelligence than in one addressed specifically to parents. On the other hand, parents seemed least interested in item 24, "Most Children Can Succeed," which, in essence, subscribes to rejecting the concept of reading readiness and developmental differences.

4-B. Given a group of annotated titles, all relevant to the topics of children in kindergarten or to beginning reading instruction, which title will most frequently be selected by teachers as a source of information?

Teachers were also asked to indicate how frequently they would read the kind of article represented in questionnaire items 22-26. The findings are reported in Tables 42 and 43.
Table 40. Statistical Data from Parent Responses to Questionnaire Items 22, 23 and 24: Would You Read This Kind of Article for Useful Information?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22. &quot;The Child's Development of Intelligence&quot;: helps us understand how children see the world at different ages, what to expect of them, and why they ask odd questions.</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>.998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. &quot;The classroom is a Language Lab&quot;: explains that language skills for reading are developed as children listen to stories, view films, study words, or write.</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>1.222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. &quot;Most children can Succeed&quot;: tells us to reject remedies involving time to mature or to develop readiness, when a child is not succeeding. Instead, insist that reading skills be taught.</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>1.109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response mode: 5 = very frequently, 4 = often, 3 = sometimes, 2 = rarely, 1 = never.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25. &quot;Listen and Learn with Phonics&quot;: describes a learning kit that reportedly makes reading easy. The child hears the letters or sounds on a record, sees them in a book, and repeats them.</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>1.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. &quot;Parents--What Role in Reading&quot;: experts say rushing into reading lessons can kill a child's interest. Instead, read and talk to the child and encourage curiosity.</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>.964</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response mode: 5 = very frequently, 4 = often, 3 = sometimes, 2 = rarely, 1 = never.
With high mean values and narrow standard deviations on three questionnaire items, shown in Tables 42 and 43, it appears that teachers would quite frequently select the kinds of articles represented in item 22, "The Child's Development of Intelligence," in item 23, "The Classroom Is a Language Lab," and in item 26, "Parents--What Role in Reading?" Like the parents in this study, teachers seemed least interested in the content of questionnaire item 24, entitled "Most Children Can Succeed."

4-C. Is there a significant difference between the annotated title most frequently selected by parents, and the annotated title most frequently selected by teachers, with titles representing information on children in kindergarten, or on beginning reading.

A chi-square analysis of the difference between parent and teacher responses to questionnaire items 22-26 resulted in the findings reported in Table 44.

As noted in Table 44, chi-square analysis indicated there were significant differences between parents' and teachers' responses to questionnaire item 23, "The Classroom Is a Language Lab," and item 24, "Most Children Can Succeed." The differences between items 22, 25 and 26 were not significant.

When the frequency of parent responses to item 23 (Table 40) is compared to that of teachers (Table 42), it seems possible to conclude that teachers are significantly more interested in
Table 42. Statistical Data from Teacher Responses to Questionnaire Items 22, 23 and 24: Would You Read This Kind of Article for Useful Information?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Frequency of Response*</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22. &quot;The Child's Development of Intelligence&quot;: helps us understand how children see the world at different ages, what to expect of them, and why they ask odd questions.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9 6 4 2 1</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. &quot;The Classroom is a Language Lab&quot;: explains that language skills for reading are developed as children listen to stories, view films, study words, or write.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7 11 1 2 1</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>.582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Most Children can Succeed&quot;: tells us to reject remedies involving time to mature or to develop readiness, when a child is not succeeding. Instead, insist that reading skills be taught.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4 2 4 4 5</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>1.152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response mode: 5 = very frequently, 4 = often, 3 = sometimes, 2 = rarely, 1 = never.
Table 43. Statistical Data from Teacher Responses to Questionnaire Items 25 and 26: Would You Read This Kind of Article for Useful Information?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>Frequency of Response*</th>
<th>Mean s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25. &quot;Listen and Learn with Phonics&quot;: describes a learning kit that reportedly makes reading easy. The child hears the letters or sounds on a record, sees them in a book, and repeats them.</td>
<td>19 6 7 4 2 -</td>
<td>3.89 1.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. &quot;Parents—What Role in Reading&quot;: experts say rushing into reading lessons can kill a child's interest. Instead, read and talk to the child and encourage curiosity.</td>
<td>19 9 6 4 - -</td>
<td>4.26 .784</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Response mode: 5 = very frequently, 4 = often, 3 = sometimes, 2 = rarely, 1 = never.
Table 44. Chi-Square Analysis of Parent and Teacher Responses to Questionnaire Items 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26: Would You Read This Kind of Article for Useful Information?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Significance (rejected at .05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23. &quot;The Classroom Is a Language Lab&quot;</td>
<td>8.690</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. &quot;Most Children Can Succeed&quot;</td>
<td>8.135</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. &quot;Listen and Learn with Phonics&quot;</td>
<td>1.023</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. &quot;Parents--What Role in Reading?&quot;</td>
<td>1.380</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

reading about the development of language skills in the classroom. On the other hand, when parent and teacher responses (Table 40 and Table 42) to item 24 are compared, the difference appears to lie in the large number of parents who indicated they would "sometimes" read an article encouraging the rejection of remedies involving maturation and readiness when a child does not succeed. Although neither group manifests strong interest in item 24, parents appear significantly more interested than teachers.
Research Question 5

5. Based on classroom observations by the researcher, what is happening during reading instruction in the private kindergartens observed?

Classroom activities and instruction were observed in nine kindergarten classrooms, with observations noted on the five-point scale of the "Check List for Kindergarten Learning Environment," an instrument developed by R. V. Allen (1976, pp. 485-488). The Check List was used to rate the extent to which each instructional situation had visible evidence of the Three Strands of a Language Experience Approach, the type of pre-first grade reading instruction recently recommended by the Interorganizational Committee (1977). For each classroom observed, a mean score was calculated on each of the three Strands, and a total mean was also calculated. These findings are reported in Table 45.

R. V. Allen (1976, p. 485) explained the interpretation of the Check List score as follows: "the closer the total mean score is to 4.00, the nearer the classroom environment is to satisfying basic requirements for a language experience approach." Conversely, it seems possible to conclude that the classroom environment lacks some of the basic requirements for a Language Experience Approach when the total mean score is equal or less than 2.00, as shown on 89% of the classrooms reported in Table 45.
Table 45. Mean Scores of Classroom Observations on the "Check List for Kindergarten Learning Environment": Three Strands of the Language Experience Approach*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School and Classroom</th>
<th>Strand I**</th>
<th>Strand II**</th>
<th>Strand III**</th>
<th>Total Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-1</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Allen (1976).

**Scoring scale: 0 = did not exist at time of observation; 1 = present but on a restricted basis; 2 = present during observation, not a continuing part of program; 3 = present during observation, a continuing part of program; 4 = superior performance of part observed, an essential part of program.
In order to describe which characteristics of the Language Experience Approach are most often observed in the classrooms visited, the 10 characteristics of each Strand have been ranked according to the combined frequency of observed behaviors in the nine classrooms. These data, noted on the "Check List for Kindergarten Learning Environment," are presented in six tables: Tables 46 and 47, Strand I (Experiencing Communication); Tables 48 and 49, Strand II (Studying Communication); Tables 50 and 51, Strand III (Relating Communications of Others to Self).

Strand I emphasizes the real language of the learner which is deemed basic to the development of reading as well as other communication skills. The data on Strand I characteristics, noted in Tables 46 and 47, reveal that all children in the classrooms observed appear "free from the fear of using incorrect language," and in 77% of the classrooms there were "obvious opportunities for each child to participate comfortably with home-rooted language." Also, most learning situations offered children "opportunities to respond to meanings not represented by symbol systems--weather, color, shape, size, texture, emotion, sound, motion." In none of the classrooms observed, however, were children given an "opportunity to listen to their own language recorded on tape."

Strand II emphasizes an understanding of how language works and includes studying the structure of language, style and form, non-alphabetic symbols, and extending vocabularies. It is
Table 46. Statistical Data for Observations in Nine Classrooms on the "Check List for Kindergarten Learning Environment": Strand I--1, 2, 3, 4 and 5*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Scoring Scale**</th>
<th>Raw Score</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is there obvious opportunity for each child to participate comfortably with home-rooted language when talking to &quot;share&quot; with the group?</td>
<td>1 1 - - 7</td>
<td>29 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is the real language of the children used as part of the room environment through dictated stories and books?</td>
<td>8 1 - - -</td>
<td>1 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Are children free from fear of using incorrect language?</td>
<td>- - - - 9</td>
<td>36 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is space and time provided for children to express their ideas with many media?</td>
<td>1 3 - 4 1</td>
<td>19 4.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Is space and time provided for children to participate in puppetry, dramatizations, and pantomime?</td>
<td>7 1 - - 1</td>
<td>5 7.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Allen (1976).

**Scoring scale: 0 = did not exist at time of observation; 1 = present but on a restricted basis; 2 = present during observation, not a continuing part of program; 3 = present during observation, a continuing part of program; 4 = superior performance of part observed, an essential part of program.
Table 47. Statistical Data for Observations in Nine Classrooms on the "Check List for Kindergarten Learning Environment": Strand I--6, 7, 8, 9 and 10*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Scoring Scale**</th>
<th>Raw Score Total</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Are there adequate tactile and visual models available for naming, describing, and discussing?</td>
<td>1 6 - 2 -</td>
<td>12 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Do children have opportunity to listen to their own language recorded on tapes?</td>
<td>9 - - - -</td>
<td>0 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Is there opportunity for children to respond rhythmically to music?</td>
<td>4 - 1 -</td>
<td>19 4.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Do children dictate, observe the writing, and illustrate books that are useful in the classroom?</td>
<td>7 1 - - 1</td>
<td>5 7.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Do children have opportunities to respond to meanings in their environment not represented by symbol systems--weather, color, shape, size, texture, emotion, sound, motion?</td>
<td>1 - - 5 3</td>
<td>27 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Allen (1976).

**Scoring scale: 0 = did not exist at time of observation; 1 = present but on a restricted basis; 2 = present during observation, not a continuing part of program; 3 = present during observation, a continuing part of program; 4 = superior performance of part observed, an essential part of program.
possible to conclude from the ranked characteristics of Strand II, shown in Tables 48 and 49, that many of the children in the observed classrooms have opportunities to "respond to language structures such as rhythm, beginning sounds, and predictive sentence patterns;" and further, that some are given opportunities to respond to non-alphabetic symbols in clocks, maps, numerals, graphs and calendars. On the other hand, children whose natural speech was characterized by "gross errors" were seldom offered alternatives, the item ranking tenth.

Strand III emphasizes the influence of the language and ideas of many people on the personal language of the individual child. It includes written, spoken, representational and symbolic systems of language. Ranking first in the variables related to Strand III, presented in Tables 50 and 51, it seems possible to conclude that all kindergarten classrooms observed provided "many types of books" for "browsing and reading together," and in most classrooms it was customary to read stories and poems "to and with children" daily. However, in none of the classrooms observed were children given opportunities to look in a variety of places for information on the same topic, in essence, to pursue a special interest or a curiosity.

This chapter has described the findings that resulted from questionnaires, interviews and observations. The next chapter will provide a summary of the rationale and research procedures, will state conclusions that are based on the reported
Table 48. Statistical Data for Observations in Nine Classrooms on the "Check List for Kindergarten Learning Environment": Strand II—1, 2, 3, 4 and 5*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Scoring Scale**</th>
<th>Raw Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Are children encouraged to &quot;read&quot; and respond to their environment through their senses—hearing, smelling, tasting, and seeing.</td>
<td>4 5 - - -</td>
<td>5 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are children given the opportunity to learn to respond to non-alphabetic symbols in clocks, maps, numerals, graphs, and calendars?</td>
<td>- 4 1 3 1</td>
<td>19 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do children engage in conversation to discuss topics such as names of letters, words, and sentences?</td>
<td>2 4 - 1 2</td>
<td>15 3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are children acquiring vocabularies of names of things, words of action, and words in many descriptive categories?</td>
<td>5 3 - 1 -</td>
<td>6 7.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Strand II—1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
** Scoring Scale: 0 = not observed, 1 = rarely observed, 2 = observed occasionally, 3 = observed frequently, 4 = observed consistently.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Scoring Scale**</th>
<th>Raw Score</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Is vocabulary being extended through teacher modeling, mediating, and offering alternatives.</td>
<td>4 4 1 - -</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Allen (1976).

**Scoring scale: 0 = did not exist at time of observation; 1 = present but on a restricted basis; 2 = present during observation, not a continuing part of program; 3 = present during observation, a continuing part of program; 4 = superior performance of part observed, an essential part of program.
Table 49. Statistical Data for Observations in Nine Classrooms on the "Check List for Kindergarten Learning Environment": Strand II--6, 7, 8, 9 and 10*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Scoring Scale**</th>
<th>Raw Score</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Is there obvious emphasis on developing an awareness of words of highest frequency?</td>
<td>5 2 - - 2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Are alternatives offered to children whose natural speech is characterized by gross errors?</td>
<td>8 1 - - -</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Do children respond to language structures such as rhyming, beginning sounds, and predictive sentence patterns?</td>
<td>2 1 - 1 5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Do children have opportunities to identify labels and other words in printed form?</td>
<td>3 3 - - 3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Do children have time and place to explore writing by tracing, copying, and writing independently?</td>
<td>4 2 - 1 2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Allen (1976).

**Scoring scale: 0 = did not exist at time of observation; 1 = present but on a restricted basis; 2 = present during observation, not a continuing part of program; 3 = present during observation, a continuing part of program; 4 = superior performance of part observed, an essential part of program.
Table 50. Statistical Data for Observations in Nine Classrooms on the "Check List for Kindergarten Learning Environment": Strand III--1, 2, 3, 4 and 5*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Scoring Scale**</th>
<th>Raw Score</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Are many types of books available for browsing and reading together?</td>
<td>- - - 1 8</td>
<td>35 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are stories and poems read to and with children every day?</td>
<td>1 1 - 1 5</td>
<td>24 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Are films and filmstrips used to bring children in contact with the language and ideas of others?</td>
<td>5 1 - 1 2</td>
<td>12 5.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do children have access to records and tapes that accompany books?</td>
<td>3 2 - 4 -</td>
<td>14 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do children have opportunity to repeat words, phrases, and sentences of other authors as they listen to reading of language that is different from their home-rooted language?</td>
<td>6 1 - 1 1</td>
<td>8 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Allen (1976).

**Scoring scale: 0 = did not exist at time of observation; 1 = present but on a restricted basis; 2 = present during observation, not a continuing part of program; 3 = present during observation, a continuing part of program; 4 = superior performance of part observed, an essential part of program.
Table 51. Statistical Data for Observations in Nine Classrooms on the "Check List for Kindergarten Learning Environment": Strand III--6, 7, 8, 9 and 10*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Scoring Scale**</th>
<th>Raw Score</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Do children have opportunity to add to the ideas of others as they listen to stories and poems?</td>
<td>4 2 - 2 1</td>
<td>12 5.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Are art prints, musical compositions, photographs, and other creative materials available for personal interpretation with personal language?</td>
<td>2 7 - - -</td>
<td>7 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Are choral readings, finger plays, songs, and rhymes a part of the language program to bring children to contact with other's language?</td>
<td>4 - - - 5</td>
<td>20 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Do children have the opportunity to look in a variety of places for information on the same topic?</td>
<td>9 - - - -</td>
<td>0 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. Do children have opportunity to evaluate communication of others—real from imaginary, fact from fantasy, poetry from prose?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Scoring Scale**</th>
<th>Raw Score</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 - - - 1</td>
<td>4 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Allen (1976).

**Scoring scale: 0 = did not exist at time of observation; 1 = present but on a restricted basis; 2 = present during observation, not a continuing part of program; 3 = present during observation, a continuing part of program; 4 = superior performance of part observed, an essential part of program.
findings of this chapter, will suggest implications for education, and will offer recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter (1) summarizes the rationale and research procedures used in this investigation, (2) lists conclusions and summarizes major findings as they relate to research questions and conclusions, (3) offers some implications, and (4) makes some recommendations for further research.

Summary

This study identified, analyzed and described selected factors presently influencing reading instruction in the kindergarten. This was achieved by investigating the views and notions of parents of kindergarten children and teachers of kindergarten children, and by observing kindergarten classes.

Historically the kindergarten has been a play school, a child-centered environment that provided unstructured opportunities for learning and growth during the year prior to first grade. There are today, however, currents of influence that pull the kindergarten away from an unstructured program and toward a curriculum that includes highly structured pre-reading skills. Public interest in reading has been manifested in recent years by large expenditures for federal programs, and by the number of
popular volumes, periodicals and news articles addressing the subject of reading. In the same vein, education at all professional levels has demonstrated concern for reading through the proliferation of reading courses in teacher-training institutions across the nation, through state certification requirements in elementary as well as secondary reading, through the growth of professional organizations and journals whose major concern is reading and the language arts, and in the increased number of professionally authored publications on the process, products and practices related to reading. By their existence and sheer volume, it seems highly probable that these factors have influenced the thinking of parents and teachers who have reasons for personal interest in early childhood education. In turn, the views and notions of parents and teachers will influence the type of reading instruction that children receive in kindergarten, the one assumption on which this research is based.

As this research was initiated, certain parent-teacher factors were identified that might reveal parents' and teachers' views on significant issues related to the instructional program and reading in the kindergarten: (1) decisions about initiating reading instruction, (2) notions regarding instructional practices for beginning reading, (3) type of print media used as a source of information on reading, and (4) educational topics that appear most attractive to readers. Further, looking for the relationship between what is voiced and what is practiced,
(5) certain factors in the kindergarten classroom environment were also observed and evaluated. These selected factors form the basis of the 13 research questions that were first presented in Chapter 1, and later in Chapters 3 and 4.

Data were collected from 19 Huntsville, Alabama kindergarten teachers and teaching-directors, and their pupils' parents. Subject selection was based on volunteer participation by first the school and later the individual. The directors and teachers of seven private schools, 16 classrooms, and 112 parents cooperated in the conduct of this research, during the spring of 1978. The seven schools (two large and five small) had an average classroom enrollment of 19 children and represented seven geographically different sections of the city. Kindergarten directors described the population their school served as "diverse," mostly "middle class," "upper middle class," mostly "city residents," but some "rural residents." According to the directors, the major emphasis of their instructional program was: preparing the child for the next grade level (3), developing the child's high self-concept (2), offering opportunities for social adjustment (1), and providing a wholesome atmosphere (1). Of the 16 teachers who participated, eight held state certification, and 11 had undergraduate degrees. Most schools reported using varied means to communicate with parents: newsletters, conferences, home visitation, parent orientation, workshops, notes, telephone calls and personal contacts.
Multiple data collection strategies were used: (1) a 26 item questionnaire (Appendix C), written by the researcher and revised after pilot studies, was completed by all subjects (19 teachers and teaching-directors and 112 parents); (2) 15 parents and 15 teachers, randomly selected from the subjects indicating permission, were interviewed using the structured and unstructured questions included on the Interview Guide (Appendix D), written by the researcher; and (3) observations of 16 kindergarten classrooms were noted on the "Check List for Kindergarten Learning Environment" (Appendix A), created by R. V. Allen (1976). Questionnaire items were an outgrowth of the review of the literature, Chapter 3, and the interview, intended to provide additional information, allowed the researcher to follow-up leads, obtain more data and achieve greater clarity. The observation instrument was used in rating the extent to which the learning environment had visible evidence that the Three Strands of a Language Experience Approach were being used.

Both quantitative and qualitative analysis were used to treat the data. Statistical analysis for each of the 26 items on the completed questionnaires, for parents' responses and teachers' responses, included frequencies, means, standard deviations, and chi-square, used to determine the significance of differences between parents' and teachers' responses. Raw score totals, means and rankings were provided from scored notations on the observation instrument: "Check List for Kindergarten Learning
Environment" (Allen 1976). Data gathered through parent and teacher interviews were described through classification, with frequencies provided where useful.

Conclusions

In view of the results of the investigation and within the limitations of the study, the following conclusions and ancillary findings appear justified. The 13 research questions are restated to incorporate the present conclusions and each is followed by a discussion of the findings.

1-A. According to parents of kindergarten children, the child's maturity and readiness should determine when and teachers should determine how reading will be taught in the kindergarten.

On the basis of questionnaire (Table 1) and interview data (Table 2), it seems possible to conclude that most parents want teachers to take the responsibility for decisions about initiating reading instruction; however, in a large group of interview responses (40%), parents expressed the need for cooperative decision and effort between parents and teachers. Further examination of their classified interview responses to, why should that person decide (Table 2), offers evidence that (1) a majority (53%) want parents' views to be considered and (2) most recognize the teacher's professional background and experience with children prepares them for making these decisions.
Considering the data in Tables 1 and 3, from questionnaires and interviews, the conclusion may be drawn that parents are strongly convinced, like Tinker and McCullough (1962), that the child's maturity and readiness are the key factors in determining the appropriate time to start instruction. During the interviews, it was surprising to find that a majority of parents expected their child to exhibit readiness by showing interest and eagerness for learning to read (Table 3). From these responses it seems possible to infer that parents are aware that all children are not ready for the same instruction at the same time, that there are, indeed, individual differences.

1-B. According to teachers of kindergarten children, the child's readiness and maturity are key factors in the decision but teachers, professional educators and researchers should determine when and how reading will be taught in the kindergarten.

Teachers shared the view with parents, that a child's maturity and readiness are key factors in beginning reading instruction, a judgment rendered on the basis of data from questionnaires (Table 4) and interviews (Table 7). Teachers were also in general agreement (93%) that the child will enter the decision by demonstrating his or her readiness.

Lacking consensus on the issue of who should determine when and how reading will be taught in the kindergarten, teachers
indicated by their questionnaire responses (Table 4), that it should decidedly not be the parents, and, with 50% agreement, that it could be the teachers. Responding to this question during the 15 teacher interviews, seven named teachers, two named parents, five named somebody else, and one named parents and teachers. Teachers' classified responses (Table 6) provide further definition of "somebody else" as professional educators and researchers. Unlike Scherwitsky's (1974) teachers, who felt the decision should remain with them, these teachers apparently prefer to share with other educators the responsibility for this decision.

The evidence suggests that teachers have less confidence in their own professional capabilities than parents have. On the other hand, since neither group named themselves by majority, it could be an instance of neither parents nor teachers wanting the personal responsibility for the decisions regarding when and how reading will be taught in the kindergarten.

That parents and teachers could work together in making these decisions seems a possibility. In their interview responses, teachers (Table 5) revealed much less interest in making these decisions a joint parent-teacher effort than did parents (Table 2). It seems evident that the greatest benefit for the child and the instructional program would be derived from a spirit of cooperation. One parent stated it quite well: "If the teacher starts in school and gets no back-up from home, it doesn't
work as well as it could. Working together is best" (Appendix D, Interview Question Set 2).

1-C. There are no statistically significant differences between parents' and teachers' questionnaire responses regarding who should determine when and how reading will be taught in the kindergarten.

Using chi-square to test the significance of differences between parent and teacher responses to the three pertinent questionnaire items, no statistically significant differences were found (rejected at .05). The conclusion may be drawn that no statistically significant differences were discovered on the basis of the three items addressing the issue of determining when and how reading will be taught in the kindergarten. Had this research been restricted to the data gained from questionnaires, this would have been the singular conclusion on this issue. By including interview data as well, greater insights, previously described, were gained.

2-A. The notions most frequently held by parents of kindergarten children regarding instructional practices for beginning reading are:

1. A published series of lessons should be used so children can master some beginning reading materials (questionnaire item 7, Table 9).
2. Kindergarten reading should include skills like identifying letter shapes and sounds (questionnaire item 15, Table 9).

3. Developing a child's interest and curiosity in books is an important kindergarten goal (questionnaire item 2, Table 9).

4. Children will develop reading skills as they discover and explore a variety of materials (questionnaire item 4, Table 9).

5. Listening to stories is extremely important in helping a child understand the concept of written language (questionnaire item 1, Table 10).

6. Dictating personal stories and creating books help children learn to read (questionnaire item 6, Table 10).

7. Reading is the most important subject taught in school and deserves the most time (questionnaire item 8, Table 11).

8. If a child cannot read, it is not necessarily because the child lacks phonics (questionnaire item 10, Table 12).

9. It seems doubtful that children get a better start in reading by working with words and sentences that have meaning, rather than the letter sounds (questionnaire item 13, Table 12).
10. Children learn better when actively involved than when sitting still and listening (questionnaire item 3, Table 13).

11. Most learning does not occur in a situation where the teacher strictly controls the children and the lessons (questionnaire item 5, Table 13).

12. A child's learning and intellectual development can be speeded up (questionnaire item 11, Table 13).

13. If children are ready, it's a good idea to start beginning reading activities in the kindergarten (Interview Question Set 1, Table 14).

14. Developing personal attitudes and social behavior are the most important experiences gained in kindergarten (Interview Question Set 1, Table 15).

15. Instructional practices should lead children to enjoy learning to read and reading (Interview Question Set 3, Table 16).

16. Reading instruction for today's children should achieve the warm, positive attitudinal factors of the past, but provide better instructional practices (Interview Question Set 3, Table 16).

Data gathered through 112 questionnaires and 15 parent interviews led to these 16 conclusions which describe parents' views on selected instructional practices for beginning reading in the kindergarten. The source of data which was the basis for
each conclusion, as well as the table in which the statistical data were reported, are identified within parentheses following each stated conclusion.

Six questionnaire items and their resultant conclusions (1 to 6) addressed the question of purpose: what is the purpose of the reading program? The six items were intended to represent three theoretical positions: Behavioristic, Nativistic, and Cognitive Field, as described by Canady (1976). Rather than a view supporting one theoretical position, parents' responses suggest an eclectic view.

A second area investigated was priorities, with parents indicating strong support for reading as "the most important thing taught in school," a view previously identified in the Gallup (1977) poll, and one that "deserves the most time." Holding these views, it could be inferred that parents would, as Early (1974, p. 708) described, pressure teachers "to teach reading first and foremost." This was not borne out in the interviews, however, where parents described the most important thing learned in kindergarten as good personal attitudes and social behavior (Interview Question Set 1, Table 15). It seems judicious to take the position that parents are keenly interested in their children learning to read, but not to the detriment of their personal attitude toward reading and school. One does not necessarily follow the other, since reading could be given a high priority without sacrificing affective factors.
The controversy of meaning versus sounds was the third topic investigated within instructional practices. A majority of parents disagreed with the statement, if a child cannot read it's because the child has not learned phonics, perhaps recognizing the presence of other important factors and leading to conclusion number 8. As previously indicated in the second conclusion, parents revealed a desire that "kindergarten reading should include skills like identifying letter shapes and sounds." To some extent, parents do endorse the views on phonics that have been associated with Flesch (1955), Rubicam (in Fisk 1977), Gagné (in Williams 1973), and Lippincott's readiness materials. Apparently, parents are unaware of any of the reasons, previously cited by Smith, Goodman, and Meredith (1976), that phonic methods have fallen into disfavor. In none of the interviews, for example, was one derogatory statement made about "phonics" or "sounding out letters."

Findings indicated that parents are not fully cognizant of the three types of information that the reader uses simultaneously. While Goodman (1974), Durkin (1976a), and booklets for parents like Your Child and Reading (Houghton Mifflin 1973), have described the use of grapho-phonetic, syntactic and semantic information in reading, most parents recognize only the grapho-phonetic as the beginning stage of reading instruction: they do not comprehend the value inherent in working with words and sentences that have meaning, the basis for the ninth conclusion.
A review of parents' interview responses (Appendix D) reveals that "phonics" or "sounding out letters" were mentioned only six times, word association twice and references to syntactic or semantic information never. It seems highly likely that, as one parent said, "Most parents don't know enough about the process of learning to read: (Interview Question Set 2, Appendix D).

How children learn, the fourth topics associated with instructional practices, was investigated through three questionnaire items. Statistical data on responses to item 3 (Table 13) revealed parents' acceptance of a view consistent with Piaget's, that a child's active involvement contributes to better learning. Findings reported on questionnaire item 5 (Table 13) indicated that a large number of parents reject the notion that most learning occurs in a teacher-controlled situation, but their agreement with item 11 (Table 13) indicated a belief in the popularly held notion that learning and intellectual development can be speeded up (Englemann and Englemann 1966, Beck 1967). These findings on parent notions are reflected in conclusions 10, 11 and 12. This general statement seems justified: on some notions associated with children's learning, parental views reflect current educational thought, but on others they do not.

Data from parent interviews, Question Sets 1 and 3, provided additional information on notions associated with instructional practices and led to conclusions 13, 14, 15 and 16.
Interview questions posed in Set 1 sought parents' reactions to starting beginning reading activities in the kindergarten and to the most important thing children learn in kindergarten. Seventy-three percent of the parents interviewed felt it was a good idea to start beginning reading activities in the kindergarten (Table 14), because many children are ready for it, a sentiment previously voiced by Durkin (1972) in describing the results of her six-year study of early readers. Durkin would probably agree with the parent who indicated, if a child has readiness skills "and is eager to start, it may be wrong to hold them back" (Appendix D, Interview Question Set 1). Of their classified comments (Table 14), five statements suggested that starting reading activities in kindergarten provided academic preparation for first grade.

In identifying the most important thing children learn in kindergarten, 71% of the responses (classified in Table 15) described learning to get along with other children and with teachers as the most important experience. The balance of parents' comments named reading or reading-related experiences. Considering the findings and conclusions previously reported on priorities in the instructional program, a point of clarification is offered. Judging by their responses and comments, parents seem to classify elements of the instructional program into two categories: social skills and academic skills, naming "learning to get along with others" as the most important social skill and reading or
reading-related activities as the most important subject or academic skills. Of these two categories, parents appear to give the greatest weight to developing good personal attitudes and behavior, at least during the kindergarten year. These findings appear inconsistent with the view of kindergarten as essentially a play-school environment (Elkind 1972) or as primarily a structured academic program (Sava 1968). Again, parents' views appear eclectic rather than reflecting any one position.

In Set 3, interview questions were directed toward the inquiry: do parents want today's kindergarten children to have the kind of educational experiences they personally had, possibly a return to "basics," or do they want something better? In a majority of those interviewed (60%), parents indicated they would like their children to have similar experiences to their own, in learning to read, but not for reasons associated with the "back to basics" movement; instead, because it was an enjoyable experience, because I want them to find joy and pleasure in reading (classified responses, Table 16). Also indicated were parents' desire for better learning experiences, stated with candor: "It should be better," "It should be easier and quicker for today's children," "In the last 25 years educators should have learned more about how to teach reading" (Appendix D, Question Set 3). These findings led to conclusions 15 and 16.
2-B. The notions most frequently held by teachers of kindergarten children regarding instructional practices for beginning reading are:

1. A published series of lessons should not be used to aid children's mastery of some beginning reading materials (questionnaire item 7, Table 17).

2. Kindergarten reading should include skills like identifying letter shapes and letter sounds (questionnaire item 15, Table 17).

3. Developing a child's interest and curiosity is not the important goal in kindergarten (questionnaire item 2, Table 17).

4. Children will develop reading skills as they discover and explore a variety of materials (questionnaire item 4, Table 17).

5. Listening to stories is extremely important because it helps a child understand the concept of written language (questionnaire item 1, Table 18).

6. Dictating personal stories and creating books are very important in helping children learn to read (questionnaire item 6, Table 18).

7. Reading is not necessarily the most important thing taught in school (questionnaire item 8, Table 19).
8. If a child cannot read it may be due to other reasons than that the child lacks phonics (questionnaire item 10, Table 20).

9. Children do not get a better start in reading by working with words and sentences that have meaning, rather than the letter sounds (questionnaire item 13, Table 20).

10. Children learn much better when active and involved than when sitting still and listening (questionnaire item 3, Table 21).

11. Most learning does not occur in a situation where the teacher strictly controls the children and the lessons (questionnaire item 5, Table 21).

12. A child's learning and intellectual development may possibly be speeded up (questionnaire item 11, Table 21).

13. If children are ready, it's a good idea to start beginning reading activities in the kindergarten (Interview Question Set 1, Table 22).

14. Developing personal attitudes and social behavior are the most important experiences gained in kindergarten (Interview Question Set 1, Table 23).

15. Instructional practices should lead children to enjoy learning to read and reading (Interview Question Set 3, Table 24).

16. Reading instruction for today's children should achieve the warm, positive attitudinal factors of the past, but
provide better instructional practices (Interview Question Set 3, Table 24).

Teachers' views on selected instructional practices for beginning reading in the kindergarten were gathered through 19 questionnaires and 15 interviews. The same questionnaire and interview guide used in gathering data from parents was used for teacher data. For this reason, there will be a parallel development of conclusions, with differences in findings reflected in differing descriptive terms.

Like parents, teachers' notions on four topics related to instructional practices were investigated: the purpose of the instructional program, the priority of reading within the instructional program, the value of phonics or a meaning centered approach in beginning reading, and the way that kindergarten-age children learn.

Six questionnaire items attempted to characterize teachers' notions regarding the purpose of a kindergarten reading program. These items represented purposes attributed to three theoretical positions: Behavioristic, Nativistic and Cognitive Field, as described by Canady (1976). Unlike parents, teachers showed disagreement with two items: 67% "disagreed" with the need for a published series of lessons (item 7, Table 17), and 53% "disagreed" with the statement that developing a child's interest and curiosity in books is the important goal in kindergarten (item 2, Table 17). The teachers in this study "agreed" with
both items that reflected Cognitive Field Theory: item 1, listening to stories read out loud is important because it helps a child understand what written language is like, had a mean of 4.74 and standard deviation of .592; item 6, dictating their own stories and making their own books helps children learn to read, had a mean of 3.94 and standard deviation of .832 (Table 18). The narrow standard deviation reflects their consensus on these two items. The purposes with which teachers most frequently "agreed" appear most closely associated with Cognitive Field Theory. Parents, on the other hand, were found to be eclectic. The findings for questionnaire items 1 and 6 (Table 18) are represented in conclusions 5 and 6. The content of these items also reflects instructional practices that are always valued in a language experience approach (Allen 1976): reading stories aloud to children, developing language concepts, and communicating ideas through personal authorship.

Teachers' notions about the use of a published series of lessons were contrary to those of parents; as indicated by their responses to questionnaire item 7 (Table 17). Teachers' responses allow the conclusion that a majority, indicated by frequencies, do not see the need for a published series of lessons to aid children in mastering some beginning reading materials (conclusion 1); however, their differing opinions are reflected in the mean of 3.00 and standard deviation of 1.236.
While in agreement, teachers indicated an even stronger support for including the identification of letter shapes and letter sounds in kindergarten reading (conclusion 2, questionnaire item 15, Table 17): the mean of teachers' responses was 3.79 and that of parents was 3.49.

Differing opinions were registered on whether developing a child's interest and curiosity is the important goal in kindergarten reading. Teachers indicated it is not the important goal and parents indicated that it is the important goal. Since many parents wrote comments on this item, their conclusion represents a moderation of "the" to an important goal (conclusion 3).

There was consensus among teachers (84%), as well as parents, that children will develop reading skills as they discover and explore a variety of materials (conclusion 4, questionnaire item 4, Table 17). Teachers' comments during interviews, though, tend to indicate this is not as firm a conviction as their questionnaire responses indicated. There is also the chance that teachers misinterpreted the questionnaire item because it lacked clarity. In their interview comments about the idea of starting reading activities in the kindergarten, most teachers talked of teaching readiness concepts, ease of learning, and reading skills. Only one response represented the Nativistic view intended for the item: "Those who are ready will start, as a natural transition. There's no need to press for skill development" (Appendix D, Interview Question Set 1).
In terms of priorities, teachers did not give reading as high a priority as did parents. Although teachers' most frequent response was "disagree," the combined "agreement" categories accounted for 55% of teacher choices (questionnaire item 8, Table 19). These findings formed the basis for conclusion 7: for teachers, reading is not necessarily the most important thing taught in school.

Teachers, like parents, revealed a failure to recognize the value of a meaning-centered approach to beginning reading, the type of program recommended by many authorities including Smith, Goodman, and Meredith (1976), Frank Smith (1971), Stauffer (1970), and Nerbovig and Klausmeier (1974). Teachers' most frequent response to questionnaire item 13, children get a better start in reading by working with words and sentences, rather than the letter sounds, a mean of 2.32 and standard deviation of .820, led to conclusion 9, a negation of this statement.

Accepting Piaget's tenet that children learn best when active and involved, teachers, like parents, rejected Englemann's highly structured view by disagreeing with questionnaire item 5 (Table 21), a statement indicating that children learn the most from a teacher-directed and controlled lesson. These findings are represented in conclusion 11.

Popular publications have suggested it is possible to speed up a child's learning and intellectual development (Morris 1961; Englemann and Englemann 1966; Beck 1967), while Piaget's (1969) work (Ginsburg and Opper 1969) described the intellectual
stages of development and the disruptive effect that can result from pushing a child too fast. Feeling less positive than parents on this issue, teachers indicated 42% "agreement," 21% "undecided," and 32% "disagreement" (Table 21) with the statement: a child's learning and intellectual development can be speeded up (questionnaire item 11). Because their opinions seemed less than positive, conclusion 12 is worded "may possibly be speeded up."

Teachers' enthusiasm equalled that of parents' by indicating in their interview remarks that it's a good idea to start beginning reading activities in the kindergarten (Interview Question Set 1, Table 22). The 80% expressing this view did so for reasons that were classified into three categories: it's a good idea to "start reading as children are ready for it" (56%), it's a good idea when "viewed as academic preparation for first grade" (17%), and it's a good idea to "take advantage of a young child's facility with learning" (11%). Conclusion 13 reflects the largest percentage of teachers' comments.

In their interview responses teachers indicated the most important things children learn in kindergarten are attitudinal factors which were classified as the development of personal attitudes and social behavior. Of their 26 remarks classified in this category, two types of responses were most often voiced: the most important thing is learning to listen and follow directions (35%) and the most important thing is learning to get along
with others in a school environment (35%) (classification of responses, Table 23), the basis for conclusion 14.

Responding with the same number of affirmative answers (9) as parents had, teachers indicated during the interviews that they want today's children to have experiences similar to their own in learning to read. Eight of their classified responses (Table 24) reflect warm, positive attitudes toward learning to read and reading: to have the same kind of enjoyable experience, to learn without pressure, and to find joy and pleasure in reading. Teachers also expressed interest in adding phonics and provision for a creative, imaginative environment to the current instructional program. Neither kindergarten teachers nor parents offered evidence of rejecting present day instructional practices for a "return to basics." In fact, these findings give pause to wonder whether newspapers and magazines are publishing editorial or journalistic views rather than "public" views on the basics. These data, gathered during teacher interviews, provide evidence for conclusions 15 and 16.

2-C. There are some statistically significant differences between parents' and teachers' notions regarding instructional practices for beginning reading.

1. Parents feel that a published series of lessons should be used so children can master some beginning reading
materials, while teachers tend to disagree (significant at .001 level) (questionnaire item 7, Table 25).

2. Parents feel that developing a child's interest and curiosity in books is the important goal in kindergarten reading, while teachers do not (significant at .001 level) (questionnaire item 2, Table 25).

3. Parents disagree and teachers strongly disagree that if a child cannot read it is because the child has not learned phonics (significant at .01 level) (questionnaire item 10, Table 25).

4. Parents appear more convinced than teachers that a child's learning and intellectual development can be speeded up (significant at .03 level) (questionnaire item 11, Table 25).

Chi-square was used to test the significance of differences between parents' and teachers' responses to the 12 questionnaire items related to Research Questions 2-A and 2-B. With rejection at the .05 level, differences between four items were found to be significant. There were highly significant differences (.001) on two items related to the purposes of a kindergarten reading program: parents tended to "agree" and teachers to "disagree" with the need for a published series of lessons (questionnaire item 7, Table 25), an item reflecting Behavioristic theory; and parents "agreed" and teachers tended to "disagree" that developing a child's interest and curiosity in books is the
important goal of kindergarten reading (questionnaire item 2), an item reflecting Nativistic Theory. These findings are represented in conclusions 1 and 2.

A very significant difference (.01) was noted between parents' and teachers' responses to the statement: if a child cannot read it is because the child has not learned phonics (questionnaire item 10). Although both groups tended to disagree with this statement, teachers "disagreed" more strongly, a finding reflected in conclusion 3.

Also significant (.02) were the differences between parents' and teachers' responses to item 11: a child's learning and intellectual development can be speeded up. A significantly larger group of parents "agree" with this item than did teachers, allowing the inference that parents are more convinced on this point than teachers, conclusion 4.

3-A. The types of print media in which parents most frequently find useful information about the teaching of reading appear to be:

1. Educational journal or digest (questionnaire item 18, Table 27).
2. A book, booklet or pamphlet published by a parent or teacher organization (questionnaire item 20, Table 28).
3. Books from university courses (questionnaire item 21 write-in responses, Table 29).
Where do parents read about reading instruction? According to their responses to five questionnaire items (16 to 20), they most frequently find useful information about reading instruction in an "education journal or digest" or "in a book, booklet or pamphlet published by a national parent or teacher organization." These findings, however, represent the lowest number of responses on the entire questionnaire, with only 84% of parents who completed questionnaires responding to these two items. Mean values of less than 3.00 on all five items suggest that the incidence of finding useful information about reading in print media may be rather low. Questionnaire item 21, the sixth of the group, offered the opportunity to indicate how frequently respondents found useful information about reading in "other sources" and to also write a response.

Parents' 34 write-in responses to item 21 contained 73 classifiable comments (Table 29). Their "other sources of useful information about the teaching of reading" included four categories: print media (44%), personal contacts and experiences (36%), instructional situations (12%), and non-print media (8%). Within the largest category of responses, print media, "books from university courses were cited in 17 comments. In the second largest category, personal contacts and experiences, parents named "talking with teachers" most often.

Information gained from parent interview responses to Question Set 4 provided additional data. To the first question,
do you remember an article about reading that made an impression on you, 10 parents responded "yes." Of those 10, nine were able to provide a description of the content. These responses were classified into five nearly equal categories: that related to the way children learn, that reporting success in early reading, that focusing concern for reading, that related to instructional practices, and that addressing some phase of reading readiness. It seems evident from these five categories that the kinds of articles parents recall most often are primarily informative articles and not those intended to alarm the reading public.

Parents were also asked the question: where do you find the most helpful information about the teaching of reading? Their classified responses (Table 32) indicate their most frequent sources of information are "personal contacts and experiences" (61%) and "print media" (17%). "Professionally directed instructional situations" and "non-print media" were the categories mentioned least often (13% and 9%).

On the basis of these findings it seems appropriate to conclude that parents gain some information about reading from print and very little from non-print sources, but the bulk of their information on the teaching of reading appears to come from situations in which there is personal contact and interaction, and of those situations "talking with the teacher" is the most common source.
3-B. The types of print media in which teachers most frequently find useful information about the teaching of reading are:

1. An education journal or digest (questionnaire item 18, Table 33).

2. A book, booklet or pamphlet published by a national parent or teacher organization (questionnaire item 20, Table 34).

3. News publications and features (interview question 4, Table 37).

4. Lippincott Teachers Guide (interview question 4, Table 38).

Data gathered through questionnaire items 16 to 20 and interview question set 4 formed the basis for the four listed conclusions. On the five questionnaire items, kindergarten teachers were also asked to indicate how useful they find several types of print media. As might be expected, they most frequently indicated "an education journal or digest" (questionnaire item 18, Table 33); however, two teachers (11%) indicated they never find useful information about reading in these sources, certainly an unexpected response. "A book, booklet or pamphlet published by a national parent or teacher organization" was their second most popular choice, with a mean of 3.33 and a narrow standard deviation of .685. Of the types of print media listed on the questionnaire, the least useful source appeared to be a "general
interest magazine." Teachers' responses to item 21 indicated they quite often find useful information in "other sources." Only three teachers completed the write-in response to this item.

Additional information was gathered from Interview Question Set 4. When asked, 13 teachers responded "yes" they had read something about reading that made an impression on them. Their descriptions of the content were classified into five categories, the same used for parent responses: that related to the way children learn (29%), that related to instructional practices (29%), that addressing some phase of reading readiness, that reporting success in early reading (7%), and that focusing concern on reading (7%). Ten teachers were able to supply the names of the recalled publications which were classified as: books (4), periodicals (4), and news publications and features (6) (Table 37).

When asked, "Where do you find the most helpful information about the teaching of reading," during the interviews, 15 teachers named 32 sources which were classified into four categories: professionally directed instructional situations (38%), personal contacts and experiences (31%), print media (28%), non-print media (3%). Within the largest category, professionally directed instructional situations, five teachers named workshops and four named college or university courses. Within the category print media, Lippincott Teacher's Guide and special newspaper articles were each named three times. This interview
question gave perspective to the part that print media plays in providing what teachers consider useful information about teaching reading.

These findings allow the conclusion that teachers get useful information from several print media sources, but their most helpful information comes from professionally directed instructional situations, like workshops and college or university courses. Their second most helpful source appears to be personal contacts and experiences, with print media running a close third. Reviewing these data leads to the speculation that kindergarten teachers are more gregarious than scholarly: their most helpful sources of information were ones in which there are opportunities for professional or personal interaction and not a solitary situation like reading.

3-C. There are some significant differences between parents' and teachers' indications of the type of print media in which they most frequently find useful information about the teaching of reading.

Chi-square analysis revealed significant differences between parent choices and teacher choices of print media sources in which they find useful information about the teaching of reading. The differences on questionnaire item 16 were significant at .05 level and the differences on questionnaire item 21 were significant at .01 level (Table 39). These differences lie in
the fact that teachers considered the daily or Sunday newspaper and other sources of information more useful than did parents (parents, Tables 27 and 28; teachers, Tables 33 and 34).

4-A. Given a group of annotated titles, all relevant to the topics of children in kindergarten or to beginning reading instruction, the titles most frequently selected by parents are:

1. "The Child's Development of Intelligence" (questionnaire item 22, Table 40).
2. "Parents--What Role in Reading?" (questionnaire item 26, Table 41).

On five questionnaire items which included titles and annotations of hypothetical articles, parents indicated how frequently they would read each kind of article. Their most frequent choices were: (1) an article on the development of intelligence, drawn from the work of Piaget; and (2) an article addressed to parents, based on Carro's (1977) "Preschoolers and Reading: What Role Should Parents Play in Reading" in the Ladies Home Journal. Carro's column presents an "expert's view" on the negative aspects of parents teaching children to read early, at home. Parents seemed least interested in item 24, "Most Children Can Succeed," an item rejecting the concept of reading readiness and developmental differences, and insisting that reading skills be taught.
4-B. Given a group of annotated titles, all relevant to the topics of children in kindergarten or to beginning reading instruction, the titles most frequently selected by teachers are:

1. "The Child's Development of Intelligence" (questionnaire item 22, Table 42).
2. "Parents—What Role in Reading" (questionnaire item 26, Table 43).
3. "The Classroom Is a Language Lab" (questionnaire item 23, Table 42).

As asked how frequently they might read the kind of article represented in questionnaire items 22 to 26, kindergarten teachers most frequently selected (1) an article on intelligence, based on the work of Piaget (1969) with a mean of 4.26 and standard deviation of .784; (2) an article about parents' role in reading, reflecting the "expert's view" on the negative aspects involved in parents teaching their child to read (Carro 1977), with a mean of 4.26 and standard deviation of .784; and (3) an article explaining the development of language skills for reading, based on Allen's (1968) description of characteristics related to a language experience approach, with a mean of 4.32 and standard deviation of .583 (Tables 42 and 43). High mean values and narrow standard deviations suggest teachers' high level of enthusiasm for these three topics.
Less interest was shown for "Listen and Learn with Phonics," and the least interest for "Most Children Can Succeed," which reflected Englemann's (1975) writing.

4-C. There are some differences between the annotated title most frequently selected by parents and that selected by teachers, with titles representing information on children in kindergarten or on beginning reading.

Chi-square analysis of the differences between parent and teacher responses indicated significant differences to questionnaire item 23, "The Classroom Is a Language Lab," and item 24, "Most Children Can Succeed" (Table 44), with significance at the .05 level for both items.

After a comparison of the data in Tables 40 and 42, it seems possible to conclude that teachers are significantly more interested in reading about the development of language skills in the classroom (questionnaire item 23) than are parents; and although neither group revealed strong interest in item 24, parents appear significantly more interested than teachers. The differences between items 22, 25 and 26 were not significant.

5. Based on classroom observations by the researcher, reading instruction in the private kindergartens observed most commonly includes:
1. Freedom from the fear of using incorrect language (Table 46, Strand I-R 1, raw score total 36).

2. Many books available for browsing and reading together (Table 50, Strand III-R 1, raw score total 35).

3. Opportunities to participate comfortably with home-rooted language when talking to "share" with the group (Table 46, Strand I-R 2, raw score total 29).

4. Opportunities to respond to meanings in the environment not represented by symbol systems—weather, color, shape, size, texture, emotion, sound and motion (Table 47, Strand I-R 3, raw score total 27).

5. Responding to language structures such as rhyming, beginning sounds, and predictive sentence patterns (Table 49, Strand II-R 1, raw score total 24).

6. Stories and poems read to and with children every day (Table 50, Strand III-R 2, raw score total 24).

7. Choral readings, finger plays, songs and rhymes as a part of the language program to bring children in contact with other's language (Table 51, Strand III-R 3, raw score total 20).

8. Opportunities to respond rhythmically to music (Table 47, Strand I-R 4.5, raw score total 19).

9. Space and time provided to express personal ideas with many media (Table 46, Strand I-R 4.5, raw score total 19).
10. Opportunities to respond to non-alphabetic symbols in clocks, maps, numerals, graphs and calendars (Table 48, Strand II-R 2, raw score total 19).

Observations in nine kindergarten classrooms were noted on Allen's (1976) "Check List for Kindergarten Learning Environment." The Check List was used to rate the extent to which each instructional situation had evidence of a Language Experience Approach, the type of pre-first grade reading instruction recently recommended by the Interorganizational Committee (1977).

Listed under the fifth conclusion are the 10 most commonly observed language experience characteristics. In parenthesis following each item are: the table in which the data are reported, the Strand to which the characteristic belongs and its rank (R) within that Strand, and the raw score total from all classroom notations on that characteristic. The conclusions are ordered from 1 to 10 by their total raw score which reflects the frequencies with which that characteristic was observed.

For each classroom, mean scores were calculated on observations of each Strand and a total mean score was calculated on the data from three Strands. Means in Strand I ranged from .5 to 2.5, means in Strand II ranged from .2 to 2.4, and means for Strand III ranged from .8 to 2.7. Total mean scores ranged from 1.07 to 2.50. The total mean score on the Check List is interpreted as follows: "The closer the total mean score is to 4.00, the nearer the classroom is to satisfying basic requirements for
a language experience approach (Allen 1976, p. 485)." Based on this interpretation, it seems possible to conclude that the environment in all classrooms observed lacks some basic requirements for a Language Experience Approach.

Most of the findings and resultant conclusions appear consistent with the data gathered on all research instruments and procedures. On the whole, most kindergarten programs provided a child-centered program that included mostly unstructured but some structured characteristics: each child's personal language was accepted; a variety of books, picture, story and poetry, were available for children to use and for the teacher to read aloud; there were opportunities to respond to meanings within the environment that were not represented by symbol systems, to language structures, to choral readings, finger plays, songs and rhymes, as well as music; and space and time were provided to express personal ideas with many media.

One inconsistency is apparent between teachers' responses to the questionnaire and the observations made in the classroom. The Check List for Kindergarten Learning Environment (Allen 1976) was developed to reflect cognitive field theory. Similarly, teachers' responses to questionnaire items reflecting the purpose of a reading program, and representing three theoretical positions, indicated strongest agreement with the items that represented the Cognitive Field Theory. If their classroom instructional program had revealed evidence of this theoretical
base, the scores on the observation instrument would have been higher. The scores, in fact, were very low.

It seems possible to conclude that most of the programs do reflect parent and teacher approved "sounds of letters," with some using published workbooks and some not. Further, that many of the children are participating in somewhat structured pre-reading programs. Also, some but not all of the decisions related to reading are being made on the basis of teacher or parent preference and knowledge of how children learn best. On the basis of the findings herein described for the seven private kindergartens and the classrooms cooperating in the study, the two concerns of the Interorganizational Committee (1977), cited earlier in Chapter 1, are only partially justified.

Implications

This study offers evidence on parent-teacher factors that influence reading in the kindergarten: (1) decisions about initiating reading in the kindergarten, (2) notions regarding instructional practices in beginning reading, (3) type of print media used as a source of information, (4) educational topics that appear most appealing to parents and teachers, and (5) observations of kindergarten reading environment. All have implications related to the kindergarten reading program.

This study offered evidence that most parents want teachers to take the responsibility for decisions about initiating reading instruction, but a majority want their views to be
considered. In fact, a large group of those interviewed described the need for a cooperative effort between parents and teachers. Teachers, on the other hand, seem to lack personal confidence in making these decisions, suggesting that other individuals, like teacher-educators and researchers, should decide when and how reading will be taught. Perhaps the popular press and its desparaging remarks have shaken teachers' confidence in their ability to make sound decisions. Teachers were certain, though, that parents should not make these decisions and appeared unaware of the need for cooperation between home and school. It seems evident that kindergarten teachers' interests focus primarily on the child to the exclusion of the home and family. Instead, teachers need to adopt a more cooperative attitude toward parent involvement and even parent education. Open communication and a sharing of views between parents and teachers seems an essential step if education is to be a responsive as well as a cooperative enterprise. This implication seems particularly important in light of the findings that parents consider talking with teachers as their most important source of information on reading instruction.

Parents and teachers recognized that the child's maturity and readiness are the key factors in determining when reading instruction should be initiated. For many of these individuals, however, "readiness" was a critical time when the child merely showed interest and eagerness for learning to read, or when the
child had command of such skills as "sounding out the letters"; their understanding of readiness appeared a vague "gray area" or something narrow and specific. Parents and teachers lacked understanding of learning to read as a continuous developmental linguistic and cognitive process that starts from day one, when the child is born. One major deficiency noted was the total lack of understanding regarding the use of three types of information in reading: grapho-phonic, syntactic and semantic. Interest and awareness of only the grapho-phonic prevailed. Fortunately, their responses revealed a willingness to recognize individual differences and unstructured learning situations, but unfortunately in many classrooms whole-group instruction in reading skills workbooks was the daily routine. Both parents and teachers appear to need additional information and background on readiness, individualized instruction, the reading process and the best instructional practices for the five-year old child, implications for supervisory personnel and teacher educators.

A large percentage of parents and teachers felt it was a good idea to start reading activities in the kindergarten. Both groups indicated that reading instruction should have high priority but within an atmosphere that allowed children to enjoy learning to read. Although it seems inconsistent, many teachers used such personal warmth, attention to individual children and creative adaptations with published readiness materials, that many of the usual criticisms were mitigated. These observations
reinforced the realization that it is not the materials that make the program; instead, it is the teacher's personality, "art" and manner of using the materials that create an environment in which children can learn.

Although many of the characteristics of a language experience approach were observed in the classrooms, no direct effort to implement this type of program was observed. During conversations that paralleled the interviews, most of the kindergarten teachers expressed curiosity, interest or a lack of knowledge of the language experience approach, nor were they aware that the approach had been recommended by an Interorganizational Committee. Parents were even less informed on this approach as well as its advantages, the implication being that early childhood educators as well as parents need to be informed about the language experience approach. Although much has been offered, more is needed.

Neither the parents nor the teachers in this study expressed interest in a highly structured academic program for the kindergarten. Their views most often reflected a concern for the child's learning to get along with others in a school environment, but many also showed interest in the kindergarten as academic preparation for first grade. The implications are for a program that incorporates both.

Where parents get their information about reading was also investigated because what they know or learn will influence their views and notions about reading and, it is assumed, the
instructional program. The evidence suggests that parents' most frequent sources of information are personal contacts and experiences, particularly with teachers, and print media. Teachers, on the other hand, get their most helpful information from professionally directed instructional situations, and some from personal contacts and experiences and print media. The implication is that in-service workshops or other instructional situations would be the best way to provide current educational information to kindergarten teachers. If teachers are well-informed, they in turn will be better sources of information for parents.

Both parents and teachers gave information on the print media sources that are most helpful to them. The obvious implication of these data are their value in identifying frequently used sources. Written communication would be most apt to reach these two groups if published in an education journal or digest, in materials published by a national parent or teacher organization or in news publications and features.

Teachers were evidently not aware of the recommendations generated by the Interorganizational Committee, the group of esteemed professional educators who focused on concerns regarding present practices in pre-first grade reading. There appears a need to communicate these findings more widely and more effectively. The print media sources previously recommended or workshops would seem, on the basis of this study, the best ways to communicate with kindergarten teachers. There may also be a need
for organizations like the International Reading Association to make a special effort to include kindergarten teachers in their membership.

Parents and teachers offered evidence of similar reading interests by indicating the same two topic preferences. From five annotated articles, both groups showed greatest interest in an article on the development of intelligence and one on parents' role in reading. Both would appear to be good topics for publications, an implication for educational writers.

The findings of this study suggest there are at least three groups of individuals concerned with beginning reading instruction in the kindergarten: parents, teachers and professional educators (teacher-educators and researchers). Because of their involvement with seeking and providing quality education for children, there is a dependency among these three groups. As their responses indicated, there is a tendency toward limited, one-way communication: parents look for useful information and sound decisions from teachers; teachers look to professional educators for information and guidance on making decisions about beginning reading instruction; and from a base of knowledge, experience and research, the professional educators respond. In most instances that is the extent of the communication. Interviews and classroom observations suggest that only in limited ways do parents and teachers listen to professional educators. Data also revealed parental interest in cooperative decisions
about beginning reading, but teachers apparently shun these overtures. Communication seems weakened by the inability or reluctance of each group to listen and interact with the other. Rather than an interactive circle of listening, sharing and responding, the three groups seem like three disconnected points on a triangle. Each can, however, make a unique contribution: parents have greater knowledge about their individual child, teachers are best informed about a child's classroom behavior, and professional educators possess or have access to the most current information on the many facets of education. In order to provide the best possible initial reading instruction for children, parents, teachers and professional educators should work toward greater interaction, intercommunication, and the establishment of a "working relationship."

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The use of multiple data collection strategies led to more clarity and understanding of the questions investigated in this research, and greater insights on parent-teacher views, notions and relationships. Had only the questionnaire been used, different conclusions in many cases would have been realized. For these reasons, multiple data collection strategies are recommended for other research in the field of education.

The present study involved private kindergartens, a similar study involving public kindergartens could be considered.
Since parents indicated their best source of information was talking with teachers, it would seem judicious to investigate the question: what do parents want or need to know about their child's schooling and beginning reading instruction? An extension of the same concern could be represented in research related to the best means of helping teachers to develop communicative abilities with parents, and the best way to help parents communicate with teachers. Further, what do teachers need to know about parents?
APPENDIX A

OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT AND PERMISSION FOR USE
PLEASE NOTE:

In all cases this material has been filmed in the best possible way from the available copy. Problems encountered with this document have been identified here with a check mark √.

1. Glossy photographs ______
2. Colored illustrations ______
3. Photographs with dark background ______
4. Illustrations are poor copy ______
5. Print shows through as there is text on both sides of page ______
6. Indistinct, broken or small print on several pages /\ throughout ______
7. Tightly bound copy with print lost in spine ______
8. Computer printout pages with indistinct print ______
9. Page(s) _____ lacking when material received, and not available from school or author ______
10. Page(s) _____ seem to be missing in numbering only as text follows ______
11. Poor carbon copy ______
12. Not original copy, several pages with blurred type ______
13. Appendix pages are poor copy ______
14. Original copy with light type ______
15. Curling and wrinkled pages ______
16. Other __________________________
SCHOOL OBSERVED:

DATE: 

OBSERVER:

HOURS:

CHECK LIST FOR KINDERGARTEN LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

This check list is to be used in rating the extent to which any learning environment has visible evidence that the three strands of a language experience approach are being implemented. It does not deal with the nonvisible aspects of the program.

Tentative conclusions from the use of this rating scale indicate that children who live and learn in an environment with a rating above 3.0 make significant progress toward communication abilities that promote reading and writing.

THE SCORING SCALE

0—Does not exist at the time of observation
1—Present but on a restricted basis—by permission only or after completion of "regular work"
2—Present during observation period but little or no evidence as a continuing part of the program
3—Present during observation with visible evidence that the condition is a continuing part of the program
4—Superior performance of part observed and/or visible evidence that the condition is an essential part of the program

OBSERVATION TIME
Minimum of 50 minutes recommended for external evaluation. No time limit for self-evaluation

SUMMARY:

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<th>Strands</th>
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INTERPRETATION

The closer the total mean score is to 4.00, the nearer the classroom environment is to satisfying basic requirements for a language experience approach.

Scores below 3.00 reflect a need for improvement in communication opportunities that are required of a language experience approach.
STRAND ONE
Experiencing communication

MAJOR IDEA
This strand emphasizes the real language of the learners as basic to communication skill development.

ITEMS TO BE CHECKED

| 1. Is there obvious opportunity for each child to participate comfortably with home-rooted language when talking to “share” with the group? |
| 2. Is the real language of the children used as a part of the room environment through dictated stories and books? |
| 3. Are children free from the fear of using incorrect language? |
| 4. Is space and time provided for children to express their ideas with many media? |
| 5. Is space and time provided for children to participate in puppetry, dramatization, and pantomime? |
| 6. Are there adequate tactile and visual models available for naming, describing, and discussing? |
| 7. Do children have opportunity to listen to their own language recorded on tapes? |
| 8. Is there opportunity for children to respond rhythmically to music? |
| 9. Do children dictate, observe the writing, and illustrate books that are useful in the classroom? |
| 10. Do children have opportunities to respond to meanings in their environment not represented by symbol systems—weather, color, shape, size, texture, emotion, sound, motion? |

| Superior performance of part observed. Essential part of program |
| Present during observation. Continuing part of program |
| Present during observation. Not a continuing part |
| Present but on a restricted basis |
| Did not exist at time of observation |

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Total Raw Score
Mean score (raw score divided by 10)
STRAIJD TWO
Studying communication

MAJOR IDEA
This strand emphasizes an understanding of how language works for individuals.

ITEMS TO BE CHECKED

1. Are children encouraged to "read" and respond to their environment through their senses—hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, and seeing?
2. Are children given the opportunity to learn to respond to nonalphabetic symbols in clocks, maps, numerals, graphs, and calendars?
3. Do children engage in conversations to discuss topics such as names of letters, words, and sentences?
4. Are children acquiring vocabularies of names of things, words of action, and words in many descriptive categories?
5. Is vocabulary being extended through teacher modeling, mediating, and offering alternatives?
6. Is there obvious emphasis on developing an awareness of words of highest frequency?
7. Are alternatives offered to children whose natural speech is characterized by gross errors?
8. Do children respond to language structures such as rhyming, beginning sounds, and predictive sentence patterns?
9. Do children have opportunities to identify labels and other words in printed form?
10. Do children have time and place to explore writing by tracing, copying, and writing independently?

Raw score totals
TOTAL RAW SCORE
Mean score (raw score divided by 10)
STRAND THREE
Relating communication of others to self

MAJOR IDEA
This strand emphasizes the influence of the language and ideas of many people on the personal language of children.

ITEMS TO BE CHECKED

1. Are many types of books available for browsing and reading together?
2. Are stories and poems read to and with children every day?
3. Are films and filmstrips used to bring children in contact with the language and ideas of others?
4. Do children have access to records and tapes that accompany books?
5. Do children have opportunity to repeat words, phrases, and sentences of other authors as they listen to reading of language that is different from their home-rooted language?
6. Do children have opportunity to add to the ideas of others as they listen to stories and poems?
7. Are art prints, musical compositions, photographs, and other creative materials available for personal interpretation with personal language?
8. Are choral readings, finger plays, songs, and rhymes a part of the language program to bring children in contact with other's language?
9. Do children have the opportunity to look in a variety of places for information on the same topic?
10. Do children have opportunity to evaluate communication of others—real from imaginary, fact from fantasy, poetry from prose?

Raw score totals
TOTAL RAW SCORE
Mean score (raw score divided by 10)
MEMO TO: MARTHA L. LARSON
REGARDING: Publication Permission
FROM: ROACH VAN ALLEN

Permission is granted for you to use "Check List for Kindergarten Learning Environment" in your research procedures for your dissertation.


Roach Van Allen
Professor of Elementary Education
Dear Kindergarten Director:

I am asking for your participation in a research study that I am conducting on reading and reading readiness in the kindergarten. This research will help me to gather needed data for my doctoral dissertation. In conducting this study I would:

1. observe kindergarten classes
2. distribute a short questionnaire to teachers and parents
3. interview a few parents and teachers

Information on my professional and academic background may be helpful to you in considering this request. My professional preparation includes: B. S. in Elementary Education, Athens College; M. Ed. in Reading, the University of Arizona; and Educational Specialist in Reading, the University of Arizona. Teaching experiences include elementary classroom and reading/education classes at the university level.

Please complete and mail the enclosed postal card so I can determine your interest. Additional information or explanation will gladly be provided.

Your help would be greatly appreciated.

Yours truly,

Mrs. Martha L. Larson
RESPONSE CARD

Regarding the kindergarten research,
I am not interested in discussing participation.
(CIRCLE ONE)

PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING:

How many kindergarten classes meet daily? _____
How many kindergarten teachers in school? _____

NAME: ______________________ PHONE: __________
SCHOOL: _____________________________
ADDRESS: ______________________ ZIP: __________
Subjects Consent

(Federal Regulations require that I provide this information and gain your written consent.)

Dear Parents and Teachers,

I need your opinions about teaching reading in kindergarten. Historically, children have started reading instruction in first grade. Now there seems to be a trend towards starting part of that instruction in the kindergarten. I'm investigating this new trend by conducting research in Huntsville, Alabama. The subjects of this research will be Parents of Kindergarten Children and Teachers of Kindergarten Children.

The purpose of my research is to describe "Selected Parent-Teacher Factors that Influence Reading in the Kindergarten." I plan to describe parent-teacher views on starting some reading instruction in the kindergarten. Further, I want to investigate where parents and teachers expect to find useful information on reading instruction and whether parents and teachers would read the same things.

For this purpose I'm asking you to complete the attached questionnaire and I'll also observe a few of the kindergarten classes. Sometimes more is learned from a conversation than from a questionnaire. To explore questions or answers that were possibly not included on the questionnaire, I would like to talk to a few of you. But only if you grant the following permission.

Yes, I will talk with you.
My telephone number is ____________________________

Your cooperation during spring 1978 will help me to gather research data for my doctoral dissertation. Any information that you provide will be confidential. The data gathered will not be used for any other purpose nor by any other researcher. I will be glad to answer any question you may have: telephone 883-8078.

FORM: I have read the above "Subjects Consent" and understand the nature of this research project. I understand that I am free to participate or withdraw from the project at any time without causing ill will.

I also understand that this consent form will be filed in an area designated by the Human Subjects Committee with access restricted to the principal investigator or authorized representative of the particular department.

Subject's Signature _____________________________ Date
Witness' Signature _____________________________ Date
(family member or other teacher)
Dear Parents and Teachers,

Make your views known by participating in this research. The only cost to you is a little of your time:

1. Completing the QUESTIONNAIRE will take about 10 minutes.
2. If you agree to participate in an interview, that will take an additional 10 minutes.

It is important that your opinions and ideas be reflected in this research. The primary benefit of the research is providing information which will be helpful to educators and to society in planning future instruction for young children.

I appreciate your help. Thank you.

Mrs. Martha L. Larson

ACT NOW! COMPLETE AND MAIL IN YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE!
Huntsville, Alabama  
April 28, 1978  

Dear Parents and Teachers,  

Time is running out. Please complete and return that Research Questionnaire NOW. Make sure that YOUR views on kindergarten reading are reported.  

If you did not receive a Research Questionnaire, please call me at 883-8078. I'll be glad to mail one to you.  

If you have already completed and returned your Questionnaire, thank you very much.  

I do appreciate the time required to read and complete the Questionnaire. Be sure to put your completed Questionnaire in the mail.  

Thank you.  

*Mrs. Martha L. Larson*  
Telephone: 883-8078
Please circle the words that describe you:

PARENT  TEACHER  FEMALE  MALE

In which state were you born? ____________________________________________

Part 1, Directions: Here are 20 statements about teaching reading to children in kindergarten. Please rate each statement for meaning or value to you.

SA — strongly agree
A — agree
U — undecided
D — disagree
SD — strongly disagree

Sample item:

SA  A  U  D  SD  Both parents and teachers teach children.

Since I strongly agree with this statement I circled SA.

SA  A  U  D  SD  Listening to stories read out loud is important because it helps a child understand what written language is like.

SA  A  U  D  SD  Developing a child's interest and curiosity in books is the important goal in kindergarten.

SA  A  U  D  SD  Children learn better when active and involved than when sitting still and listening.

SA  A  U  D  SD  Children will develop reading skills as they discover and explore a variety of materials.

SA  A  U  D  SD  Most learning occurs when the teacher strictly directs and controls the children and the lessons.

SA  A  U  D  SD  Dictating their own stories and making their own books helps children learn to read.

SA  A  U  D  SD  A published series of lessons should be used so children can master some beginning reading materials.

SA  A  U  D  SD  Reading is the most important thing taught in school and deserves the most time.

SA  A  U  D  SD  A parent knows the true ability of a child and should decide what the child can learn and when.

SA  A  U  D  SD  If a child cannot read it's because the child has not learned phonics.
A child's learning and intellectual development can be speeded up.

Teachers are trained educators and should decide how reading will be taught in their classes.

Children get a better start in reading by working with words and sentences that have meaning, rather than the letter sounds.

Maturity and readiness are the key factors in determining when a child starts instruction in reading.

Kindergarten reading should mainly develop skills like identifying letter shapes and letter sounds.

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**Part 2, Directions:** In this part answer the questions according to your own experience. 
Circle one number for each question.

5-very frequently, 4-often, 3-sometimes, 2-rarely, 1-never

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the Sunday Magazine Section, how often do you find useful information about the teaching of reading? (Sometimes I find useful information there so I circled the 3)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the daily or Sunday newspaper, how often do you find useful information about the teaching of reading?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a parent or homemaker magazine (like Parent or Good Housekeeping), how often do you find useful information about the teaching of reading?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In an education journal or digest (like Childhood or Education Digest), how often do you find useful information about the teaching of reading?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a general interest magazine (like People, Ebony, or Reader's Digest), how often do you find useful information about the teaching of reading?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a book, booklet or pamphlet that is published by a national parent or teacher organization, how often do you find useful information about the teaching of reading?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you gain useful information about the teaching of reading from other sources?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Directions: Here are some titles and descriptions of articles. Please circle one number for each item according to your personal preference.

WOULD YOU READ THIS KIND OF ARTICLE FOR USEFUL INFORMATION? (5-very frequently, 4-often, 3-sometimes, 2-rarely, 1-never)

5 4 3 2 1 "The Child's Development of Intelligence" Helps us understand how children see the world at different ages, what to expect of them, and why they ask odd questions.

5 4 3 2 1 "The Classroom is a Language Lab" Explains that language skills for reading are developed as children listen to stories, view films, study words, or write.

5 4 3 2 1 "Most Children Can Succeed" Tells us to reject remedies involving time to mature or to develop readiness, when a child is not succeeding. Instead, insist that reading skills be taught.

5 4 3 2 1 "Listen and Learn with Phonics" Describes a learning kit that reportedly makes reading easy. The child hears the letters or sounds on a record, sees them in a book, and repeats them.

5 4 3 2 1 "Parents--What Role in Reading?" Experts say rushing into reading lessons can kill a child's interest. Instead, read and talk to the child and encourage curiosity.

Put your completed questionnaire in the envelope and seal it. Then mail it or return it to your child's teacher.

Thank you very much.

Mrs. Martha Carson

Any comments?
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE AND RESPONSES
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Date: 
Teacher: 
Parent: father mother Other children in family:

1. INTRODUCTION: There seems to be a trend towards starting some reading activities prior to first grade.

How do you feel about the idea of starting beginning reading activities in the kindergarten?

- good idea
- not a good idea
- don't know

Why do you feel that way?

What is the most important thing that children learn in kindergarten?

2. INTRODUCTION: The next questions are about the decision of when reading will be taught and how it will be taught. (If clarification is needed--at what grade level will it be started, and what method will be used for instruction)

Who do you think should decide when reading will be taught, and how it will be taught?

- parents
- teachers
- somebody else

Why should that person decide?

How should the child enter into the decision?
3. INTRODUCTION: Now I'd like to ask you about some of your own childhood memories.

What do you remember about learning to read?

Remembers:

Remembers nothing: Then what is the earliest school experience that you remember?

Do you want today's children to have similar experiences?

yes no dk

Why is that?

4. INTRODUCTION: Newspapers, books, and magazines have included a good bit of information on education and reading instruction.

Do you remember something about reading that made an impression on you?

yes no dk

What was that article about?

Do you recall the name of the publication?

Where do you find the most helpful information about the teaching of reading?
Parent Responses to Interview Question Set 1

How do you feel about the idea of starting beginning reading activities in the kindergarten?

Why do you feel that way?

Responses: N = 15

It's a good idea (11)

In many of the public schools it is an advantage. Most first grade teachers expect children to have phonics and basic readiness skills.

Better prepared for first grade.

My kindergarten child is sounding out letters and forming words. The ten year old had same instruction and has had no trouble with reading.

My own child has been anxious to read and wanting someone to take the time to teach her.

Some children are ready to develop concepts: left to right, associate words with objects.

Some kind of preparation for reading is good--just so it isn't regimented.

It's good for a child that is ready. Test children and let them start if ready.

If the child is ready, has sounds of letters and shapes and is eager to start, it may be wrong to hold them back.

(name) wants to read very much. They learned their letters this year because she read a book to me the other day in the car. I was surprised she could do that well.

Depends on the child. My child started in kindergarten. If the teacher is qualified, they will learn. It puts them ahead in first grade.
Parent Responses to Interview Question
Set 1, Continued

It develops interest and helps them later to have had some background.

Undecided or Don't Know (4)

It depends on how mature the child is. Some children aren't ready in kindergarten.

I picked (name) school because it does not have a structured program.

We moved here recently and didn't have this kind of work in (name) state with our older boy, when he was in kindergarten.

It's a good idea for my little girl because she is very excited about learning to read. On the other hand, other children may not be as ready as she is.
Parent Responses to Interview Question Set 1, Continued

What is the most important thing that children learn in kindergarten? N - 15

Responses:

Readiness to go into a school atmosphere, learning some basics, getting along with others.

How to behave and get used to school and classes. Phonics is important—that helps children to read the words.

Getting along with one another.

Interaction is important. Learning to read is very important because it effects how well they do in all the other subjects.

Learning to listen and follow directions. Also social skills, participating verbally, go to the bathroom by themselves, become an integral part of group.

To learn to listen, follow directions, and learn how to get along in a school situation.

Phonetics for reading and the ability to get along socially with other children, particularly.

Shapes and configuration, readiness and motivation, desire to want to read, relationships with others, and most importantly—a positive self-concept.

Learning their capability. They should learn to be with other children prior to kindergarten.

Getting along with others in the classroom situation.

Love learning and school. Good attitudes toward initial school experiences are very important.

Learning to get along in peer group, basics like numbers and the alphabet, and reading.
Associate with one another, follow directions of another adult besides mother, and get along with peers.

Develop a teacher-child relationship in preparing for first grade. They're expected to work in first grade and need some introduction—need to distinguish between play school-nursery atmosphere.

Socialization.
Parent Responses to Interview Question Set 2

Who do you think should decide when reading will be taught, and how it will be taught?

Why should that person decide? N = 15

Responses:

Teachers (9)

If it's a joint effort within a school. Teachers could not decide individually

A teacher knows how child is working in school. Parents like to push too much I think.

Educators are professionals and should realize their responsibility. I depend on them knowing.

Teachers have the background--it's their business. Most teachers will consider parent's views.

Teacher can see the child's capabilities in terms of other children. Parents should know but do not always recognize a child's true capability.

Parents would be too easy going and wouldn't recognize the difficult work children could do. If teachers were well qualified and experienced, they would know that age child and when they are ready for learning particular things.

Most parents don't know enough about the process of learning to read. Teachers should have more than one method to use, in case a child is not progressing.

Teachers understand phonics and children as well. Teachers would know when a child is ready.

Teachers have training in the area and are best qualified to judge.
Parent Responses to Interview Question
Set 2, Continued

Parents and Teachers (6)

Not sure parents always know and not sure teachers always know. A well-qualified, experienced teacher should know when a child is ready, but not all teachers are that well prepared.

Parents will have started if interested earlier, but teachers should decide when they're ready in kindergarten.

Parents and teachers in conjunction. Parents who are also teachers start preparing the child very early. In school decide jointly—teachers usually decide and are not always right. No need to rush—some are not ready.

Teacher is supposed to be trained to recognize when the child is ready but the parent knows the child the best—a cooperative decision.

Weighted in the direction of teachers...concerned for best learning and professional preparation. Parents are a supportive factor. If a child needs special attention, parents can recognize that and help. Teachers can't do it all—too many children.

If the teacher starts in school and gets no back-up from home, it doesn't work as well as it could. Working together is best.

How should the child enter into the decision?

The child should not have the power of decision. He needs to learn—must adjust to world of school and learning to read is part of it.

Can't ask a child. Does he express willingness and interest—perhaps a little test. Observe and see how a child works with some of the early activities.

A child enters it vicariously at first and later at the will of parents or teachers. If right environment is created, it will cause the child to want to read. Frequently they will bring books at an early age and ask that they be read to them.
Parent Responses to Interview Question Set 2, Continued

If they're not ready—won't start. If it's presented in the right manner, they will be eager to participate.

Mainly by attitude towards it. If it creates a behavioral problem, wait until later. Can't base readiness on a birthday—there's wide variations between children.

Individual differences must be considered. Parents are most aware of a child's individual readiness and quirks.

Should not. The child should not be consulted. Adults should make the decision.

Some would rather play. Could ask whether he'd like to do some of the things.

Recognize deficiency in the child. As true professionals, kindergarten teachers should be able to evaluate each child. If they are teaching, that means they have professional preparation.

Through his testing he's helping make the decision.

Observe the child and determine readiness. Child has to be evaluated.

Their responsiveness to having reading introduced. Can't be forced or pushed—must reveal an attitude of interest.

Depends upon his taste—don't rush the child into reading until he is ready.

Note: two parents indicated "I don't know."
Parent Responses to Interview Question Set 3.

Do you want today's children to have similar experiences (similar to your own, in learning to read)? Why is that?

Responses N = 15

YES (9)
It was very pleasant and enjoyable.
Kids should find reading a pleasure!
It was an enjoyable experience.
And more things like Sesame Street besides.
We do choral reading and reading aloud at home with them. I want them to have a good feeling about reading and about themselves.
Because they were happy, self-fulfilling and ego building.
What ever method was used must have been a good one because I grew up loving to read and reading a great deal. Today's children don't seem to be learning to love reading.
To work in small groups like we did, have more joy and less regimentation.
Because I enjoy reading and I would like for the children to enjoy it, too.

NO (3)
I didn't look forward to going to school. I want them to enjoy school and be eager to learn.
Because word association is better than memorization.
I see faults in it. Now they're experimenting with everything. But open classrooms don't seem to be the answer. I really don't know what's best.

UNDECIDED OR DON'T KNOW

First grade wasn't good but second was fantastic. I had a teacher that I still remember very well.

It really should be better. They should learn earlier and quicker than I did. It gives them a much better start in school.

It should be easier and quicker for today's children. In the last twenty-five years educators should have learned more about how to teach reading.
Parent Responses to Interview Question Set 4

Do you remember something about reading that made an impression on you?

If "yes," what was that article about?

Responses

Yes (10)

About kindergarten children getting ready to read.

I read everything I see on the subject; an article on letter reversals which can be crucial to identifying dyslexia; and an article encouraging parents to read aloud to their children.

Trying to start reading earlier than first grade now and finding it works well to start earlier.

I'm currently teaching secondary and recall Lou Burmeister's book on secondary reading, and also Arthur Heilman's on Phonics We Teach.

About the poor reading abilities of older children, and the pros and cons on phonics—I think it's very good.

When my child was two-and-a-half, I started the child in Montessori school and read books about Montessori.

Read to children because it helps them to learn to read.

Maybe we're pushing kids too early—maybe some should not start until 7 or 8 or even 9.

Some neighborhoods had set up nursery-kindergarten schools and found children learned numbers and letters on blocks very early.

I've read many articles and books but can't recall a specific one.
Parent Responses to Interview Question Set 4, Continued

Do you recall the name of the publication?

My mother is a kindergarten teacher and it was in one of her teaching magazines.

The *Ladies Home Journal* and *Family Life*.

*Parade* article, "Parents Can Help Children Learn to Read."


The book: *Too Much Too Soon*.

*Parents* magazine.

Where do you find the most helpful information about the teaching of reading?

**Responses**

From my child's teacher and school. If there's something particular that I need to know I'd ask my child's teacher for help or to recommend a source.

My sister who has taught in remedial reading and television—but nothing specific.

A friend at the Reading Center and friends who have had children experiencing difficulty in learning to read, and in teacher conferences.

Observation in the classroom, seeing different procedures that different teachers use with children.

On television, (name) watches educational TV—*Sesame Street* presents pictures and words together and that seems to help my child learn the words.

State Department of Education information on Right to Read and workshops.
Parent Responses to Interview Question Set 4, Continued

From kindergarten teachers, a good friend that teaches third grade, from other mothers who have children learning to read, and television—documentaries like 60 Minutes' program on dyslexia.

My son's teacher and special courses on language and speech development or child development. When I feel the need to know about something I frequently enroll in a course that is related to my needs. I always ask about the school program before I enroll my child.

Newspapers and magazines, education journals, and the Good Housekeeping.

Visiting and observing in the schools.

Heard about the Lippincott Program at work. People there have told me to look for a kindergarten that uses that program.

I go to a teacher or reading specialist. I have a friend who teaches reading and if I have a question I ask her.

What I learned in educational psychology in school. I really need to read some current research articles. Newspapers just print what they want.

From experience in the classroom. I've worked in daycare and have learned a great deal about children by working with children.

I don't look for it! Perhaps I'm a bad parent. Parents depend on the teacher's knowing what's best. Teachers should be impressed by knowledge of methods and research. For example, the new math didn't work and they should have known that before they put it into the schools. Really, it's the teacher's responsibility.
Teacher Responses to Interview Question Set 1.

How do you feel about the idea of starting beginning reading activities in the kindergarten?

Why do you feel that way?

Responses N = 15

IT'S A GOOD IDEA (12)

The earlier children are exposed, the easier it is to learn.

Because they group children at the beginning of first grade. All or none of the kindergartens should be teaching sounds and the alphabet. Some children are not ready though.

Children are ready for it. They retain more from 4 to 6.

Readiness concepts okay, like activities involving letters, sounds, color words—things that are familiar to the child already.

Children are ready for it. They have been exposed to so much—are more aware. Most are successful.

Because children are ready.

It's good for some children. Many children are ready for reading experiences. They've had a wide range of experiences and group activities as well.

Don't see any reason to limit what children are exposed to. No reason to put them on HOLD until first grade.

Those who are ready will start, as a natural transition. There's no need to press for skill development.

It's necessary! It prepares them for first grade reading skills.

Because of phonics. It introduces the child to first grade work.
Most children seem to be ready. They've seen a lot on television and can recognize words. Two-thirds of the children were here for the four-year class and half were here as three-year-olds.

**IT'S NOT A GOOD IDEA (2)**

There are other things this age group can do that will be more helpful than specific skills and worksheets or a regular program.

If a child can do it himself, all right. No program to start reading. My class has six to seven months difference in age.

**I DON'T KNOW (1)**

Some children are ready and will start. It is happening. Children of 3 are reading signs and that is fine, but not all children are ready. The variations among children are great. I want to do experience stories.
Teacher Responses to Interview Question Set 1, Continued

What is the most important thing that children learn in kindergarten? N = 15

Responses:

A feeling of self-worth and high self-concept.

A sense of learning as fun. Other things are important like self-confidence, pre-reading skills—interest in words, love of stories, words are made up of sounds, what is written on paper is talk written down.

Those who are ready will start—a natural transition. There's no need to press for skill development.

To be able to sit still, listen, follow directions, and get along with the group.

God is relevant to their everyday life and the Bible has the message about his son.

Listening—learning to listen, learning self control.

To be away from parents for a short period of time. Learn to share, play together, listen to teacher and other children, even sitting and listening.

To feel good about themselves.

Letter recognition and sounds are most important. Also a good concept of numbers through ten, good social development—adapt to new situation and get along with other children.

Listen and follow instructions. Reading readiness skills are important, too.

There are several: participate in a group, listen, fundamentals of reading, learning what school is about.

Learning to deal with 18 to 20 children in a school environment. Field trips into the outside world, to widen experiences, are important, too.
Teacher Responses to Interview Question
Set 1, Continued

To listen and follow instructions.

Social contact, learning to take turns, listening—aids maturity and ability to function in first grade.
Who do you think should decide when reading will be taught, and how it will be taught? (parents, teachers, parents and teachers, or somebody else)

Why should that person decide?

Response N = 15

PARENTS (2)

Parents make that decision when they select the school. The teacher develops the curriculum, but concerned parents usually inquire and select a school that has basic skills or a play school.

Because they can start them early and can choose the kind of kindergarten that children attend—one that has reading readiness or not.

TEACHERS (7)

Because they have training and parents do not.

But teachers are not really well enough trained. They have more training than parents and parents tend to push their children too hard—especially the bright ones.

She's acquainted with the child and knows what children can learn and when they're ready.

The first grade teacher, because reading will be taught in first grade. Others starting earlier will do so naturally.

She has many children to observe and can compare and determine readiness.

They understand the child and recognize when they're ready and do not force if they're not.

A teacher that has worked with the child. That teacher knows the individual child's needs.
Teacher Responses to Interview Question Set 2, Continued

PARENTS AND TEACHERS (1)
A combination of the two working together. The two should decide. Parents are most concerned and teachers have more training and understanding of what children can do.

SOMEONE ELSE (5)
The child. I don't think you teach them to read. The child does it. We merely help.

Educators and researchers. Parents couldn't because they wouldn't all decide at the same time. First grade teachers don't want it taught because of differing levels. They think it's better to wait for first grade.

Researchers and people who have had a chance to observe children. Don't think parents should because they can't compare children and get an overall view. First grade teachers discourage it for kindergarten.

Directors or principals and teachers. Some children are started at home by their parents. Some parents push the children too fast. A teacher has the education to recognize when a child is ready.

People who have worked with children—and not just individuals. If the group is ready and the child is not—that adds information. On a one-to-one basis a child can do things that he cannot do in a group. School is a group situation.

How should the child enter into the decision?
He would have to be ready for it. Children can't really learn until they are ready.

When the child is ready, it will be a natural step forward. In my class, I have children who are reading because they've learned letter sounds and can put them together.
The child should be observed for maturity and the teacher should encourage a child if he shows interest. She should help him along.

When children are enthusiastic about learning to read, they will do so. They should not be forced.

The child should be ready—maybe testing will provide the answer. The child should be anxious to read.

If the child is ready to learn, he will pick up what is taught. If he can handle and cope with it, then pursue instruction. Otherwise drop it.

It has to be geared to the child and the child's attention span. No pressure should be used.

By existing and reacting with the parent—mentally, physically and socially.

If a child can perform in a group situation and then in readiness materials, if most can start in Lippincott, then start them. The 4-year-olds would not be ready.

Children learn much from television. The child should not be pressed, if not interested and eager to learn. Most children are excited about being able to recognize the words.

The child should decide. The teacher can stimulate interest and help.

If he's ready, he'll show positive interest. He should not be pressured at this point.

He makes the decision by showing through his behavior when he's ready. By sitting still, controlling pencil and interest.

It depends on how excited and eager the child is to learn. In first grade they don't have any choice.

I don't know.
Teacher Responses to Interview Question Set 3.

Do you want today's children to have similar experiences (similar to your own, in learning to read)?

Why is that?

Responses  

N = 15

YES (9)

Nothing ever bothered me. I enjoyed it.

I'd want them to feel the enjoyment and eagerness to read many books.

But they can offer more. Teachers can do more creative things. They can do a unit or something rather than just stay with a single book.

We weren't pressured as much as children today are. Even in the early grades privileges are taken away for less than As.

It can't have any adverse effect as long as there is no pressure.

Reading is pure pleasure, enriches life, and reading is a way of finding things out.

They should have happy, pleasant school experiences. I know sometimes it's hard to have them mind and be happy, too.

Because it was enjoyable, but I think phonics should go along with sight reading.

Because they can learn phonics. I remember all good experiences.

NO (4)

It should be different. There should be a good phonics background when starting to read. My other children had it and are good readers. I didn't and am a slow reader.
Teacher Responses to Interview Question Set 1, Continued

I was teacher's pet and it didn't do anything but inflate my ego.

I'm strictly for phonetic reading. It's much easier for children to remember individual sounds and letters than whole words.

It was very cold and unimaginative—not nearly creative enough.

UNDECIDED OR DON'T KNOW (2)

I like some of the traditional but some of the new freedom and creativity. The traditional part that I like is the basic math and English, and rules.

Yes, pleasant experiences, but with phonics.
Do you remember something about reading that made an impression on you?

If "yes," what was that article about?

Responses N = 15

Yes (13)

Shouldn't place pressure on children—when they're ready then they can perform on their own.

Every child does not learn the same way. It's up to the adult to find out how to teach them.

The article on preschoolers and their using concrete objects to help them learn to read. This helps children understand what the story is about.

A book about teaching young children to read—could teach a two-year old, if you wanted to.

Articles on high school in the newspaper, telling about children graduating who cannot read. These articles panic parents. My college-educated parents recognize the pit falls of not reading. I have had five-year olds who read well, children who have been read to all their life.

It was a newspaper article on how to help your child be a better reader. It said to read the story and then ask questions.

Several articles about phonics and sight reading.

Piaget's work.

General articles explaining that children are different at different stages of development.

When children should start learning to read.

Modular teaching and reaching each individual child—meeting their needs.
Children must have had some prior experiences. If reading about a farm, they need experiences—need concrete experiences.

About authors of children's literature—the process and the product.

Do you recall the name of the publication?

The magazine section of the newspaper.

A book explaining Piaget.

Grade Teacher.

Believe it was the newspaper.

Teacher.

I've learned from many child development books that I've read.

Newspaper articles.

Parade magazine section.

Article in Parade, "How to Teach Your Child to Read More and Faster."

Psychology Today.

The book: Dare to Discipline—everybody needs discipline.

Dare to Discipline, by Dr. Dodson.

(One teacher responded "no.")
Where do you find the most helpful information about the teaching of reading?

Responses

Reading conferences at (name) university.

Workshops and student teaching experience in the public schools.

My old teaching materials that I've collected—newspaper clippings, charts, good worksheets, and special articles.

Methods classes in reading and education journals.

From college courses and instructors at (name) university.

Personal experiences with children. Background from courses helps guide—what to look for. I believe I learn to teach through teaching and working with children. I see what works and what doesn't.

Teacher magazines like Teacher, seminars, and other teachers.

From teaching and private tutoring. I experiment and find what works. Workshops are much alike.

Newspaper articles.

From our Lippincott program.

From the Lippincott Teacher's Guide and from working with children. I learned from the salesman and listened to tapes that accompany the program. Also from a workshop on hyperactivity.

A friend who teaches at the Reading Center and some workshops.

Books about early childhood education, articles in the newspaper and through Lippincott Resource Teacher's Guide.

Courses at school, talking with teachers that have tried various things and workshops.
Observations in classroom situations, kindergarten workshops, and in (city) we had a Consultant for Kindergartens that was very helpful. I was a first year teacher and that was very helpful. And other teachers.
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