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Teaching phonics within a whole language theoretical orientation

Nancy Lynne Woodhead

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TEACHING PHONICS WITHIN A
WHOLE LANGUAGE THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

A Project Submitted to
The Faculty of the School of Education
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the
Degree of

Master of Arts
in
Education: Reading Option

by

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SUMMARY

This project promotes the teaching of phonics within a whole language theoretical orientation. It will enable those teachers who feel phonics instruction an essential ingredient of reading instruction to be able to teach skills within a whole language theoretical orientation. It expresses some of my own concerns and cites whole language advocates who have found a means of combining phonics lessons within the whole language theoretical orientation. One such advocate, Marilyn Adams wrote "...a ready knowledge of spellings and their connections to sound is necessary for becoming a willing, thoughtful, and able reader." (1991, pps. 211-212)

Through whole language, students are better able to focus their minds upon single concepts, thus aiding their learning for students seek meaning and connections in order to incorporate information into their existing schemata. The whole language theoretical orientation combines the teaching of semantics, syntax, sound and symbol relationships,
context, and prior knowledge. (Class Notes, 1988).

Whole language is also motivating for children. It provides a variety of ways for children to learn and express themselves. They accomplish the latter verbally and physically through art, music, movement, drama, and written and oral expression. Additionally their social skills are enhanced by learning to question and develop personal expression as well as the strengthening of their communication skills through use of techniques such as cooperative learning groups.

There are three thematic units within this project which promote social, writing, verbal, and cognitive skills necessary for the future lives of students. These units focus upon the following topics: Ocean life, land animals, and air life. The primary goal of these three units is to show children how all of life is interconnected and why mankind should be concerned with our environment. These units provide a wide range of activities as well as tools to use for evaluative purposes.

Although these units target first and second grades, they may be adapted to fit necessary grade levels.
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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In the eighteenth century, literacy was taught in the family setting. There were three aspects of family literacy according to Managham (1991). They were as follows: 1) it fostered family interaction, 2) it was communal in nature, and 3) the father served as the head teacher in the evenings. (Managham, 1991)

Family literacy was met in ways such as Bible reading, memorization of Bible verses and prayers, and diary or journal writing which served in personal (primarily spiritual) development. (Managham, 1991)

There are gaps in the history of literacy instruction in the early eighteenth century, but it is known that reading was taught orally by an alphabet method in which hornbooks (small boards with handles on which were mounted pieces of parchment containing the alphabet and table of numbers) and primers (books used for instructing children to read) were used for alphabet and syllabary mastery before moving on to Bible reading. (Managham, 1991)

Literacy was also taught along gender lines.
Women taught young children reading until they were seven years of age at which time the men in the household taught penmanship (the primary source of writing). (Managham, 1991)

Most schools were open solely to boys. Girls could attend private schools during the hours the boys did not attend school. In general, private writing masters were paid for the instruction of girls.

Today, matters are quite different. Our family system is disintegrating and it is now up to the schools to provide the educational background that was previously learned in the home.

America is currently facing the problem of non readers. Despite the National Governors' Association and President Bush's national goal stating the right of all "adult" Americans to be literate, America is still in the midst of a future of non reading adults if teachers do not respond to the pressing needs of our children who will physically mature into adults and, possibly, be non readers. (Managhan, 1991)

It is an unfortunate statistic that nine out of ten children who begin first grade in the lowest group remain in the lowest group throughout their elementary
education. (Managhan, 1991)

With an increasing number of children coming from homes where both parents are working and are often too busy, too poor, too undereducated, or simply too self absorbed to provide the pre-academic training children of previous generations were privy to.

The United States is spending a substantial amount of money for special education and the repercussions of remedial children; however, the need is to support the children, not the programs. We need to enhance our literacy rate. (Managhan, 1991)

The reading continuum consists of three theories of reading instruction. They are the decoding model, the skills model, and the whole language philosophy. (Class Notes, 1988)

The decoding model begins with the teaching of sounds and symbols, then moves to the teaching of individual words, and finally advances to gaining meaning from sentences, paragraphs, and texts. (Class Notes, 1988)

The second model, the skills approach, teaches vocabulary, decoding, comprehension, and grammar in separate entities. (Class Notes, 1988)
The whole language philosophy combines the teaching of meaning, syntax, sound and symbol relationships, context, and prior knowledge. It asserts that language is a natural process and is learned from whole to part. It seems to take the decoding model and teach it upside down, moving from meaning to sound and symbol relationships (Class Notes, 1988).

New Zealand is known for their whole language theoretical orientation concerning reading. Their schools begin educating their children on their fifth birthday. Those with learning problems are not separated from their peers. In a study where ability grouping did not occur, Logan, Rux, and Paradis (1991) wrote

Rather than being separated from readers of differing abilities as in ability grouping, children in this class learned from each other. Within groups, most children saw other students as reliable and willing sources of information even though they were aware of ability differences...a very good reader reported
that...she had not understood part of a story but two group members (less able readers) had explained it to her. (Logan, Rux, Paradis, 1991, p. 93)

When beginning this paper, I perceived myself as being eclectic in my view of teaching reading. I had found that a program based on a whole language philosophy had been fun and motivating for both children and teachers. It had much to offer many children. It provided a variety of ways in which children could express themselves; physically and verbally through art and through written expression. Furthermore, they were growing socially and learning to question and develop personal expression as well as developing and enhancing communication skills necessary for future jobs.

In such a program, children were using all their senses, and thus, whole language was reaching and teaching groups of children with diverse learning styles.

I was partial to most of the concepts of whole language, but expressed concern in teaching my lower children and saw a need for more work on the
graphophonemic (phonics) and syntactic (grammar and sentence structure) cuing systems than what I believed the whole language philosophy catered to. I felt that the whole language theoretical orientation minimized the instruction of the aforementioned areas.

I appreciated the various theories which stated the learning of phonics would come in time, but I felt phonics could still be taught more in depth in the classroom—especially with regard to children who were struggling with the whole language reading process.

I noted that many children who had entered my class as non readers benefitted greatly from phonics instruction. It provided them with building blocks with which to decode and formulate words. These children were overwhelmed and on the verge of giving up before phonics instruction, but after a few months of work, they were able to read at first grade level.

As far as semantics (meaning) went, I felt (and still feel) the whole language philosophy taught it well to all children. I believed, and still maintain the belief, that whole language did well to integrate the forementioned cuing systems, but could have been strengthened by working with the sound and symbol base
of the decoding model and allowing separate instructional time for the teaching of grammar as allowed by the skills model.

Meanwhile, I have since found, to my surprise (and perhaps some dismay and embarrassment) that my philosophy can be compatible with the whole language philosophy. It was as though the proverbial lamb (whole language) and lion (skills and phonics) finally laid down together. I found that I simply lacked the knowledge of incorporating the teaching of such skills into daily whole language lessons. There is much preparation necessary to teach whole language properly. Perhaps part of me was simply too lazy to accept such responsibility.

Granted, there is no foolproof system by which to teach reading. Williamson and Carrington (1991) quote:

The direct conversion of theoretical insights into practical terms...tends to lead to egregious over-generalization. What might be a good idea with a few children in a limited
context becomes inflated into a foolproof system for teaching entire populations the whole time.

(p. 138)

I intend to show those who fear that whole language tosses the instruction of skills and phonics out, how to come to terms with seemingly conflicting beliefs and how compatibility can be achieved among such ideas.

Furthermore, thematic units are a wonderful way for teachers to organize classroom curriculum. In addition, they enable children to organize their thoughts and to concentrate on a given topic. This is a far more effective means of learning.

To exemplify this efficiency, let's examine how a laser beam works. It is a high concentration of light focused on a given object. Because all the light is directed on a given area it has the power to cut human tissues. Of course, light not so concentrated or directed is not as powerful.

The mind works in a similar fashion. When concentrated upon a single topic or idea, it is able to
learn more effectively and efficiently.

With thematic units, children have a focal point and are able to note how subjects relate to each other. This relates to schema theory which concerns the way one organizes information about a given topic. An integrated curriculum utilizes schema theory (meaning prior knowledge or background knowledge).

Sadoski, Paivio, and Goetz (1991) list elements assumed by all schema theories. They are 1) selection of information, 2) abstraction (a means of storing information), 3) interpretation (in which background knowledge aids in comprehension), 4) integration (in which previous products of interpretation form a memory representation), and finally a retrieval process known as 5) reconstruction.

Whole language activities play a vital role in literacy, for as Brown and Briggs (1991) write "Children should be encouraged to participate in environmental literacy activities because these experiences are indispensable to language development." (p. 34)

According to Blachowicz and Lee (1991) there are characteristics essential to whole literacy
instruction. They are as follows: 1) time is spent on real reading, 2) learners are actively engaged with meaningful, language-rich tasks (ones which involve students personally and as active participants the write, share, respond, and read as opposed to passive receivers of information) and 3) problem-solving strategies are utilized and developed.

Hurd (1990) writes the following:

Language and social interaction skill development do though appear to be intimately entwined with another. Halliday in fact asserted that ‘There can be no social man without language and no language without social man.’ ‘Language then symbolizes the social system, creating it as well as being created by it. (p. 128)

It is for the reasons stated in this paper thus far that I am writing a curriculum project supporting whole language and how phonics instruction can be taught within it’s framework. I will discuss my personal conflict in combining the two seemingly opposing views and present ways to teach phonics in
ways acceptable to those with a solely whole language theoretical orientation.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Often it seems that whole language and the teaching of skills are at opposing ends. After listening to complaints of teachers concerning the conflict between whole language and phonics, I have found that it is a common mistake to see the two as incompatible concepts. In beginning this paper, I was ambivalent in my feelings regarding whole language. The following paragraphs will show how I was able to find a way to teach phonics within a whole language theoretical orientation.

In beginning this paper, I found the whole language theoretical orientation to be highly appealing to children, but I felt safe to note that children did not always want what was best for them. I could see that in the types of foods children chose. Given a choice between vegetables and a candy bar, most children would choose the latter. Granted at least the child was eating something and wouldn't die of hunger, but nevertheless, nutrition ought to take precedence over a child's pleasure.
I believed that like vegetables, skills weren't going to win the excitement of children when compared to reading, writing, and discussing literature. Phonics simply wasn't appealing to children, but neither were baths, cleaning rooms, or doing yard work. My point was that a child's reading would be stronger with more work on skills.

To exemplify this, I'd look at present day athletics. There are two prevalent philosophies in teaching sports to children. One is that the most important thing is that they learn to enjoy sports, the other being that children need to learn self discipline and that winning is a result of working hard and having repetitive drills which aren't always fun. The goal of this philosophy is to win. In our "dog-eat-dog" society, I believed, and still maintain the belief, that the latter philosophy is vital in preparing children for their futures.

As a child, I swam for a coach who was drill oriented. I never enjoyed practice, but loved swim meets because I usually won. My pleasure came from such accomplishments.

Another team we competed against, swam for a coach
who believed teaching children to enjoy swimming was the most important element of his coaching. Though their team never beat us, they did have fun.

My team reared winners. We worked hard, hated practice, and won. My little sister eventually became an Olympic medalist and world record holder with such training.

The other team’s kids did learn to swim, but not nearly as well our team’s. This showed me that skills were necessary for winners. I am still supportive of skills but have, through this paper, learned that I can side both with skills and whole language.

Skills are not necessarily incompatible with the whole language theoretical orientation. It is possible to teach skills within the whole language framework.

Baumann (1991) in synthesizing dictionary definitions of the term "skills" defined literary skills "as aptitudes, abilities, or proficiencies language users employ intentionally, selectively, and flexible for the performance of literacy acts such as composing a written test or understanding and responding to a text written by someone else." (1991, p.iv)

I, like Baumann, agree "that skills...ought not
involve funny little tasks that appear out of the blue and seemingly have little relationship to composing, comprehending, or responding to written text..." (1991, p.v1)

It seems to be the prevalent thought that skills are instructional beasts. While whole language advocates do condone the teaching of skills as part of reading and writing, they do not provide the necessary instruction children need. Such advocates rely primarily upon the teachable moment - a time when children desire to learn or come upon a specific skill. (Baumann, 1991)

The exclusive reliance on such teachable moments creates the potential problem of important literary skills to remain unpresented. I side with Baumann (1991) as he states:

I will argue that the disdain with which whole language proponents view skills along with the restrictive conditions under which skills are to be taught within a whole language framework may result in students being deprived of
instruction in certain appropriate
and necessary literary skills. (1991, p.iv)

I am not inappreciative of the sum of whole language. In fact, as I stated earlier in this paper, I find that my eclectic philosophy largely consists of whole language concepts; however, I do find a need to develop more fully the graphophonic and syntactic cuing systems in younger children.

In support of phonics, Williamson and Carrington (1991) wrote

what is rarely, if ever stated
is that the child's efforts to comprehend what he is reading,
by forming reasonable hypotheses about the likely meaning of un
known words, can only take place if, and when, the child already possesses a store of words which he does understand, as well as a knowledge of certain of the phonic regularities in the language. (1991, p.140)

Marilyn Adams in a 1991 interview supported the
teaching of phonics in connection with its meaningful use concerning print - not as a base for teaching reading nor as an isolated skill to be learned. She expounded upon the importance of phonics by stating: "...a ready knowledge of spellings and their connections to sound is necessary for becoming a willing, thoughtful, and able reader." (Adams, 1991, pps. 211-212)

She further magnified the importance of phonics instruction by writing:

I found myself deeply impressed by both the breadth of research indicating that...youngsters really must develop a ready knowledge of spellings and of their connections to speech in order to become confident, thoughtful, reflective, willing, able readers. That much is not debatable. (Adams, 1991, p.207)

Freppen and Dahl (1991) discussed phonics instruction in a whole language classroom. They observed a primary class in which children with little or no previous exposure to print learn through centers
why print is meaningful. The centers included a science center, a book center, a writing center, and a dramatic play center. The dramatic play center encouraged the use of print by use of a sign up sheet, make believe appointment calendars, and note pads and pencils.

The children used journals in which to write. A daily agenda was posted on the board. They learned the code by the teacher writing in front of them and orally sounding out words as she wrote. The teacher also encouraged children to find the sounds in words as they wrote. She emphasized the importance of others being able to read her message. (Freppon and Dahl, 1991)

Freppon and Dahl (1991) provided principals for phonics instruction within a whole language classroom. They were as follows: 1) phonics instruction must be learning centered so that it is developmentally appropriate, 2) phonics instruction needs to be taught in communicative tasks (writing notes or making lists) so that it is learned in context, 3) children need a foundation of ideas about print before instruction begins so that lessons are not merely abstract concepts but are beneficial in strengthening their knowledge of
sound-symbol relations, 4) instruction needs to be based on the communicative purposes and goals of the children, 5) learning must be integrated with other written language concepts and not taught in isolation, 6) the teacher must demonstrate sound-symbol relations (as in the class writing of a story and sounding out words), 7) the learners must be actively involved in instruction as in sounding out words they are using in their stories, and 8) children need to learn from many sources (each other, print around the room, teachers, etc.).

Perez (1991) wrote how teachers use writing for phonics instruction. He presented ideas for children to use the visual, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic channels of learning, thus helping all children to internalize sound-symbol relationships.

First, he wrote how one teacher used a chart. She had a capital "A" at the top of the chart and asked children to state all the words they can that begin with a capital "A" - thus imbibing phonics and writing techniques. The children then were given turns to read the chart using a pointer to point to the word being read. Afterwards, the children were to copy the words
on a separate piece of paper and were given a star next to each correct word. If a word was incorrect, the child returned to her seat to write it correctly until a star could be put next to it. Though not composing, the children recorded language graphically which helped in word recognition abilities. (Perez, 1991)

Adams, in her review of research related to beginning reading, also concluded that children - and especially at risk children - needed a rich variety of reading and writing experiences, as well as some direct instruction in letter-sound patterns (1991, p. 579).

In working with first grade teachers from various schools, Cunningham (1991) developed a balanced, multimethod, multilevel approach to beginning literary instruction.

She wrote how a teacher would teach such a balanced type of curriculum. In observing such a class, Cunningham wrote, the teacher began with a class writing project in which she did the writing in front of the children and purposely made mistakes in her writing. The children, in turn, checked to see that the following existed: 1) every sentence made sense, 2) every sentence began with a capital letter and ended
with a punctuation mark, 3) people and place names had capital letters, 4) possible misspelled words were circled, and 5) the writing stayed on the topic. (Cunningham, 1991)

Upon completion of this lesson, children were dismissed to work on their own writing. Children were at various stages of the writing process. There were tables for pre-editing (student and peer done), editing (teacher and parent helper done), printing (children writing the story in prestapled, construction paper covered booklets), and illustrating. (Cunningham, 1991)

After a given time, the children returned to the carpet to share their work. Children were given a specified day each week to share something they had worked on. Listeners stated what they liked about a child’s story and how she could make it better. (Cunningham, 1991)

Immediately after the last child had read her story, the children returned to their seats with paper. They faced a wall on which 110 words on construction paper were in columns and were arranged alphabetically by the first letter. (These were the most commonly
used English words. Five were added to this list each week.) She told them she was going to dictate to them three sentences. As she did so, the children used the words on the wall to help them spell correctly. After the sentences were completed, they checked for capitalization and ending punctuation. They checked for spelling by chanting the spelling of each word. This took about thirteen minutes. (Cunningham, 1991)

Next, they went to making words, a time when children listened for vowels, looked for patterns, and recognized how one consonant could change a word. They were each given four consonant and two vowel cards. The teacher asked the children to identify the two vowels. She asked children to spell a two-letter word utilizing their cards. She asked the children for their responses and then wrote the word on the board. Then she had them create three and four-letter words following the same process. Lastly, they created a surprise word utilizing all their letter cards from the day’s lesson. (This word would be used later to begin their basal lesson. The children were always excited about what the daily surprise word would be because it was to be the topic of their reading that day.)
By this time, several words were printed on the board. The teacher continued the lesson by asking what words rhymed with a given word. They spelled the rhyming words and found similarities in their endings. They were then asked to spell words not on the board that rhymed with a given word from the day's lesson. (Cunningham, 1991)

The surprise word, turnip, was then returned to and discussed. Children talked about what they knew about the word. They opened their books to "The Enormous Turnip", looked at the pictures, and discussed whether the story was fiction or non-fiction. They were told to read the story with a partner and to think about character development because they would be acting out the story at the end of the lesson. (As they read, the teacher walked around the room making notes on the reading fluency of what she called "the day’s children" which were the children whose day it was to share their writing work earlier.) Upon completion of this task, children were brought together to act out their story and then to complete their workbook pages. (Cunningham, 1991)
Next, the children had a twenty minute self-selected reading block. Books - by topic - were assigned to various tables (ie. tray 1 had books pertaining to their science lesson, tray 2 had "old favorites," tray 3 had preprimers and primers, etc.). The children read silently or with a partner. As they did so, the teacher went around with a clipboard taking notes on the day's assigned children and asking them questions about their reading and having them read to her. At the end, the day's assigned children told about what they had read or else read a favorite page from their book. (Cunningham, 1991)

This showed a classroom in which children were actively engaged in writing, reading, and working with words without the use of traditional worksheet seatwork.

Because of this shift from traditional seatwork, questions have arisen regarding the roll of the teacher in the education of children for

In the past, teachers tended to do much of the talking and thinking for students asking the questions, issuing the information and
Students are now encouraged to talk, frame questions, work through problems, discuss the topics of their reading and writing or pin down some aspect of language itself. (Ministry of Education, 1988, p.16)

Students collaborate with the teacher allowing themselves to explore their personal understandings and their relations to things outside of themselves. The teacher no longer dominates the classroom situation. There are no longer necessarily right and wrong responses to questions provided viable answer is given. This enhances individual exploration of answers and more open sharing of thought during group-interaction. Furthermore, students develop social relations, listening skills, and the ability to clearly express themselves as necessitated by group discussions which are advantages to their future lives in dealing with others. (Ministry of Education, 1988)

In breaking away from the traditional role of the teacher, comes a change in the grouping of children.Traditionally, children have been grouped by ability;
however "the authors of *Becoming a Nation of Readers* state because of the serious problems inherent in ability grouping, the Commission on Reading believes that educators should explore other options for reading instruction." (Logan, Rux, and Paradis, 1991, p.85)

Logan, Rux, and Paradis (1991) proposed a way in which to organize heterogeneous grouping within a classroom. They identified two key components in such classroom organization: 1) an all-class book and 2) books written by groups. There were also many management techniques concerning discussion group rotations and a posted daily agenda.

They stressed four reading strategies to be modeled during time spent on the class book. These strategies had important ties to reading comprehension and were used often during the academic year. These strategies were as follows: "1) mapping and categorizing, 2) written retellings, summaries, and responses, 3) mental imagery exercises, and 4) prediction/confirmation exercises." (Logan, Rux, & Paradis, 1991, pps. 86-87)

After working on the all-class book, the teacher introduced three books. The children were to then
choose one book to work on for an extended period of time. Groups were thus formed depending upon interest. Children were given up to one week to change book groups. (Logan, Rux, & Paradis, 1991)

Following this, the teacher read the groups the first two chapters of their chosen book in order to stimulate interest in their story. (Logan, Rux, & Paradis, 1991)

Students proceeded to read a given amount of chapters depending on the book’s level of difficulty. Children not finished, did so during sustained silent reading (SSR) or were allowed to take them home to complete. (Logan, Rux, & Paradis, 1991)

When the books and related activities were finished, the process began again.

Management techniques included 1) a daily reading schedule, 2) serving individual needs of the students, 3) rotation of work within discussion groups, 4) pacing, and 5) anecdotal records on each child. (Logan, Rux, & Paradis, 1991)

The students’ daily assigned activities were listed on the board and were discussed by the teacher at the beginning of the reading period. This helped
to avoid later class interruptions and provided the more able students with extra related activities. (Logan, Rux, & Paradis, 1991)

In addressing individual needs, there were regular discussion groups which provided less fluent readers an opportunity to clarify content and the chance to note how fluent readers made connections and drew conclusions. Students were also provided with activities that strengthened their use of skills (is. mapping, summarizing, etc.) Assignments were open-ended in order that individual student needs might be met. (Logan, Rux, & Paradis, 1991)

Groups rotated around reading, vocabulary, responding to questions, discussing content, and connecting the story to background information and related books. (Logan, Rux, & Paradis, 1991)

Pacing was necessary so that all groups finished approximately at the same time. This varied due to book choices and individual needs and was dealt with in means of assigned work to groups. (Logan, Rux, & Paradis, 1991)

Lastly, anecdotal records were kept. Students were observed at least once a week. The records were
used to determine who needed to be challenged more and who needed extra help. Records were kept for parent conferences as an evaluative technique. (Logan, Rux, & Paradis, 1991)

Logan, Rux, and Paradis noted that the following four factors enabled heterogeneous grouping to succeed: "positive student perspective, student choices of reading material, group cooperation, and group discussion." (1991, p.92)

Children had a positive perspective on such grouping and saw themselves connected to a given book rather than labeled as belonging to a reading level. Additionally, because of the ability to choose their own reading material, students were more motivated to read and complete assignments. Furthermore, group cooperation enabled students to use each other as viable sources of information, thus learning from each other, for it was through group discussion, that many ideas were presented which clarified and enhanced a student’s knowledge about the material. (Logan, Rux, & Paradis, 1991)

Blachowicz and Lee (1991) described three characteristics they believe are essential in whole
literacy instruction which emphasize "real reading in classrooms, engaging learners in active ways in instruction, and developing independent problem-solving strategies." (1991, p.190)

Students need to be provided with broad experiences with words in reading, discussing, and responding to literature. Blachwicz and Lee (1991) provided the following guidelines for whole literacy classroom vocabulary instruction: 1) Choose from contextual reading all vocabulary for instruction. 2) Use vocabulary from material that will be used in the course of study (ie. maps and seatwork). 3) Use words associated with concepts from the reading. 4) Use vocabulary in postreading activities. 5) Refer to the reading and other meanings for discussion if words are still unclear. 6) Vocabulary should be used in integrated ways (ie. acting, speaking, writing, etc.).

"Graves identified three developmental stages in the children’s composing process: 1) overt and early manifestations of speech, 2) page-explicit transitions, and 3) speech features implicit in text." (Brown and Briggs, 1991)

In stage one, speech embellishes the student’s
writing. Characteristically, children at stage two combine the composing process with drawing. The third stage resembles the way a child speaks. (Brown and Briggs, 1991)

Children learn the functional uses of reading and writing by observing parents and others involved in print interaction. (Brown and Briggs, 1991)

Social interactions encourage the learning of the fundamentals of writing and thus, classroom conversations should be encouraged during a student's act of composing. (Brown and Briggs, 1991)

Fitzgerald (1989) advised teachers to use the following strategies in promoting writing and thinking: 1) Students should be told to write. 2) After writing, the students should form small groups and meet as a group with the teacher to read their own piece. 3) The teacher in the group should ask the children to respond to the following: a) Tell me what the paper was about. b) Tell me what you liked about the paper, and c) Do you have any suggestions, comments or questions for the writer? 4) The students should be provided an opportunity to revise their pieces.

In conclusion, students need to learn phonics as
part of whole language instruction. Phonics provides the necessary building blocks which enable a student to decode as well as spell words. A whole language theoretical orientation is valuable because it aids in making meaningful connections with a student's existing schema. It is possible to teach phonics within a whole language framework.
GOALS AND LIMITATIONS

Goals

The objective of these thematic units is to teach (in an integrated manner) science, reading, writing, art, music, social studies, and occasionally math. By focusing students on a particular topic, they will be better able to connect information and thus retain learned material more effectively.

Through the enjoyment of literature, students will be more motivated to read and complete assignments as well as stimulated to pursue independent reading projects. Additionally, students when reading or being read to will acquire a knowledge of story structure and plot development and thus enhance their writing abilities.

Student motivation will also be enhanced by realizing that reading and writing can be fun because of their connection to the fine arts.

Because of the cooperative group and whole class learning, children will become better prepared for their future lives in dealing with others. They will
be stronger speakers for they will need to clearly express their thoughts and, additionally, they will have strengthened their listening skills. Through group work they will come to an understanding that others may have different views than those of their own. They will develop confidence in defending their personal views which may help lessen peer pressure in their later years.

Limitations

There are some limitations in attaining the forementioned goals. The first is insufficient funds with which to pull from. My own school has had several budget cuts resulting in fewer books for our school library, fewer funds for art supplies, the loss of access to a much needed film library, and a complete budget cut for all field trips. (These limitations have been reconciled by using my personal income to rent films from a nearby video store, buying books for a class library, buying art supplies and occasionally having children bring in their own, and having our P.T.A. raise money for a field trip fund. If my principal would have allowed, I would have had a classroom fund raiser by saving newspapers and cans.)
The ideas in my project will need to be adapted to specific grade levels by building upon or taking away from some concepts.

For some lessons, parental aide, peer tutoring, or cross-age tutoring may be necessary. In lower economic schools it may be difficult to get adult aide which may be necessary for field trips and some special projects.

Lastly, in the implementation of such a program it is mandatory that one's principal is supportive of the whole language theoretical orientation. Parents must also be made aware of the reasons behind this philosophical change in teaching and helped to understand how such a program benefits their child.
EVALUATION

In the past, basal reading tests were an effective means of assessing literary growth; however, such assessment tests are no longer useful tools for teachers as they are not in line with the current whole language theoretical orientation. Tests must involve writing skills as well as comprehension. Tests must insure that children are allowed to respond creatively - not with one sole "right" answer - provided they have a valid answer.

I feel that within a whole language curriculum informal assessment, done during class time by teacher observation, works best. Within these confines, I prefer authentic assessment which occurs during "actual" reading and writing. Such assessment would include the following:

1. Portfolios
3. Anecdotal Records involving the following:
   A. Book Discussions
   B. Oral Reading
   C. Participation and Accuracy in Group
Discussions

D. Writing Progress

E. Conference Records

In portfolios, I would keep writing samples throughout the school year. They would contain journals, some special projects, and occasional paragraphs. These are important for they enable the teacher to see if children understand the components of sentence structure - such as capitalization and appropriate use of ending marks. Furthermore, it shows how well a given child understands beginning and ending sounds, medial vowels and consonants, standard spellings, syntax, and spacing between words. (Pils, 1991)

Portfolios would be used for individual assessment, parent conferences, and student conferences. They would enable the teacher to know exactly where a specific child needed work and how to best instruct her.

I would use my personal modification of Wood's Group Comprehension Matrix (1991). Wood's matrix is a single page sheet stating the name of the story, the genre (i.e. realistic or fantasy, narrative, poetry,
plays, or exposition), and containing all students' names from a particular group. Names are arranged in rows and a box is given in columns next to desired learning traits for the purpose of assessment. Wood uses a + to indicate that the desired trait appears often, an S to show it is observable sometimes, a - to indicate it is seldom seen, and an N to state the trait is not observed at all. He also adds a section for comments at the bottom of the page. Wood uses the following as desired traits:

1. Makes predictions about story
2. Participates in the discussion
3. Answers questions on all levels
4. Determines word meanings through context
5. Reads smoothly and fluently
6. Can retell selection using own words
7. Comprehends after silent reading
8. Can read "between the lines"
9. Possesses broad background knowledge

To this, I would like to personally add the following:

10. Writing reflects knowledge of simple beginning sounds
11. Writing reflects knowledge of beginning
digraphs

12. Writing reflects knowledge of beginning blends
13. Writing reflects knowledge of vowel sounds
14. Writing reflects knowledge of simple ending sounds
15. Writing reflects knowledge of two and three letter endings
16. Writing reflects knowledge of middle consonant sounds
17. Writing reflects knowledge of ending marks
18. Writing reflects knowledge of capital letters
19. Writing reflects understanding of syntax
20. Writing reflects understanding of spacing between words
21. Writing reflects ability to formulate a complete idea
22. Writing reflects knowledge of proper sequencing
23. Writing occurs from left to right

I would, also, use a separate sheet per student and keep a copy in each child's portfolio.
I would keep anecdotal records on each child. These would include book discussions, oral reading,
participation in group discussions, writing progress, and recording of conferences.

Cunningham (1991) in a study of first grade children, found a classroom in which each child had a given day of the week in which to share and be observed by the teacher. This enabled each child to have a fair turn to share and also enabled the teacher to concentrate upon the needs of a few children, thus enabling her to better evaluate each child.

In book discussions, children would share something related to a book they had read during the course of a week. They could either read their favorite page, talk about the story, and answer questions of listeners. Listeners could also offer suggestions of other books or how they could make their presentation better.

Oral reading could be assessed by utilizing Wood’s matrix and questions pertaining to it as mentioned previously.

Writing progress would be based upon individual portfolios and work in group discussions. Assessment of writing within portfolios has been mentioned earlier. Assessment of group discussions would be done
by student participation in the group and how accurately the child responded to questions asked.

Pils (1991) wrote of an excellent way to maintain up to date anecdotal records. She used blank mailing labels which she carried around the classroom on a clipboard. Each morning she dated several labels and wrote names and observations regarding each child's work. She kept in a three ring binder, sections for each child. At the end of the day she would place the labels in the appropriate section. These helped her to notice behavioral patterns and problems that needed addressing, as well as individual accomplishments.

I would try to conference with each child monthly during the daily sustained silent reading period. In these conferences I would review the child’s portfolio and individual modified Wood’s matrix. In addition we would discuss any interests the child has acquired in her reading or writing as well as any possible problems the child may have encountered.

In conclusion, the evaluation would be informal, authentic, and ongoing. Portfolios, anecdotal records, and individual conferences would all be part of the evaluative process.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A

OCEAN LIFE
Rationale

It was in the ocean that life began. For three billion years, the Earth’s waters were the only home of life. Although land temperatures change vastly, the ocean’s remain fairly constant. While gravity is stronger on land, the salt content in the ocean enables it’s occupants to be more buoyant and thus less affected by gravity. Microscopic plant cells that live on the ocean’s surface provide four times as much food and oxygen as green land plants. Over 70% of the earth’s surface is covered by water. Most Californians live within a few hundred miles of the ocean, yet know little about it’s environment. All of Earth’s life is interconnected and what we do to alter the ocean’s life, we do to alter life on land.

Concepts

1. The Earth’s surface is over 70% water.
2. Water moves in a cycle.
3. Food webs are part of every ecosystem.
5. Animals adapt to their environment in order to survive.

6. The ocean supports a variety of life.

7. There are several careers involving ocean life.

Throughout the unit

1. Students will keep a daily journal.

2. Students will have a folder in which to place assignments from lessons.

3. Teacher will keep a modified Wood’s matrix (as listed in evaluation) to record student progress.
Lessons

Concept #1:

With over 70% of our planet covered with water, it is imperative that we concern ourselves with its preservation.

Into:

Look at a globe as a class. Ask students what they see. Explain that the main bodies of land they see are called continents. Ask them what is shown on most of the globe. Use a copy of a world map for the students to color. Have them note how much of the map the ocean covers. As a class, brainstorm as to what students know about ocean life. Write responses on a class list, sounding out words as you spell them and talking about why you are using certain punctuation marks.

Ask students what makes land animals different from ocean animals. Have students answer that question in groups having a speaker report to the class regarding group results.

Through:

Read Life in The Oceans to students.
Beyond:

Ask students if they found anything in the story that they would like to add to either the class list of things they know, or to their group list of what makes land and ocean animals different. Record responses on a class list having children help with sounding out the spelling of words and with proper punctuation. Have students write in their journals about ocean life.
Concept #2:

Water moves in a cycle from sky, to earth, to bodies of water, and back to the sky again.

Into:

The class will enter into a discussion of evaporation by talking about what happens to a glass of water when it left out for awhile. (If this is an unfamiliar concept to the students ask them what happens to a puddle of water after it rains.) We will discuss where they think the water might go.

Through:

We will then heat a pan of water over a hot plate. When it begins steaming, I will hold a plate of glass over the steam. Water droplets will appear on the glass and, when held at a slant, water will drip onto the table. I will tell them that this is how a cloud is formed and how when the water vapor becomes to heavy, it falls to the ground. I will explain that this is the water cycle. I will ask them to help me write on a large paper, the water cycle beginning with a cloud.
We will then, pretend we are the water on the ground and will slowly rise up and evaporate, thus forming a cloud. We will pretend we are becoming heavy and we will "rain" and end up back on the ground.

**Beyond:**

I will read *The Ocean Book* (p.7) to the students and students will complete the page in cooperative learning groups. (The students will be tracing the water cycle.)

Upon completion, we would share our work with the class and then write silently in our journals about the day's lesson.
**Concept #3:**

Interlocking food chains form food webs. Food webs are part of every ecosystem and are essential to life. We depend on even the lowest parts of the food web.

**Into:**

On the board, I will have a picture of a bear, a raccoon, a fish, a worm, and some fungi. I will ask the students what they feel the least important source of food pictured would be. Ask what animal might eat it. Then ask what animal might eat that animal... As they respond, tape the picture on the chalkboard with a line going to it’s food source. At the end, discuss the importance of all the animals to the food chain. Ask what would happen if one of the food sources was missing and how it affect the other animals.

Discuss how we depend on plants and animals. Discuss where meat comes from and how the given animal depends on smaller plants and animals for it’s food source. Tell them that the ocean also has food chains and
how many of them are connected.

**Through:**

Have children look at page 4 of their sea life coloring book. Explain what plankton is and how it is so small it can’t be seen without a microscope. Read pages 4-7 and discuss. (In their free time they could color the pages.)

On the board, draw a pyramid and divide it into four equal parts. On the bottom, write the word plankton. Above it, write the words fish and squid. Above that, write the words seals walruses. Above that, write the words killer whale. Explain how more than one life form can another. Explain that when more than one depends upon a common food source, the food chain is called a food web.

**Beyond:**

Hand each child a picture on an ocean animal or life form. Take a pair of scissors and several small balls of yarn. As a class, determine whose picture shows the lowest part of the food web. Hand the student holding the picture the end of
the yarn. Next, ask the students who has a pictures that would eat the given life form. Take the next section of the yarn over to them. (The teacher may need to tie another ball of yarn on when more than one life form depends upon another.) When finished, explain what could happen if the smallest life form were to die. (Explain how and oil spill could cause this.) Literally, cut the yarn of some of the students causing their animal to "die" and as they "die" show what other animals are cut off from their life supply. Discuss orally what happens.

Students may, if old enough, wish to know why the oil and water don't just mix together in the event of an oil spill. If so, have students bring in small bottles (baby food jars work best) and pour into bottles half cooking oil and half food coloring and water. Students will be able to see that as much as they shake the jar, the oil and water will not mix.
Concept #4: (two days)

Ocean life affects life on land.

Day #1

Into:
As a class, we will review the previous lesson and read an article from Newsweek September 18, 1989 discussing the Valdez oil spill. After reading pages 50-62, we will discuss the impact upon ecosystems that loss of ocean life can affect. Being that Valdez occurred in Alaska, we will discuss the Eskimo culture and it's dependence upon ocean life.

Through:
On a map, the teacher will show students the location of the oil spill and point out the Arctic part of North America, Greenland, and the eastern tip of Asia where the Eskimos live. For older children the instructor might wish to discuss the diverse cultures of Eskimos as presented on page 1 of The Eskimos Activity Book, as well as some talk concerning the Barring Strait and possibly a short discussion as how the
world was possibly one piece at a distant time.
Day #2:
The teacher will read through The Eskimo Activity Book with the children. The children will also see a film entitled Nanook of the North which concerns itself with Eskimo life and it's dependence upon sea life for survival.

**Beyond:**

The students will take the information from the previous lessons and write a paragraph concerning what they think could happen to Eskimo life if it was completely severed from ocean life. After writing their paragraphs, the children will read them to the class and discuss.
Concept #5: (two days)

Animals adapt to their environment in order to survive. Examples of adaptation include color, size, relationship to other animals, and behavior.

Day #1:

Into:

The instructor will read a May 3, 1992 Press Enterprise article on the first page of the Science section entitled Dolphins. It concerns the mating patterns and rituals of male dolphins and how they may possibly be the key to dolphin survival.

Through:

Children will read pages 57 through 69 of The Ocean Book. These pages pertain to the various types of coloration, shape, behavior and special body features, helpful appendages, partnerships (such as observed in dolphin life), and sixth senses of fish.

In order to reinforce the concept of coloration to the children, they will make "Peter Penguin" and learn the poem that goes with the art project.
Day #2:

**Beyond:**

Children will view the film entitled *Wonders of the Arctic* and will, upon it’s conclusion, discuss the types of adaptation they observed in the film.
Concept #6: (five days)
The ocean supports a variety of life.

Into:
Students will be asked to discuss the type of life they have seen on past visits to the beach. I will make a list on the board, having students help with sounding out words, as to the types of animal and plant life students have observed. Upon completion, we will read the names and attempt to categorize them based upon the childrens' thoughts upon how to accomplish this. We will count the numbers of items in each category to determine which has the most, the second most, the third most, continuing to the category with the least using ordinal numbers as we continue. I will then explain to them that we will be reading, together, a book on seashore life.

Through:
The book we will use is a coloring book entitled Coastal Life of Southern California, Field Study Guide. It contains one page paragraphs on tide pools (Day #1), plant life in
the sea (Day #2), plankton (Day #3), mollusks (Day #4), echinoderms, and coelenterates (Day #5).

Each day we will read one chapter together, discuss, and color the corresponding pages. Upon completion of each chapter, students will write a paragraph on what they learned from the chapter. These paragraphs will be kept and compiled into individual books on sea life.

Beyond:

Sea World offers educational programs which they call outreach programs. They have a 45 program which uses "hands-on" teaching tools, slides and puppets, and specimens to illustrate biological concepts and encourage observation. I will set up an assembly for primary classes. We will then return to our classes, discuss and write about what we have learned and end with singing songs from Disney’s Sing Along Songs Under The Sea. (This is a video tape which has the words printed on the bottom of the screen for children to read.)
Concept #7:
There are many careers involving ocean life.

Into:
I will ask students why they think their parents work. Hopefully, this will lead to a discussion of making money in order to survive in the world. We will talk about the various jobs our parents have. I will then tell them that we are going to be discussing jobs one can do in the area of ocean life.

Through:
We will read pages 88-94 of The Ocean Book. These pages cover conversations of people who made the sea part of their lives, and an experience of one man who works on the ocean floor. In addition, there are activity pages concerning oil spill clean ups, cleaning up beaches, and one page which has math problems which must be solved in order to find the solution to a situation endangering marine animals.

Beyond:
Students will choose one of the careers in ocean life, write about what would be fun about
it, what it would involve, and what sort of knowledge one would need in order to properly perform that job. Each student will present his thoughts to the class.

As a culminating activity, we would spend the day at Dana Point going on an hour long whale watching excursion and visiting the tide pools. The best time of year for this would be in early March. If this distance is too far, one may also visit the tide pools at Marina Del Mar.
APPENDIX B

LAND ANIMALS
Rationale

Life is our most precious possession. Children are aware of this within themselves and in what's around them. Life’s survival is dependent upon ecosystems. Every animal and plant has its own place in nature and each is affected by the others and by the environment in which they live. Without such knowledge people are capable of destroying themselves as well as all that is around them. Children need to see the vital role that animals play in life so that as they mature into adults they will better take care of the world within their hands.

Concepts

1. People need animals.
2. There are animals that hunt.
3. There are animals that gather.
4. Food webs are part of every ecosystem.
5. Some animals are endangered.
6. Plant life can affect animals
7. There are many careers involving animal life.

Throughout the unit

1. Students will keep a daily journal.
2. Students will have a folder in which to place
assignments from lessons.

3. Teacher will keep a modified Wood's matrix (as listed in Evaluation) to record student progress.
Lessons:

Concept #1

People need animals.

Into:

We will begin the unit by sharing about our pets. I will ask students how else, aside from needing animals as pets, do people depend on animals. On the board I will write down student responses, having them sound out words as I write. We will read our list together and I will tell them that today we are going to talk about one of them. We will talk about how people depend upon animals as a source of food.

Through:

I will show the children the book, *Dairy Cows* and tell them that today we will be reading it. I will ask children to come up with questions they would like to find the answers to while we read the book. I will list student questions on the board, having children help with the sounding out of words. We will read the questions together and I will tell them to try to find as many answers to these questions as they can while I read the
story. I will read the story. Upon finishing it, I will ask students to write the answer to at least three questions in complete sentences and then to color a picture about what they learned. We will share these with the class and save them to be compiled into individual student books for this unit.

**Beyond:**

We will take a field trip to one of the Norco dairies.
Concept #2:
There are animals that hunt.

Into:
I will read the story *Leo the Late Bloomer* to the children. We will discuss Leo’s predicament, solution, and outcome. I will ask them to tell me if the story is fiction or nonfiction. I will then tell them that today we will be reading a nonfiction story about lions.

Through:
I will tell children I am going to read them a story entitled, *Lions*. As in the previous lesson, children will state questions they wish to find answers to and I will record them on the board. Upon completion of the story, children will respond to at least three questions by writing on a piece of paper and drawing a picture about what they learned from the book. We will share our sentences and pictures with the class and save them to be compiled into individual student books.

Beyond:
I will teach them how to draw lions by using a book entitled Drawing With Children by Mona Brookes and teaching the lesson "Leo the Lion". We will share our drawings and put them on a bulletin board.
I will ask them to bring in a teddy bear for the next day's lesson.

Same concept, next day's lesson:

Into:
I will read Ira Sleeps Over to the children. We will talk about times when we have been scared and what comforted us. I will then have each child "introduce" her teddy bear to the class and tell about their bear. I will tell the story about how teddy bears were named after Theodore Roosevelt and show them my pictures I photographed during a visit to the Archives in Washington D.C. of the bear given to "Teddy" Roosevelt. I will explain that just as President Roosevelt was hunting, animals—likewise—hunt. I will tell them that they will be watching a film about the life of bears.
Through:
I will show children the film *Bear Country*. Before viewing the film I will ask the children to brainstorm questions as in the previous lesson. Upon completion of the film, we will orally respond to the questions listed.

Beyond:
I will teach the children the poem, "Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear." I will take the children outside for P.E. at which time we will jump rope and do the movements for "Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear." We will then make large stuffed paper bears to display in the classroom.
Concept #3:

There are animals that gather.

Into:

I will teach children the following poem given to me by Annette Workington in her 1986 class at U.C.R. It is as follows:

Little Charlie Chipmunk was a talker yes,
Sir E,
He chattered after breakfast and he chattered after tea.
He chattered to his sister and he chattered to his brother,
and he chattered to his mother and he chattered to his father.
He chattered 'till his family was almost driven wild.
Little Charlie Chipmunk was a very tiresome child.

I will ask the children to find all the "ch" words in the poem and have them tell me the beginning sound they have. I will ask them to distinguish between fiction and nonfiction by asking them to tell me if this poem could happen in real life. I
will tell them that today's lesson will center around animals that gather food to store and will center upon chipmunks and squirrels.

Through:

We will define the word gather. We will list on the board questions we wish to find out from the film. We will watch the film, *Forest Babies*. Upon completion of the film, we will orally answer as many questions as we can from those previously listed on the board. I will then send the children back to their seats to write a story about gathering animals.

Beyond:

We will each make a chipmunk puppet and recite our poem before another class.
Concept #4:

Food webs are part of every ecosystem.

Into:

I will ask the children to think back to the unit on ocean life. I will ask them to tell me what the terms "food web" and "ecosystem" mean. I will ask them to review a food web from the ocean life unit with me.

I will tell them that today they will be discussing ecosystems of land animals.

Through:

I will have the children brainstorm ecosystems of land animals on the board. We will list them and discuss what could happen if one of the components ceased to exist.

I will then read Brown Bear, Brown Bear to the students.

Beyond:

After reading the story Brown Bear, Brown Bear, we will proceed to make pattern books utilizing the same format, but in conjunction with the theme of ecosystems. Thus, we shall each pick a small animal and have the next page be a larger animal
that would find the first animal fit to eat. An example of this would be as follows:

Green worm, green worm what do you see?
I see a red robin looking at me.
Red robin, red robin, what do you see?
I see a brown bear looking at me...
Concept #5:

Some animals are endangered.

(This concept will cover at least six days. During this time, children will be working on their endangered species coloring book.)

Into:

I will begin this section by giving each child an endangered species coloring book. I will explain to the children what the word endangered means. I will ask them to open their coloring books to page 6. We will read that page together. It concerns the American Alligator. I will tell them that they will be allowed to color the corresponding picture when they are finished with all of their work from today’s lesson.

I will tell them that I will be reading a book to them entitled Endangered Grassland Animals.

Through:

I will explain to the children what grasslands are. I will show them on a world map where the Antarctica is and explain to them that is the only continent where grasslands do not exist.

I will begin reading the book Endangered
Grassland Animals. I will tell the students beforehand that they will be expected to write a story for their personal book on an endangered animal I read about today. I will read to page 19 and have them write a story to present to the class.

Same concept, next day’s lesson:

We will read page 8 of their coloring book about the mountain lion. They will be allowed to color their picture upon completion of daily work. I will finish reading the book from previous lesson and children will again write and share their stories with the class.

Following 4 days:

These days will follow the same format: Reading one page in their coloring books and reading half of the following books each day: Endangered Mountain Animals and Endangered Forest Animals. Daily, children will write a story about one of the animals they have learned about that day.

Beyond:

The students will compile their endangered animal
stories into individual books. Children in groups of five will make murals to help others be aware of endangered animals. Students will find an endangered animal and in groups of two, will research the animal and write a one page report to present to the class. We will choose a day to call "Endangered Species Day". On this day children will post their murals around the campus, and present their reports to the class.
Concept #6:
Plant life can affect animals.

Into:
I will ask the children to think of ways plant life can affect animals. On the board we will list ways they feel plant life can affect animals. As in previous lessons, the children will be helping me to sound out words as I write them. I will read the book *Once There Was A Tree.* Upon completion, I will ask the students if they have thought of any other ways plant life can affect animal life. We will discuss.

Through:
I will tell the children that we are going to act out the story *Once There Was A Tree.* We will choose students to play the parts of the animals and I, or another student, will be the narrator. The children playing the parts of the smaller animals will make stick puppets. We will present this for other first grade classes.
I will then read them the story *Rain Forest* and have them write a story for their student books on the rain forest.
Beyond:

We will watch the National Geographic video entitled, *Animals of the Mangrove*. We will take time to discuss the film and talk about our thoughts concerning the destruction of parts of the rain forest.
Concept #7:
There are many careers involving animal life.

Into:
We will tell about what we'd like to be when we grow up. I will let each child share and then tell them we will be learning about a few jobs that involve animal life. I will read the book Animal Doctor to the children and tell them we will be having a visitor who is an animal doctor speaking in class today.

Through:
I will have a veterinarian come in to talk to the class about his job. Children will have time for a question and answer period.

Beyond:
I will read the book Zoo Keeper and tell the children that we will be going to the L.A. Zoo and we will have a chance to see how Zoo workers take care of animals.
APPENDIX C

AIR LIFE
Rationale

Without air, there would be no life on earth, for it contains the oxygen we breathe and it protects us from the sun's strong rays. It is in the air where weather is created in forms of clouds, wind, and other air formations. Life on land has always been dictated by weather. In the air are animals. Air animals are part of our ecosystem from some of the smallest entities (flying insects) to some of the larger ones. It is from air animals and their ability to fly that caused man to be curious enough to discover concepts which enabled him to create modes of flying transportation. All of life is interconnected.

Concepts
1. Life on land is dependent on the atmosphere.
2. Life on land is affected by the atmosphere.
3. There are air animals.
4. Food webs are part of every ecosystem.
5. There are endangered air animals.
6. Air animals influenced mankind's desire to fly.
7. There are careers involving the air.

Throughout the unit
1. Students will keep a daily journal.
2. Students will record daily weather on the class calendar.

3. Students will have a folder in which to place assignments from lessons.

4. Teacher will keep a modified Wood's matrix (as listed in evaluation) to record student progress.
Lessons

Concept #1:

Life on land is dependent on the atmosphere.

Into:

I will ask children to tell me what the atmosphere is. We will discuss things we have seen in the atmosphere and list them on the board. We will take those items and categorize them. After reading them over, I will ask children to tell me how life on land could be dependent upon the atmosphere.

Through:

I will read pages 28 through 38 of *Earth Sea and Sky*. We will discuss the various atmospheric changes and how they could relate to things on earth. We will list the main types of weather on the board: sunny, rainy, snowy, windy, and foggy. I will group the children by fives and give them on the forementioned topics. I will tell each group to pick a reader, a recorder, a timer, a reporter, and a thinker. They will have fifteen minutes to brainstorm changes on earth that these types of weather cause. At the end of the fifteen
minute time period, each group will share their thoughts with the class. I will ask the entire class if anyone has anything to add to any of these lists. We will share our thoughts.

Beyond:

I will ask children to write about what they think would happen if we had only one type of weather. We will compile these into a class book to share with the class.
Concept #2:

Life on land is affected by the atmosphere.

Day 1 Clouds

Into:

I will ask children how many of them have seen clouds. I will ask the children if they have ever seen a cloud in the shape of an animal or anything else. We will discuss. I will read the book *Duck Feet* telling children it is about a boy who watches clouds and daydreams about things he's like to have.

Through:

I will use the fourth grade science book by to demonstrate three different types of clouds. We will go on a "cloud walk" and see what kind of clouds are in the sky. We will keep individual journals with pictures of the sky each day and record what type of cloud we saw and what happened to the weather.

I will tell the children that they are going to review how clouds are formed. (They will have learned this from the unit on ocean life.) We will orally review what happened. I will ask
children if they have ever seen steam when one of their parents is cooking. I will explain that steam is made up of tiny water droplets. I will tell them that we are going to make a cloud in a bottle.

Beyond:

We will use the experiment from the same science text book on page 34. It shows how to make a cloud in a jar. We will do this as a class and discuss.

Day 2 Wind

Into:

I will ask the children to share what happens on windy days. I will tell them that today we are going to be learning how the wind is made. I will begin by reading a silly book called The Wind Blew.

Through:

I will tell the children that they will be learning that the wind is a result of hot and cold air. I will ask them, in groups to make a list of things they would like to find out from today’s lesson and tell them they will be answering at
least three of those questions at the end of the lesson.
I will read them the book *Feel The Wind*. I will stop periodically to check for understanding by asking oral questions of the students. Upon completion of the book, I will have the children get in groups of two. I will explain that we will become the wind with our buddy. One person will be the cold air and the other the warm air. One person will be on the floor and the other person will stand up and hold his arms over the one on the floor. The bottom one will gradually "heat up" and in so doing will slowly rise to his feet with his arms extended. At this point, the one who was on top will have "cooled" and will rush to the floor to fill up the spot where the other child was previously lying. We will continue this until each person has got to play the part of both the warm and cold air three times. I will ask each child to write a few sentences explaining how the wind is created. Children will then answer group questions.

*Beyond:*
I will ask the children to orally state things that are fun to do in the wind. I will tell them that today we will be making something that is fun to use in the wind. We will be making tetrahedral kites out of straws, tape, tissue paper, and glue. When finished, we will learn the song "Let's Go Fly A Kite" from Disney's *Mary Poppins* and then take our kites outside to fly.
Concept #3: (two days)

There are air animals.

Day 1 Butterflies

Into:

I will read *The Hungry Caterpillar* to the children. I will ask how many of them have ever had a caterpillar. I will ask what happened to their caterpillar when it got older. I will tell them that we will be reading a story about how caterpillars become butterflies.

Through:

I will hold up the book *Butterfly* and ask the children to think of question they might wish to find answers to concerning the book. We will list these questions on the board and sound out the spellings together. I will tell children that I will expect them to be able to answer at least three of the questions at the culmination of the story. I will read the story to the children. Upon completion, I will send children back to their seats to write responses to three of the questions and to draw four pictures that show the proper sequence of a caterpillar turning into a
butterfly. These we will share.

Beyond:
I will have children make stained "glass"
butterflies out of construction paper and tissue
paper.

Day 2 Bats

Into:
We will sing the song, "What Makes a Bird a Bird?"
from page 49 of the first grade Silver Burdett
music book. (This song repeats that a bird is a
bird because it has feathers.) I will then show
the children pictures from the book The World of
Bats. I will ask the children to state
differences between birds and bats. We will list
these differences on the board.

Through:
I will have the children in sooperative learning
groups brainstorm questions they wish to find out
from today's lesson on bats. They will need to
list at least seven. Each group will share their
questions with the class. I will then read to the
children the book entitled The World of Bats. I
will send each group back to their seats to answer
at least four of their questions on bats using complete sentences. These responses will be shared with the class.

**Beyond:**

We will make paper bats. I will have each child write a true story about bats using facts from what they learned in class.

**Day 3 Owls**

**Into:**

I will ask the children how many of them have seen owls and where they have seen them. I will tell the children that today we will be discussing owls and that first we are going to learn a fun poem. I will teach them the following poem that I received from Annette Workington's 1986 U.C.R. art for teachers extension course:

A wise old owl sat on the branch of a tree.
And he was as wise as wise could be.
It was night and his eyes were open wide like this (teacher opens her eyes wide).
And he looked all around--not a thing did he miss.
Some brownies crawled up the branch of the tree. 
And they were as quiet, as quiet, could be. 
Said the owl to the brownies, "Who, who who!"
And up jumped the brownies and away they all flew.

We will recite the poem together.

Through:
I will explain that owls are predators. We will discuss what the word predator means. I will tell them that we will learn about a few other birds that are predators, but that we will be focusing our attention upon the owl. As a class, we will brainstorm questions we might wish to find the answer to. I will read the book Birds of Prey and we will answer the questions as a class. The children will return to their seats and write a factual story about owls. We will compile these into a class book to share with the class.

Beyond:
We will make the owl puppet that goes along with the poem we learned at the beginning of the lesson.
Concept #4:

Food webs are part of every ecosystem.

Into:

I will read the book *Quack-Quack* by Frederic Stehr. It is a story about a duck who goes in search of his mother in dangerous animal territory. It is dangerous because of animals that might eat him. I will ask the children, after reading the story, why it was so dangerous for the baby duck. We will discuss how even birds are part of a food chain. I will tell the children that we will be learning about the sorts of food owls prey upon.

Through:

Oak Canyon Nature Center of San Bernardino has an outreach program who for $45.00 will send a docent to come to a campus and cover material such as characteristics of owls (prey, classification, numbers, general characteristics), and adaptations (eyesight, hearing, flight, food gathering). There will be time for questions and answers.

Beyond:

The forementioned organization also brings in owl
pellets which are the bones and fur of the animals they eat. Owls spit these up and by separating the fur from the bones, one is able to decipher what the owl has eaten.
Concept #5:

There are endangered air animals.

Into:

As a class we will review the term endangered. We will brainstorm animals that are endangered and list them on the board. I will tell them that today we will be learning about endangered air animals and how people have worked to protect them.

Through:

I will read to the children the book *Endangered Wetland Animals* pages 8-11. (These pages deal with how some of these birds were killed for their feathers while others were killed as a result of DDT spraying.)

I will ask the children to write about today’s lesson and then to share their stories with the class.

Beyond:

I will ask the children to brainstorm, in cooperative learning groups, ways they could help make others aware of the need to protect these endangered birds. They will share these with the
class. They will then make posters to help make people aware of the need to protect our wildlife.
Concept #6:

Air animals influenced mankind’s desire to fly.

Into:
I will ask the children if any of them ever wished they could fly. I will ask them what made them want to fly. I will tell them that today we will ble learning about a boy who desired to create a machine that could fly.

Through:
I will read The Glorious Flight to the children. It is a book about Louis Bleriot’s flight across the English Channel. We will discuss the difficulties he faced in trying to construct a flying machine. We will discuss how he didn’t give up even when he failed. I will ask the students to talk about a time when they had difficulty trying to do something new.

Beyond:
I will have the children go back to their seats and write about a time when they had to try many times before succeeding at something. We will share these with the class.
Concept #7:
There are careers involving the air.

Into:
I will ask the children to think of possible career that could involve the air. We will list these on the board. I will ask them to write about a career involving the air that they think would be fun. We will share these with the class.

Through:
We will take a field trip to the Ontario Airport. There, the children will be spoken to by pilots and stewardesses. They will also be given a chance to see the inside of an airplane.

Beyond:
On airplane shaped paper, I will have the children each write a story about what they learned at the airport.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Troll Associates.


