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## A Descriptive Study of the Beliefs and Practices of Head Start Teachers Regarding Early Literacy Development

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF HEAD  
START TEACHERS REGARDING EARLY LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ERIKSON INSTITUTE

BY  
NANCY LESSEL LIND

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This dissertation explores one aspect of young children's literacy development. Using data gathered from structured teacher interviews and classroom observations the study describes potential resources for literacy development in a sampling of Chicago area Head Start centers. In particular, the research focuses on classroom literacy environments and teachers' expressed attitudes and beliefs about the process of literacy development.

Just prior to this study, during the 1980's, a new theoretical view of the processes involved in learning to read and write was being refined. Extending the work of Marie Clay (1975) and Don Holdaway (1979) researchers such as Elizabeth Sulzby and William Teale began to discuss new ways of looking at literacy learning. This approach is often (and will be in this paper) referred to by the phrase "emergent literacy."

There are three aspects of the emergent literacy perspective that were particularly influential in the development of this study. (These theoretical concepts are discussed more fully in Chapter 2.) The first is the idea that reading and writing behaviors occurring before formal schooling are important for literacy development. This view suggests that it is important to study literacy development opportunities in preschool programs such as Head Start. The second influential aspect of the emergent literacy approach is its focus upon the social context of literacy development. This variable points to the importance of investigating of the role of the teacher as the provider of literacy development activities. A third theoretical influence is the notion that reading and writing develop in tandem and

are most appropriately considered as parts of general communication development. Belief in this concept prompted the author to design this study so that it examines different kinds of children's interactions with print.

### Purposes Of The Study

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate and describe the environment for literacy development in a sample of Chicago Head Start classrooms. Since teachers are considered by many to be a primary influence on and component of the classroom environment, an important aspect of the research was exploring the subject teachers' expressed attitudes, beliefs and their actual practices regarding early literacy development.

A secondary objective of the study was to see if there appeared to be any differences between teachers who had participated in the Erikson Institute Early Literacy Training Project and those who had not. The author, having been involved in the training project, was interested to see if subject teachers who had participated in the Erikson training appeared to be different than Head Start teachers who had not.

This training project has been offered to support Chicago preschool (predominantly Head Start) teachers in developing early literacy programming. The project's special emphasis is on helping teachers to: a) create a print rich classroom environment; b) offer opportunities for the children to use reading and writing materials in ways they find interesting and meaningful including dictation and dramatization of children's stories. The full training, which lasts about six months, includes monthly seminars. The key aspect is, however, the involvement of a "trainer" who spends half a day, once a week in the participating teacher's classroom. The trainer becomes sensitive to the dynamics of the particular classroom and then acts as a teacher-partner, not only consulting with the teacher but actually interacting with the children and modeling teaching approaches

(especially regarding story dictation and dramatization). The goal is for the trainer and teacher to work together to implement lasting curriculum changes which are believed to foster children's literacy development. In the years following the author's involvement in this program, pragmatic factors forced adaptations in the training program. These adaptations created a program that provides less intensive teacher trainer work in the Head Start classrooms (McLane, personal communication, 1992) than the full version described above.

### Research Questions

The basic questions guiding the design of this study and the development of the instruments were as follows:

- **What kind of physical literacy environment are children exposed to in the sample Head Start classrooms?**
  - What kinds of drawing/writing materials are available?
  - Are there books available? What is their condition?
  - Is there print displayed for the children's benefit?
- **What activities are offered for literacy development in each of the sample classrooms?**
  - What do the teachers report their activities to be?
  - What activities are observed?
- **What are the sample Head Start teachers' expressed attitudes and beliefs about early literacy development?**
- **How do these teachers appear to distribute themselves on a theoretical continuum with the "Basic Skills" approach at one end and the "Whole Language" approach at the other?**
- **What are these teachers' personal experiences with literacy?**
  - What are their recollections of literacy learning?
  - What kind of non job related reading and writing are they currently doing?
- **Do teachers trained by the Erikson Institute Early Literacy Project seem to be different than those who have not undergone the training?**

### The Significance of the Study

The data gathered by this study will offer information for: a) individuals desiring more information about Head Start teachers' beliefs and practices regarding literacy programming, b) those interested in early childhood literacy curriculum, c) those offering programs for teacher education, and d) those involved in the Erikson Institute training project.

#### Significance For Head Start

This study is designed to enhance understanding of an important aspect of Head Start's educational component: literacy development. In light of pressing societal concerns about illiteracy and new theoretical approaches to early literacy, it seems of particular importance to investigate just what Head Start teachers are doing to foster the literacy learning of their students. This study differs from previous, related research in several ways. First, it uses the broad definition of literacy development activities suggested by the emergent literacy perspective. Use of this approach involves considering all the ways children might be exposed to and interact with print in the Head Start classroom. Second, rather than focusing upon children and their performance, this work examines the entire classroom literacy "environment" (Schickedanz, 1986). Teachers are considered to be a critical influence on and component of this environment, so special effort was made to investigate their thinking about literacy learning. Finally, in contrast to much of the earlier research, this study is designed to be descriptive rather than evaluative. Its principle objective is to provide an in-depth view of how a limited number of Head Start teachers are approaching literacy development in their classrooms in light of recent research.

In reviewing the Head Start literature in preparation for this project, it was surprising to discover that, although oral language development has been of in-

terest to Head Start researchers (e.g., Byrne, 1967; Friedman, 1970), there is a paucity of research on the subject of children's involvement with print. One explanation for this may be that it is only recently that informal, child directed preschool activities, such as pretend reading and scribbling, have been considered to be a legitimate part of the process of learning to read and write.

There are numerous Head Start studies which concentrate exclusively on children. In contrast, this study was designed to look at classroom literacy "environments" and the role teachers play in creating these environments. This study defines the literacy environment as consisting of both concrete objects (i.e. books, writing/drawing materials, and displayed print) and more abstract factors (i.e. space and time allocation, curriculum selection, and adult responses to children's activities). The idea of thinking about a literacy environment grows out of a great deal of recent work (e.g. Auerbach, 1989; Cazden, 1981; Heath, 1986; Gundlach, et al., 1985) which suggests that social context is a potent factor in directing literacy development.

Because there has been so little research taking a broad view of early literacy development, it was believed that there was a need for background information about some of the classroom experiences Head Start children are having with print. Because of the logistical constraints of a dissertation, the decision was made to use a limited sample and direct the research toward gathering detailed descriptive data about all aspects of the literacy environment in those classrooms. It is felt that this kind of in-depth information regarding the current state of literacy development approaches in at least some urban Head Start classrooms will be of interest and value to Head Start administrators, curriculum developers, and other teachers.

### Significance For Teacher Development

Even though teachers are generally recognized as an extremely important factor in determining what actually takes place in any Head Start (or other early childhood) classroom (Ayers, 1989; Yonemura, 1986), research in the areas of teacher beliefs and practices has been limited. In her review of research regarding teaching, Stacie Goffin (1989) suggests that there is a "dearth of research on teacher effects in early education in contrast to the wealth of literature available to elementary educators." While it is difficult, if not impossible, to analyze the teacher's role in a clear-cut, quantitative manner it seems important that data be gathered on this significant classroom variable (Ayers, 1989).

The teacher focus of this study was, in part, motivated by the author's repeated observations that individual Head Start teachers have a great deal of autonomy in the teaching approaches they chose to use in their classrooms. Curricula and educational strategies (e.g., High Scope and the Erikson Early Literacy Program) imported to the Head Start classroom are often rapidly and drastically adapted and modified by teachers according to their individual teaching techniques and the realities of their classrooms. This study was designed with the premise that interviewing teachers regarding their attitudes and beliefs about literacy learning would add important insights to observations of what occurs in their classrooms. While the reliability of self-report data concerning attitudes and beliefs may be tenuous at best, it is still believed that the teachers' responses to the interview questions offer valuable information about their attitudes and teaching approaches that is not otherwise available. This kind of information should be particularly valuable to those interested in influencing classroom practices through curriculum design or teacher training.

## General Significance

As a means of putting the data into some kind of context, a continuum of theoretical perspectives about literacy learning is outlined. This continuum is conceptualized as having the "traditional/basic skills" approach at one end and the "whole language/emergent literacy" approach at the other (these perspectives will be described in Chapter 2). The subject teachers are divided, via statistical analysis, into three groups representing different areas of this continuum.

## Overview of Methodology

The study was conducted using a sample of twenty-six Head Start teachers in the Chicago area. At the time of the study all but one of the subject teachers worked for programs funded through the Department of Human Services (DHS), the primary Head Start funding agent for the city of Chicago. The teachers involved in the study were recommended by one of their administrators, usually either the site director or the educational coordinator for the program's sponsoring agency. A structured teacher interview addressed matters of attitudes and beliefs about literacy learning; asked for information about literacy activities offered in the teacher's classroom; and explored some of the teacher's personal experiences with literacy. Classroom observation was conducted by the researcher who completed a specially designed observation form and took field notes.

Because part of the teacher interview consisted of forced choices on a Likert scale and because it was possible to quantify aspects of the observation form, statistical analysis and quantitative reporting of some of the data is possible. The hypothetical continuum ranging from the traditional/basic skills to the emergent literacy/whole language is used to help describe the theoretical orientation of teacher's beliefs, practices and classroom literacy environments. To enhance the descriptive detail of the study, three teachers with varying approaches were selected for detailed description in the form of case studies.

### Organization Of The Dissertation

The next chapter reviews the literature regarding Head Start, early childhood teacher attitudes and beliefs, and most particularly, various theoretical approaches to literacy development in the preschool years. Chapter III describes in detail the research methodology used in this study. The general results of the study, including three descriptive case studies are reported in Chapter IV. The final chapter offers discussion of the findings, suggestions for practice, possibilities for additional research and a summary.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The early childhood research which has influenced the development and implementation of this study can be divided into three categories: 1) the extensive literature which explores the educational and developmental processes by which young children become literate; 2) the research examining early childhood teachers' attitudes and beliefs about literacy development and how to facilitate it; and 3) information regarding actual language and literacy programs in Project Head Start classrooms. This chapter reviews the literature in these three research areas. The first section, and principal area of discussion, covers theoretical approaches and educational methodologies related to early literacy development. Because of its impact on the design of this study, particular mention is made of the recent work that emphasizes the importance of social context in literacy acquisition. This section also includes a detailed discussion of two divergent viewpoints regarding how children learn to read and write. These approaches are labeled in this work as "traditional/basic skills" and "emergent literacy/whole language." They mark the end points of the theoretical continuum used as the basis for descriptive teacher groupings.

The second section of this chapter will discuss the limited research which has explored early childhood teachers' attitudes about literacy education. The third and final section reviews the research that has been conducted in Head Start programs related to literacy teaching and learning.

### Early Literacy Learning and Development

Literacy behaviors are complex (Holdaway, 1979; Taylor, 1989), involving motor as well as cognitive capacities. There have been, and continue to be, many diverse approaches to elementary school instruction in reading and/or writing. In her overview of early childhood reading curriculum, Nita Barbour (1987) lists six different approaches evaluated in a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education during the 1960's. These were: "traditional basal," "Initial Teaching Alphabet," "language experience," "linguistic," "basal plus phonics," and "phonics plus linguistic." Barbour suggests that recently a number of additional approaches (e.g. "shared book experience" and "Writing to Read") have been added to the primary teacher's choice of methods. Approaches to literacy in preschool classrooms have been less clearly delineated, probably because preschool literacy curriculum (which is often referred to as language arts), is usually teacher developed, atheoretical, and specific to individual programs. The absence of standardized curricula complicate analysis and discussion of the various approaches to preschool literacy education.

Although the author believes that most preschool teachers tend to be both atheoretical and eclectic in their approaches to literacy education, for purposes of description this paper will discuss two methodologies reflecting contrasting theoretical viewpoints. The first is the behavioristically oriented "basic skills" approach. This method comes from what Frank Smith (1983) describes as "outside-in" theory, which focuses on skills and knowledge related to reading and writing that the child must begin to master. The second approach is the whole language method which fits nicely with the theoretical concepts of "emergent literacy" (Teale, 1986). Smith describes this approach as "inside-out," and suggests it emphasizes the child's motivation to make sense of print.

These two perspectives differ both in their definition of literacy and their explanations of the process of literacy acquisition. For the traditional/basic skills theorist, literacy is viewed as mastery of the skills involved in reading and writing e.g., learning the phonetic translation of letter combinations and accurately copying traditional letter formations. Writing and reading are considered to be separate and distinct areas of learning, each having a predictable and consistent hierarchy of sub-skills. Those following this approach believe literacy, in the form of facility in reading and writing, can be assessed empirically by measuring an individual's competence in skills such as decoding print, producing correctly shaped letters or writing a grammatically correct paragraph. Because literacy is defined in terms of specific skills, the only factors which are considered relevant to the process of becoming literate are those directly connected with mastery of the sub-skills that have been identified as components of reading and writing (Henderson, 1981). Traditional/basic skills theorists usually describe literacy acquisition in terms of teaching and learning behaviors; e.g., learning initial consonant sounds and teaching letter formation.

In contrast, the emergent literacy approach views literacy as a complex communicative process acquired in ways that vary among individuals. Reading and writing are seen as closely interrelated, mutually dependent one on another, and connected to oral language. The emergent literacy theorist would evaluate an individual's literacy acquisition by considering their general ability to derive meaning from and communicate with others using print, as well as by measuring specific skills. In this approach, many aspects of human communication are considered to be relevant to the acquisition of literate behaviors, so a broad range of factors in the individual's environment are considered when discussing the "emergence" of mature literacy behaviors.

## Background

Debate about the best way(s) to encourage literacy, particularly regarding methods of teaching reading, has gone on for centuries (Chall, 1967). However, until recently the focus was usually on children of six and older. Consideration of the nature of literacy learning and/or development in younger children is a fairly recent phenomena. Current interest in exploring literacy development in preschool children seems to have come from two primary sources. First is the interest generated by Piaget and his followers in closely examining how young children "construct" their own knowledge (Piaget, 1952). Piaget's use of both detailed observational methods and his insistence upon respecting the child's innate desire to make sense of the world have influenced numerous researchers exploring many areas of development including language.

The other impetus for investigating early literacy has been concern about the effectiveness of the American educational system (Bruner, 1960). One area of particular interest was the observation that despite mandatory, universal education, many students left school unable to read and write effectively (Children's Defense Fund, 1989). In an attempt to better understand the dynamics of literacy development (or the lack there of) some scholars began to investigate what might, or might not, occur in the years before formal literacy education traditionally begins (Heath, 1983; Wells, 1986; Schieffelin & Cochran-Smith, 1984).

The social context of literacy development and learning was of particular interest to those trying to understand why problems of illiteracy and school failure were more extreme in some groups than in others. Theorists looking for solutions to the problems of education began to look at cultural and/or social factors that might influence educational success. Utilizing the methods of anthropologists, researchers (e.g., Schieffelin, Cochran-Smith and Leichter) explored potential influences on literacy development outside of the school setting, particularly in the

home. This approach led them to consider the children's experiences before they entered elementary school.

Studies by Shirley Brice Heath and Denny Taylor, using ethnographic research methodology, have added a great deal to our understanding of the nature of children's literacy experiences before and outside of school. Many would now agree that: "Growing in an environment where literacy is the only option, they (the children in the study) learned of reading as one way of listening, and of writing as one way of talking" (Taylor, 1983). Heath's book, Ways With Words (1983), which is an ethnographic view of "language, life and work" in three Carolina communities, begins to reveal the complex manner different families' social and cultural communicative styles have upon the way children learn to interact with print. In the epilogue, Heath comments, "factors involved in preparing children for school-oriented, mainstream success are deeper than differences in formal structure of language, amount of parent-child interaction, and the like. The language socialization process in all its complexity is more powerful than such single-factor explanations in accounting for academic success" (p. 344).

One plan devised to improve the education prospects for American students was to begin the process when children were younger. The most notable example of this method was the establishment of the preschool compensatory educational program, Project Head Start. This program was designed to prepare "disadvantaged" students for existing public school educational programs. While research specifically examining early literacy in Head Start programs is limited (see a review later in this chapter), evaluation of general aspects of these compensatory programs (Head Start, 1974) has added a great deal to our understanding of preschool programming. The well known Perry Preschool project's longitudinal research and other studies have demonstrated "that high-quality preschool pro-

grams for poor children can lead to improvement in their intellectual and scholastic performance" (Schweinhart, Weikart & Larner, 1986).

A relatively recent attempt to solve the problems of American schools is what some call the "push-down" approach (Katz & Chard, 1989). In this method, curriculum historically presented at the primary level (particularly the teaching of reading and writing skills), is introduced in kindergarten or even preschool classes. The rationale for this plan is the belief that children are capable of mastering basic literacy skills during the preschool years. Proponents of this approach believe that if basic reading and writing skills are mastered early, there will be more time for advanced work in the higher grades. There is a large group of early childhood specialists who are opposed to this "push-down" approach and have been working to support what they term a "developmentally appropriate" curriculum (Bradekamp, 1988). As Lillian Katz (Katz & Chard, 1989) expresses it, "just because children *can* do something when they are young does not mean that they *should* do it." The conflict between those wishing to accelerate the introduction of traditional literacy skills and those who oppose doing so has heightened interest in and study of the whole question of how young children become literate and how this process can best be facilitated.

Research in early literacy development is unlikely to solve the complex issues of illiteracy or "rescue" the American educational system. One can, however, hope that new insights into children's early experiences with print will help make the schools more effective in understanding and meeting the educational needs of the children they serve.

### Social Context

Social context is an important theme in much of the current literature on literacy development (e.g., McLane & McNamee, 1990; Gundlach et al, 1985; Heath, 1982; Cochran-Smith, 1984; Dyson, 1985; Auerbach, 1989; Gibson, 1989;

Vygotsky, 1978 & 1986), reflecting the belief that many aspects of children's experience at home, in the neighborhood and at school have an impact upon their literacy development. Both traditional/basic skills and emergent literacy/whole language theorists would agree that some elements of social context are important factors in mediating a child's experiences with and reactions to print. The difference between the two viewpoints is in their delineation of the relevant aspects of social context.

For behavioristically oriented educational theorists, the social context relevant to learning to read and write is generally limited to the classroom and the specific teaching methods employed. In the basic skills approach, the success or failure of a child in acquiring literacy skills is considered to depend primarily upon the effectiveness of the instructor in adequately breaking down the relevant skills into their component sub-skills and in motivating the child (usually through reinforcement). In contrast, those who follow the emergent literacy approach to learning and development see more aspects of the child's life as having potential impact on his/her growth as a communicative and eventually literate individual.

### Vygotsky and Social Interaction

Emergent literacy theorists have been influenced in their interpretation of what constitutes relevant social context by the work of Soviet psychologist, Lev Vygotsky and Americans such as Jerome Bruner and Michael Cole who have explored and extended Vygotsky's ideas. Often called "social interactionists," Vygotsky and his followers stress the importance of cultural transmission and especially its linguistic components in facilitating not only literacy but general intellectual development.

These social interactionists believe that cognitive development and learning occur together. Vygotsky conceptualized the developmental process as taking place at two levels, first between individuals on the social or "interpsychological"

plane and then moving within to the personal or "intrapyschological" plane (Wertsch, 1985). Such an approach applied to the process of education has been interpreted as implying the need for appropriate, contingent interactions for transmitting information at the interpsychological level. Social interactions between children and more competent members of the culture are believed to be necessary before internalization (the process through which an individual transforms external means of guidance into his or her own ways of thinking) and true individual mental development can occur. According to this view the more experienced individual (parent, teacher, child or other mentor) mediates experiences to facilitate the learner's growth and understanding at the interpsychological level. One important way that mentors do this is by taking on most or all of a task or the responsibility for guiding the direction pursued in working on a task ("scaffolding" as Bruner puts it) and then gradually relinquishing parts of it to the child as he or she becomes capable of managing them.

An example of this phenomenon within literacy learning is book reading. Very young or inexperienced children "read" by having a competent reader do all the work. Gradually, the child begins to internalize aspects of the process, acquiring the ability and understanding necessary to take on a more and more active role in book reading interactions. Early levels of internalization of the process may be evidenced by the child's interest in selecting a book or in helping to turn the pages. A later step, often marked by the child chiming in with familiar phrases, is his or her recognition that the language in a given book remains constant. Eventually, the child comes to understand that there is a direct connection between the familiar words they hear and the letters on the page. At this point the child may be able to participate more fully by reading some of the words in a story on her own. With continued experience- and for many, instruction- the child is eventually able to manage the entire book reading process independently.



This gradual process is facilitated by the more competent readers with whom the child shares books. Depending on the child's level these mentors may choose an appropriate story, point to pictures, and call attention to particular words. Effective mentors provide (often unconsciously) just the right kind of support necessary for children to have satisfying experiences with books no matter what the stage of their literacy development.

In terms of literacy development, Vygotsky was particularly interested in how young children learn to write and expressed particular concern about the many children who had "little motivation when we begin to teach it" (1986, p.181). He commented about the typical instructional scenario in his era (which resembles some basic skills classrooms today): "Unlike the teaching of spoken language, into which children grow of their own accord, teaching of written language is based on artificial training...Instead of being founded on the needs of the children as they naturally develop and on their own activity, writing is given to them from without, from the teachers hand" (1978, p. 105). Vygotsky suggested that it was necessary to consider writing as something much more than just a complicated motor skill or as a repetition of the "developmental history of speaking." He considered learning "written speech" to be one unique aspect of a child's development toward the ability to use the symbols of his or her culture.

#### Current Social Interactionist Approaches to Literacy Development and Learning

When considering literacy development, current theorists using a social interactionist approach (e.g. , Dyson, Cole, Scribner, Schieffelin, Cochran-Smith, Gundlach, and Taylor) interpret Vygotsky's work to mean that early pre-conventional literacy behaviors such as pretend reading and scribbling are important. They believe that it is especially important that young children have opportunities to experiment with drawing and writing materials, engage in pretend play (which develops their ability to manipulate symbols and develops their sense of

narrative) and encounter print that has meaning to them (e.g., lists of lunch helpers, signs identifying their block structures, reminders to feed the pets.) Researchers with this point of view are interested in children's literacy related activities and interactions, not only in the classroom, but at home and in the neighborhood.

Some of the early social interactionist work on literacy development which looked beyond the classroom and instructional methods suggested that the availability of literacy materials in the home might be an important factor for children's success in literacy learning (Teale, 1984). More recent work seems to reflect a broader social cultural perspective by suggesting that an environment that supports literacy development involves more than the materials themselves.

Although access to books and writing implements certainly contributes to early literacy development, there is no evidence that it is essential. What probably matters more is how printed materials and writing tools are used by adults, how they are made available to children, and what messages about their use and importance are communicated to young children (McLane and McNamee, 1990, p.90).

Robert Gundlach (1983) develops Vygotsky's ideas emphasizing the social nature of literacy learning by suggesting that children are most likely to develop as literate individuals if they participate in a "community of writers and readers." This "community" provides them with examples of "authentic uses for writing" and encourages their socialization as writer and readers. He suggests that within such an environment children find a variety of ways to "build bridges from 'not writing' to writing, including drawing, play and story telling" (Gundlach, 1982, p. 134).

One aspect of recent research using a social context perspective has focused on children's very early language and literacy development in their home and family (e.g., Ninio & Bruner, 1978; Taylor, 1983; DeLoache, 1984; Teale, 1986;

Walton, 1989). Numerous studies (e.g., Bissex, 1980; Goodman, 1984; Taylor, 1983; Teale, 1986; Walton, 1989) suggest that most children raised in families who value book related uses of literacy exhibit precursors of reading and writing very early. It is the attempt to understand the dynamics of this process that has driven a good deal of the investigation of early literacy in the family (Heath, 1982 & 1983; Taylor, 1983; Schieffelin & Cochran-Smith, 1984).

Emergent literacy theorists believe that early reading and writing behaviors are, in literate families, usually a part of the child's overall language and communication development. Such development is believed to be closely tied to children's interactions with the significant others in their lives, especially family members and caregivers (Gibson, 1989). McLane and McNamee stress the interactive nature of this process: "children are not passive recipients of information, rather, they are active participants who want to learn to use and control writing and reading and make them their own" (1990, p. 91).

In her book, Through Children's Eyes, Linda Gibson (1989) describes the social contexts of children's literacy development moving from home through early schooling. She emphasizes the role of the teacher/caregiver in carrying on the early learning that began at home or in compensating where the home literacy environment does not provide many models of literate behavior. She stresses the importance of teacher-child interactions in building social support for the child's learning efforts. Endorsing what Gordon Wells' describes as a "collaborative style of learning and teaching" (1986, p. 119), Gibson suggests that:

Indeed, what has been described as the handover principle - the major strategy through which caregivers instruct their young in learning to talk, to play games, to read, and so forth - must be viewed as the major method for shaping classroom instruction (pp.31-32).

Another aspect of research regarding the social context of literacy development deals specifically with school settings. The work of Donald Graves (1983), Lucy Calkins (1983), Ann Dyson (1989), and Gillian McNamee (1990), has looked particularly at classroom writing activities and the events surrounding them. This work supports the idea suggested by Vygotsky that effective writing activities are those closely connected with meaningful communication and are facilitated by social interactions.

Another prominent theorist advocating consideration of the broad social context as an element of the educational process is Courtney Cazden. She has investigated aspects of social interactions occurring in classrooms by examining teacher-student (as well as peer) dialogues for "the language of teaching and learning." While she identifies various types of classroom discourse styles and patterns, she stresses the importance of understanding the specific context of interactions. She cautions that "contexts are nested, from the most immediate ..[to the teacher and student] to the more distant: classroom, school, school system, community and so on; and the classroom context is never wholly of the participants' making" (1988, p. 198). This would suggest that while immediate teacher-child interactions are an essential element of the learning process it must be recognized that they are affected by many factors well beyond the classroom environment.

Perhaps the clearest view of the immediate social context surrounding classroom literacy learning in early childhood comes from Vivian Paley's (1981, 1984, 1986) rich descriptions of her preschool and kindergarten classes. While she does not explicitly discuss literacy development, her narratives, such as Wally's Stories which describes one school year in the life of a kindergarten class, offers ideas about how a social interactionist, whole language program can look in operation. At the same time, her work documents the development and learning

taking place in individual children. Paley's conversational instructional style and her preparation of a literacy rich classroom environment seem likely to be particularly effective in supporting children's development and learning in language and literacy (Gundlach et al, 1985; McLane & McNamee, 1990). The Erikson Early Literacy Research and Teacher Training Program was initially developed out of Gillian McNamee's observations of and work with Vivian Paley (McLane, personal communication, October 1991). McNamee and McLane tried to abstract the principles at work in Paley's classroom that they believed influenced literacy development and study their implications for a wide range of preschool and kindergarten classrooms.

### Two Contrasting Approaches to Literacy Learning and Development

#### Traditional/Basic Skills

The "traditional/basic skills approach" to literacy development is conceptualized in this study as one pole of a theoretical continuum developed as a means of describing individual teachers and their classrooms. The "traditional" view of literacy development grows out of behaviorist theory and is often described as a "bottom-up" (Seefeldt, 1987) or "outside-in" (Smith, 1983) approach in which the focus is on the material being presented to be mastered rather than on what is developing inside the individual child. In this view, reading and writing are perceived as separate, complex behaviors learned through the mastery of task specific sub-skills. These sub-skills are believed to fit into a clear hierarchy which can be identified through "task analysis" (Smith, 1976). Task analysis is "the process of isolating, describing and sequencing (as necessary) all the necessary sub-skills which when the child has mastered them will enable him to perform the objective" (Bateman, 1971). A task analysis of reading behaviors undertaken by Donald Smith (1976) identified 18,000 steps between letter discrimination and

sentence reading. Once the necessary skills are recognized, basic skills advocates believe they can be taught through direct instruction. Because each of these skills is demonstrated by a specific behavior it is possible to evaluate students' mastery of the tasks and clearly chart his or her progress in learning to read and write (Carnine & Silbert, 1979; Perfetti & Lesgold, 1979).

Although there are many versions of basic skills curricula (Lindfors, 1987), they tend to share the belief that the type of instructional reinforcement and the sequence in which skills are presented determine the progress in learning to read and write. A behaviorist would argue that training for literacy (in the form of teaching sub-skills such as visual tracking) could begin very early in a child's life. Some textbook writers and curriculum planners who adopt a basic skills approach have designed "readiness" programs to teach preschool children pre-reading and pre-writing skills that were previously reserved for the primary grades (Smith, 1986).

The notion of "readiness" for reading has been interpreted by various theoretical positions in very different ways. During the period in the middle of this century when a maturationist view was prevalent in American early childhood education, "reading readiness" meant the time when the children's physiological development made them ripe for acquiring literacy. Proponents of this approach counseled "better late than early" and worried about the stresses placed on children who were not considered maturationally "ready" for the tasks involved in learning to read and write (Ames, 1975). The behavioristic, basic skills approach transformed the concept of reading "readiness" into a set of skills which must be mastered before instruction in the techniques of conventional reading and writing could begin (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Teale and Sulzby give this summary of the basic skills approach:

1. Instruction in reading can only begin efficiently when children have mastered a set of basic skills prerequisite to reading. The most important skills predict subsequent achievement most strongly.
2. The area of instructional concern is reading. It is implied that composing and other aspects of writing (except for letter formation -or handwriting) should be delayed until children learn to read.
3. Sequenced mastery of skills forms the basis of reading as a subject to be taught; instruction focuses almost exclusively on the formal aspects of reading and generally ignores the functional uses of reading.
4. What went on before formal instruction is irrelevant, so long as sufficient teaching and practice presented in a logical sequence are provided when instruction begins.
5. Children all pass through a scope and sequence of readiness and reading skills, and their progress up this hierarchy should be carefully monitored by periodic formal testing (1986, p. xiii).

The basic skills approach emphasizes the role of instruction, practice, reinforcement and evaluation in mastering the various sub-skills involved in learning to read and write. In a Head Start (or other preschool) classroom featuring a basic skills approach to literacy development one might see children doing oral alphabet or phonics drills, practicing letter formation and completing various worksheets dealing with skills such as left to right directionality and visual discrimination.

#### Emergent Literacy/Whole Language

In the late 1960's Marie Clay introduced the notion that literacy learning is a process that often begins before formal instruction. Her research with young children led her to question the prevailing educational concepts that suggested literacy acquisition involved an abrupt discontinuity in development (i.e., a new activity beginning at age five or six) and one that required certain levels of physiological development (i.e., readiness) before it could start (Clay, 1979). Clay suggested instead that even very young children's interactions with print were

"emergent reading." She believed that for young children who were exposed to print, literacy acquisition was an ongoing experience. She rejected the idea that it was necessary to achieve a particular level of maturity before one began the gradual process of learning to read.

Don Holdaway's book *The Foundations of Literacy* (1979) extended Clay's ideas about how children learn to read. His discussion is based upon consideration of what he identifies as six important features of literacy. The first is: "literacy is a matter of language." Reading and writing are not, he argues, "discrete subjects isolated from the world of language and spoken culture." Second, he states, "literacy has many human dimensions" and is the "most complex of human activities, engaging the organism simultaneously at every level of experience." Third, he believes that "literacy is developmental" (i.e., "developmental learning..occurs with a minimum of instruction as a 'natural' part of ordinary development"). The fourth feature he mentions is that "literacy is learned." He believes it is important to use the insights provided by behavioral researchers in learning, (e.g., "that punishment and fear are impediments to the sorts of learnings with which literacy is concerned"). His fifth consideration, and one of special influence on current research, is that "literacy is a cultural matter." Holdaway contends that "our schools now represent a special sub-culture..." and suggests that, "a disproportionate share of the failure to transmit the skills of literacy falls on children from cultural backgrounds at variance with the culture of those who have traditionally influenced the language of schooling." The final feature he identifies is that, "literacy is a complex matter" and cautions scholars to reject simple explanations about its development. His discussion of these six concepts has helped inspire various explorations of early literacy learning and development (Holdaway, 1979, pp. 12-18).



In 1986 William Teale and Elizabeth Sulzby's book Emergent Literacy: Writing and Reading pulled together the work of a number of individuals (e.g., Yetta Goodman, Catherine Snow, Emilia Ferreiro, and Anat Ninio) who had been exploring the "roots" (Goodman, 1986) of literacy. This influential book focused attention on the notion of "emergent literacy" as an important theoretical perspective.

The emergent literacy perspective views literacy development as an integral part of a child's growth as a communicative individual. Although the road to fully developed, conventional literacy is recognized as a long one, children growing up in literate environments are believed to begin the process of becoming literate during the first years of life as they interact with their family (Gibson, 1989). Young children who are read to and who see print being used for meaningful communication develop a familiarity with literate behaviors which is an important basis for literacy development. Teale and Sulzby (1986) suggest: "Literacy development begins long before children start formal instruction. Children use legitimate reading and writing behaviors in the informal settings of home and community" (p. xviii). For example, very young children read signs for favorite fast food restaurants and write messages as part of their experimentation with pencil and paper. An essential aspect of this theoretical approach for preschool teachers is the concept that the pre-reading and pre-writing activities of children, such as pretend reading and scribbling, are considered to be legitimate and significant parts of their literacy learning.

In contrast to the more traditional, basic skills orientation, those who follow an emergent literacy/whole language approach believe specific literacy behaviors such as sounding out words and forming letters are only one part of the process of literacy education. They see writing and reading as ways to extend communication resources and as tools to accomplish tasks (Gundlach, 1982). As Teale and

Sulzby (1986) put it, "literacy develops in real-life settings for real-life activities in order to 'get things done'" (p. xviii). Therefore, theorists using the emergent literacy perspective place a special emphasis on understanding the communicative functions of literacy and are especially interested in the social interactions that are believed to foster early literacy development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Perhaps one of the most interesting concepts of the emergent literacy approach is the idea that, at least for children growing up in literate environments, reading and writing develop in tandem and are closely associated with oral language development. As Teale and Sulzby (1986) describe it: "Listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities (as aspects of language-both oral and written) develop concurrently and interrelatedly, rather than sequentially" (p. xviii). Believing that literacy emerges as part of an intricate pattern of communicative development, followers of this approach do not believe that it is possible to identify a predictable sequence of skills and task mastery that must precede learning to read or write. Rather, they believe that different children, having different personal characteristics and life experiences, are likely to have different routes to literacy.

The educational method which seems most compatible with an emergent literacy perspective is often referred to as "whole language." Although there are many variations of curricula identified as "whole language," in general, whole language approaches to literacy instruction stress the meaningful, communicative uses of print and integrate the study of reading and writing with oral language development. While this discussion suggests a connection between the whole language approach and emergent literacy theory, it is important to note that methods of teaching reading that have similarities to what is now called "whole language" predate the theoretical formulation of the concept of emergent literacy. For example, the "language-experience" method of reading instruction, which has been

seen in early childhood classrooms for decades, has many of the features of a whole language approach (and undoubtedly influenced its development). The language experience method is discussed by Russell Stauffer (1980):

It suggests that the experience and the language of children are being used for reading instruction purposes, because they represent the concrete richness that becoming involved in firsthand functional situations promoting verbal interactions can produce. When this occurs the instruction becomes an extension of children's preschool learning rhythms, in which they generate a system of language usage primarily in the course of using it *to satisfy their own purposes* (p.2).

Whole language curricula differs from the language-experience method principally in its emphasis upon meaningful writing activities as a important component of early literacy education.

It should be noted that many early childhood teachers, who embrace what would be identified as a "whole language" approach to literacy curriculum have never have heard of a theory of "emergent literacy." (Many preschool teachers the author interviewed were unfamiliar with both the concept of "emergent literacy" and the term "whole language" even when their curriculum reflected such an approach.) Nonetheless, dissemination of literature regarding the emergent literacy perspective seems to have strengthened and enhanced scholarly appreciation for and development of the the whole language approach to literacy instruction.

A Head Start (or other preschool) teacher using a whole language approach plans a curriculum which provides the children with a range of opportunities to experience print in contexts that are meaningful to them. Functional print is prominently displayed in the classroom. There are lists of importance related to the children's daily activities (e.g., daily snack helpers and line leaders); there may be reminder messages, (e.g., "Feed the fish on Friday" or "Workbench is closed"). The teacher emphasizes the communicative power of print by comment-

ing to the children as she writes or reads lists, notes and so forth. The children are encouraged to print or dictate signs and messages to extend play themes (e.g. "Keep Out!" "No monsters allowed!"). Book sharing (looking at books with an adult or classmate) and story reading are frequent activities. In a preschool whole language classroom, children's efforts in early and playful literacy behaviors such as pretend reading and scribbling are encouraged and appreciated as important steps in literacy learning.

### Teachers' Beliefs and Their Classroom Behaviors

Although the role of the teacher is generally recognized as an important factor in the effectiveness of early childhood programming (Balaban, 1987), a review of the literature reveals surprisingly little research that focuses on preschool teachers' beliefs, attitudes and/or behaviors. Even observational studies of classrooms tend to focus on such issues as materials and children's behaviors. Goffin (1989) in her recent article discussing teacher effects on classrooms and children suggests that: "More understanding is needed about early childhood teachers' thinking and decision making" (p. 199).

One significant study of preschool teaching beliefs and practices is Margaret Yonemura's 1986 book A Teacher at Work, which presents a detailed study of "one effective teacher." This portrait of an excellent teacher illustrates many ways a teacher's beliefs can be played out in day to day classroom activities and interactions. Although not directly addressing questions of literacy teaching, the book explores many other aspects of the subject teacher's beliefs about children and gives examples of how these are demonstrated in her teaching approach. For example, in regard to the importance of play, Yonemura says:

Because she (Jean, the subject teacher) gave priority to play when children followed their own purposes, intent on making their own interpretations, breaking into the play to direct other activities, such as shared song or story times, was not done casually but deliberately. Jean looked for a sense that the group was ready for the next move. If children had to be disrupted in their play, she would quietly discuss this with them and let them know that there would be more time later (p.70).

Vivian Paley's (1981, 1984, 1986) candid comments describing her feelings about various aspects of classroom life and her role as a teacher provide another insight into the ways an individual teacher's attitudes can mold curriculum development and teaching style (e.g., "The skills involved in rational discourse require much practice. The teacher therefore, must use material that children want to discuss and dramatize" (1981, p. 211)).

In his recent book, The Good Preschool Teacher (1989) William Ayers gives the reader portraits of six teachers who work in various preschool programs (none of them are Head Start teachers). He eloquently describes the power of teachers within their classrooms:

When the door is closed and the noise from outside and inside has settled, a teacher chooses. She can decide to satisfy distant demands or not, accommodate established expectations or not, embrace her narrowest self-interest or not. She can decide whether to merely survive another day of inexhaustible demands and limited energy, or she can decide, for example, to interpret and invent, and resist and rebel where necessary (p.5).

Although there is strong support for the notion that the teacher is an extremely important factor in facilitating children's growth in literacy (Harris, 1986; Wilucki, 1984), the descriptive reports of preschool teacher's attitudes and behaviors relating to their role in literacy development is almost nonexistent. Harris (1986) stresses that: "The most important factor in facilitating the literacy growth of the children [is] the teacher" (p.25). However, her report focuses on children

and activities and only describes teacher behaviors in rather general terms (e.g. "She [has] to value booksharing and be willing to invest long blocks of time in it..." (p.18)).

Although she emphasizes the role of interactions as part of writing development, Ann Dyson's work (1985, 1986, 1989) describes children's activities and behaviors and mentions the teacher's role only incidentally. Linda Gibson (1989) gives us at least an indirect view of her classroom approaches to literacy as she writes about her return to teaching. She talks about "building classroom culture," but while she writes as a participant-observer, it is always clear that the focus of this book is the children. A study by Rowe (1988) looks at both peer and adult interaction at a preschool writing table but does not describe the role of the teacher.

In research designed "to examine the relationships between teachers' beliefs, instructional decisions, and preschool children's conceptions of reading and writing" (1989 p.62), Lisa Wing studied two nursery schools with differing views of reading and writing instruction. After interviewing directors and children and observing classrooms she concluded that: "Preschool teachers' beliefs and instructional decisions may influence children's orientation toward reading and writing, which may influence how children view and approach reading and writing instructional experience" (p. 71).

The only other study found by the author which directly addressed the issue of teachers' beliefs and their impact on young children's literacy activities dealt with kindergarten teachers. An ethnographic, longitudinal study of two kindergartens by Belinda Wilucki assessed the sample teachers' attitudes about literacy development as reflecting either a "communication/whole language" or a "mechanics/skills" orientation. She then examined the literacy learning experiences of the students in their classrooms. She found that: "Children in the communication/whole language classroom wrote more and longer products than did

the children in the mechanics/skills classroom. More importantly, children in the communication/whole language classroom were allowed to choose their own topics; thus, conveying the notion that sharing a message was the goal for writing" (1984, p. 38).

Overall it appears that the data available at the present time regarding preschool teachers' attitudes, beliefs and their connection to classroom behaviors regarding literacy is slim. No studies were found which attempted to assess interactional styles. While each teacher is unique and generalizations may be dangerous, it still seems important to make an effort to try and learn as much as possible about this central part of the educational process. In light of the current strong interest in the interactional aspects of literacy development it seems important to examine teachers so that we can better understand what factors may influence their styles and approaches as social transmitters and facilitators of literate behavior.

### Preschool Teacher Training

Teacher training is considered by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (1987) to be an essential aspect of high quality early childhood programs. "Research has found that staff training in child development and/or early childhood education is related to positive outcomes for children such as increased social interaction with adults, development of prosocial behaviors, and improved language and cognitive development" (p.18). However, no literature was found which examined the impact of specific training programs on teachers. Evaluation of the Erikson Early Literacy Program has, to this point, consisted of systematically collecting "data related to literacy development on the children, on the classroom environment, and on the teacher's activities with the children and their parents" (McNamee, 1990). One purpose of this study is to provide some comparison be-

tween the literacy development attitudes and practices of a group of Head Start teachers who had experienced the Erikson training and a group who had not.

### Literacy Development And Head Start Classrooms

Although the amount of research that has been done in the last twenty-five years regarding various aspects of Project Head Start is enormous, there appears to be very little which is similar in focus to this study describing teachers' beliefs and their classrooms as environment for literacy development. A recent overview of Head Start research (Collins, 1989) suggests that there have been three "waves" of evaluations of Head Start programs. The "first wave" focused on whether intervention programs "harm or help the disadvantaged child and by how much." The second wave attempted to determine what kind of program was most effective. In each of these waves the emphasis was on measuring child performance. Collins describes the current or third wave as exploring "ingredients and indicators of program quality." According to Collins, the third wave emphasizes program aspects such as: "Individualization of services to children and families based on unique needs and characteristics," and "teacher characteristics and behaviors" (1989). As of the end of her review of the literature, the author of the present study has been unable to find material describing current studies which look at either Head Start teacher attitudes and beliefs about early literacy development or at classroom literacy environments. One reason that Head Start researchers have not taken a broad view of literacy development and looked at classroom literacy environments may be the relatively recent dissemination of the "emergent literacy" approach and its more inclusive interpretation of what is involved in becoming literate.

The fact that there are few studies which use a broad definition of literacy development does not suggest a lack of interest in Head Start children's acquisition of language skills and their eventual ability to read and write. There have



been a number of Head Start studies investigating children's oral and written language abilities. A number of early studies, for example (Byrne, 1967 ; Daniel, 1966; Friedman, 1970; Dailey, 1968) evaluated various programs designed to improve children's use of oral language. This work reflected the prevailing attitude of the time that non (often viewed as sub) standard English was one of the major problems for disadvantaged children entering school. There are also a few reports describing and evaluating attempts to introduce particular literacy skills, such as letter formation, in Head Start programs (Head Start study 1966; Hall, 1969; Von Hilsheimer, 1979). These are small studies using child outcome measures to evaluate particular curricula. Many studies (Wedell-Monnig, 1980) have looked at the impact of Head Start programming on children's performance on standardized tests including some measures of "reading readiness." Most of these studies do report at least short term gains in test scores. Another line of research (Dellinger, 1971; Larsen, 1972) has followed up on Head Start students' literacy development as they move through elementary school but does not consider the possible impact of differences in Head Start literacy curricula.

### Summary

There is at present a great deal of interest in early literacy both in terms of how it develops in situations which are not intentionally instructional and how it can be encouraged through consciously designed curricula. A particularly strong element in recent studies is an emphasis upon the role of social context and interactions in literacy learning. This study has been designed to examine these elements. While there is an enormous quantity of research looking at various aspects of Project Head Start there is little or none which takes a broad view of literacy development and examines Head Start classrooms as literacy environments and social contexts for literacy development. This study was developed to offer some descriptive data in that area.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The primary objective of this study was to gather descriptive data regarding support for literacy development and learning in Head Start classrooms. The possibility of an in-depth study of Head Start literacy focusing on one or two classrooms was considered. However, in light of the limited data available on the topic it was decided that research including a larger number of programs would be more useful to early childhood specialists. An initial group of 30 classrooms and their head teachers was selected. Because of logistical problems, four subjects had to be dropped during the course of the study, resulting in a sample of 26.

To capture the many aspects of a classroom environment which may influence literacy learning, the author employed both observation and teacher interviews to gather data. The interview was administered with a fixed protocol and contained both forced choice and open-ended questions. Because the author believes the teacher is a major factor in creating the classroom literacy environment, questions concerning personal attitudes and beliefs regarding literacy development were included. The focus of observation was upon literacy activities, print in the environment, and teacher-child informal and instructional interactions (e.g., conversations, direction giving, story reading). Observations were recorded both in field notes and on a specially developed observation form. All data were collected by the author.

#### Subjects

Permission was obtained from Chicago's Department of Human Service (DHS) to approach its program directors and teachers regarding participation in

the study. DHS administers the majority of Chicago Head Start programs, either directly or through various delegate agencies (such as the Chicago Housing Authority, Hull House Association, The Salvation Army, and the Boys and Girls Club). Unfortunately, one of DHS's large delegate agencies, the Chicago Board of Education, was not included in the study because of its restrictive research policies.

When DHS administrators approved this research study, they officially requested their delegate agencies to cooperate with the author's attempt to enlist participants. Using names provided by DHS, site directors were approached by the author and invited to have their staff and center involved in the study. Directors who were willing suggested a possible teacher or teachers to participate in the research. The nominated teachers were then telephoned by the author and asked to participate in the study. Because of the nature of the research, the author believed it was essential that the subject teachers be willing to cooperate with the research effort. No one was pressured to participate. After the teacher's cooperation was confirmed, arrangements were made to conduct the observation and interview. Directors were given formal notice of their teacher's participation in a letter and all subject teachers signed a consent form before any data was collected.

Because of the author's interest in considering the impact of the Erikson Institute's Early Literacy Project, subject selection was planned to include both teachers who had (the "trained" group) and those who had not (the "untrained" group) participated in the Erikson Literacy program. The original intention was to have the trained and untrained group be of equal size. However, finding teachers willing to participate in the study who had not been exposed to Erikson programs was very difficult. Despite a concerted attempt to reassure potential participants that this was not, in any way, an evaluation of their teaching effectiveness, there

were many refusals, some by directors, and some by teachers after their directors had given tentative approval. It proved to be much easier to secure the cooperation of directors and teachers who were at least familiar with the Erikson Project. There are two possible reasons for this: first, this group felt comfortable with the Erikson staff and their particular style of research and training; and second, this group had some idea of what might be meant by a study looking at preschool "literacy."

The final sample was all female and consisted of 17 teachers who were considered "trained" and nine who were identified as "untrained." This classification was based on questionnaire replies regarding the type and source of any education these teachers had received concerning preschool literacy. It must be noted that within the "trained" group the timing and duration of Erikson Early Literacy training varied considerably. The range included two teachers who had the full six month training and had later helped train other teachers, and, at the other extreme, were several teachers who had only attended seminars or workshops which introduced the program.

### Instruments

Three instruments were developed for this study: a structured teacher interview (Appendix A), a brief written questionnaire (Appendix B), and a classroom observation form (Appendix C). (Note that section VI of the interview concerning parent involvement was included at the request of DHS and will not be analyzed in this paper.) The decision to use an interview to gather information regarding attitudes and practices rather than asking the teacher to complete a written form was based on several factors. First, was the study's focus upon gathering qualitative data which would help develop a better understanding of the research subjects and their frames of reference. An on-site, face to face interview allowing plenty of opportunity for personal response seemed more appropriate for

this kind of research than an impersonal, standardized questionnaire. Second, Head Start teachers have quantities of paperwork which many find burdensome. There was concern that asking them to spend thirty or forty minutes completing a written questionnaire would diminish their cooperation with the research effort. Finally, by conducting an interview one is assured of actually getting data; written research questionnaires are often lost, forgotten or ignored by subjects.

### Structured Interview

The interview contained questions with forced choice answers as well as those with opportunities for open-ended responses. It was believed that including scaled, forced choice questions would permit quantitative analysis of the expressed attitudes, beliefs and practices of a diverse group of teachers. Questions for the interview were worded in as neutral and balanced a fashion as possible (e.g., "Some people feel there is a connection between pretend play and literacy development, others disagree. Do you think there are any ways that play may help children eventually learn to read and write?") To assure consistency, each question was read to all the teachers exactly as it appears on the form.

The interview contained three sets of scaled, forced choice questions that were utilized for this study. Each question set was designed with responses arranged on a Likert scale. In an attempt to refine the data, a seven point scale was used for the questions designed to investigate attitudes and beliefs (questions # 2 and 3A). Achenbach (1978) and others report that in forced choice questions many subjects tend to avoid responses at the end points of the scale. It was hoped that use of a evenly spaced, seven point scale would help spread the responses between the end points and increase the chances of finding measurable differences. Items in these scaled questions were tested for reliability using the Cronbach Alpha, a conservative measure of internal consistency, and found to be highly re-

liable. Alphas were: Question #2 (see Appendix A, items marked with \*), Alpha = .9389; Question #3A, (see Appendix A, items marked with @) Alpha = .8385.

Question #2 was designed to assess the teacher's opinion about the possible value for literacy development of a variety of preschool activities. The list was compiled from the author and her advisors' experience with numerous preschool programs. It included some activities often associated with a basic skills approach (e.g., practice in forming letter shapes) and some reflecting a whole language orientation (e.g., having print that is meaningful to the children in the environment). The teachers were asked to decide, in terms of Head Start children's literacy development, whether they thought each of the activities was: Essential, Extremely Important, Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not Very Important, Not At All Important, Of No Value at All.

The second group of scaled items was developed in an attempt to explore the subjects theoretical beliefs about early literacy development. The teachers were asked to: "Indicate the phrase that comes closest to your feeling about each statement." The choices were: Completely Agree, Strongly Agree, Agree Somewhat, Neutral- Neither Agree or Disagree, Disagree Somewhat, Strongly Disagree, Completely Disagree. Some of the statements implied skill based theories (e.g., "The first step in learning to read is decoding sounds") and some emergent literacy premises (e.g., "Scribbling is an important part of writing development").

The third set of forced choice questions were those designed to categorize the teachers' reports of how often certain activities took place in their classrooms. These questions used a six point scale with each point assigned to a specific time frequency (e.g., "4 or 5 time per week", "Never takes place").

The open ended questions were designed to gain insight into individual teacher's attitudes, beliefs and practices with respect to certain areas believed to

be related to literacy development, such as the connection between pretend play and literacy development. Of ethnographic interest were the questions related to the teachers' own, personal experiences with literacy learning and their current feelings about reading and writing.

### Questionnaire

The written questionnaire contained questions about demographic factors such as the subject's age, race and education. Believing that the teachers might feel uncomfortable giving these answers orally, a self administered questionnaire was used.

### Observation Form

The structured classroom observation form (Appendix C) was developed to aid in assessing the literacy environment of the subject classrooms. This instrument was essentially a revision of an observation form that had been used in the Erikson Early Literacy Training program to evaluate the "richness" of classrooms as literacy environments (Loughlin and Martin, 1987). The list of classroom items and activities was developed by experienced early childhood educators and was designed to be fairly comprehensive. It was not anticipated that any classroom would have all of the items or activities mentioned. A tally sheet was included which assisted the observer in keeping track of children's literacy related activities in the classroom during the time of observation. The form also included a device for describing the story reading of the teacher. This story reading information was exploratory data for another study and will not be analyzed in this paper.

### Data Gathering

Scheduling was at the teachers' convenience. The nineteen teachers who had both morning and afternoon classes were able to chose which group they wanted observed. The author inferred from incidental comments that most of the

teachers chose the group of children that was chronologically older or whom they considered to be more mature. The author believes this was because these teachers felt the older children's activities would look more like traditional ideas of literacy behaviors.

The typical procedure was for the researcher to observe an entire morning's or afternoon's indoor activities which usually lasted about two and one-half hours. The interview was conducted during lunch or in the break between sessions when the teacher did not have responsibility for managing children. In some cases the interview proceeded the observation and in some it followed. In a few cases the interview and the observation were on different days.

### The Interview

The interview process was as follows. The researcher's first effort was to put the teacher at ease and establish rapport. The subject-teacher was assured that the data gathered was confidential and that neither her name nor the name of the center would be used in any report on the research. A special effort was made to let the teacher know that the interview was not a test or evaluation and that the point of the study was to find out their personal ideas about early literacy.

Responses to the scaled, forced choice questions were displayed on laminated 2 x 3 inch "show" cards to help the subjects remember the possible answers. Answers to open ended questions were recorded verbatim as were any other comments made during the interview. Teachers were encouraged to give examples and elaborate on their responses to these questions.

A few of the teachers seemed to find the fixed response parts of the interview slightly stressful and commented about the difficulty of deciding between the various levels (e.g. "Agree completely," "Agree somewhat"). In the author's opinion, all of them did, however, seem to enjoy giving their ideas and expressing



their opinions in response to the open ended questions. The length of the interview varied from twenty to fifty minutes. The variation was principally due to differences in the length and scope of teacher's replies to the open ended questions. At the conclusion of the interview teachers were asked to fill out the short questionnaire requesting personal demographic information. The time required to fill out this form was less than five minutes and did not seem to present a problem to any of the teachers. Four of them left one item, either age or level of education, blank.

### The Observation

The observation portion of the study was conducted using both a structured observation form and by taking ethnographic field notes. The form attempted to assess specific aspects of the literacy environment. The objective of the field notes was to give a comprehensive sense of the social context of literacy development in the particular classroom. A special attempt was made to record teacher-child instructional interactions. The teachers, in general, seemed very comfortable with the observation portion of the study, and only one of the participants seemed to be particularly conscious of the researcher's presence during the observation.

### Data Reduction

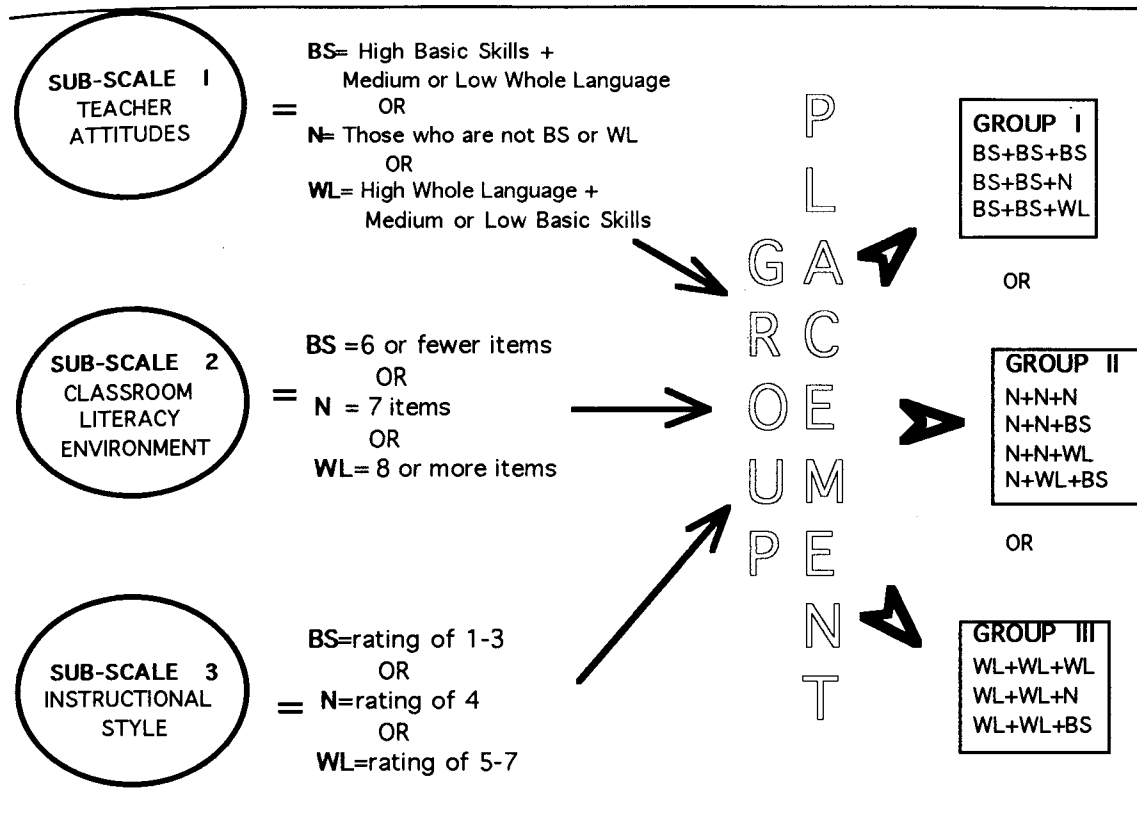
When this study was designed, the author thought that one way to offer a perspective on the nature of literacy education in the sample centers would be to assess teachers and their programs on the basis of the instructional approach and the literacy environment in relation to a theoretical continuum. This continuum was conceptualized as having the traditional/basic skills approach at one end and the emergent literacy/whole language approach at the other. As the study proceeded it became clear that the sample teachers were quite eclectic, intuitive (i.e.,

using what felt comfortable), and pragmatic (i.e., doing what was expected of them) in their educational styles. Consequently many teachers and their classrooms offered a real mixture of basic skills and whole language approaches. Since exact placement seemed unlikely, the approach was readjusted to determine if it was possible to identify a group of teachers who exhibited strong characteristics of the theoretical approaches at each end of the continuum, i.e. basic skills or whole language. To facilitate this investigation three possible groups were established. The groups were defined as: Group I, teachers in whom characteristics of the traditional/basic skills approach predominate; Group II, the eclectic group, teachers in whom neither whole language nor basic skills characteristics predominate; and Group III, teachers in whom there are strong characteristics of the whole language/emergent literacy approach.

#### Group Placements

Group placement was determined by ratings on three sub-scales designed to assess different relevant aspects of teacher/classroom data: teacher attitudes and beliefs, classroom literacy environment, and teacher-child instructional interactions. Each sub-scale rates a teacher as exhibiting basic skills characteristics (BS), exhibiting whole language characteristics (WL) or lacking a clear indication of either (N). A teacher with two or three sub-scale ratings of (BS) was classified as belonging to Group I. A teacher with two or three sub-scale ratings of (WL) was classified as belonging to Group III. All others were placed in Group II. Group II, may therefore contain teachers with one (BS), one (N) and one (WL) rating as well as those with multiple (N) ratings. The process is illustrated in Figure 1. A more detailed description of the sub-scales will follow.

Figure 1.--The Group Placement Process



### Sub-scale 1 - Teacher Attitudes

Sub-scale 1 was derived from responses to two clusters of questions in the interview (see Figure 2). One was believed to reflect a basic skills approach and the other whole language. Response scores (Range= 1-7; highest score signifies strongest support) were totaled for each group of questions. The maximum potential score for each cluster was fifty-six. Scores were classified as high, medium or low within each group based on the distribution of the total sample. (Note that because of different distributions the range for high, medium and low was different for each cluster.) Decision rules for sub-scale ratings are as follows: (WL)= high whole language score (above 50) and either medium or low basic skills score

(below 40); (BS)= high basic skills score (above 39) and either medium or low whole language score (below 51); (N)= all others.

Figure 2.-- Two Clusters of Interview Items used in Computing Sub-scale 1

Basic Skills Cluster:	Whole Language Cluster:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•from Question 2               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-practice in forming letter shapes</li> <li>-practice on shape discrimination</li> <li>-exercises stressing directionality (left to right)</li> <li>-copying letters, words, etc from blackboard or other model</li> </ul> </li>   <li>•from Question 3 A               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Children must be able to identify the letters of the alphabet before they can begin to read or write.</li> <li>-The first step in learning to read is decoding sounds.</li> <li>-Writing begins when the child learns to form some recognizable letter shapes.</li> <li>-Work sheets in word recognition and letter formation are important reading and writing readiness activities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•from Question 2               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-story dictation</li> <li>-opportunities for the children to write or pretend write for communication (stories, signs, notes, greeting cards, reminders, etc.)</li> <li>-scribbling and/or pretend writing</li> <li>-having print that is meaningful to the children in the environment (e.g. signs, lists of names, etc.)</li> </ul> </li>   <li>•from Question 3 A               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Scribbling is an important part of writing development</li> <li>-Experience in writing often helps children learn to read</li> <li>-Children's "pretend" reading of storybooks is a valuable early literacy experience</li> <li>-An important reason for children learning to write is their wanting to use print to communicate.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Sub-scale 2 - Classroom Literacy Environment

Sub-scale 2 was derived from observation of the literacy environment in the classroom. This sub-scale is based on the premise that teachers who appear to follow a whole language approach attempt to create a classroom environment rich in print, especially print that is meaningful to the children. This scale totals the number of literacy environment items from the first page of the observation form.

(See Appendix C, items marked with §). Decision rules are as follows: teachers with eight or more items marked affirmatively were rated (WL); teachers with seven items were rated (N); and teachers with fewer than six affirmative indications were considered (BS).

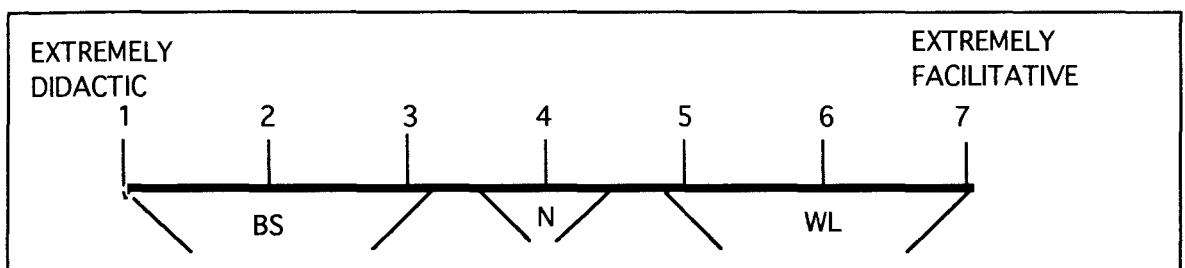
### Sub-scale 3 - Instructional Style

The author believes that one distinction between basic skills and whole language approaches to literacy development relates to the teacher's instructional style. A basic skills teaching approach can be described as "didactic" because it is highly teacher directed (i.e., through task analysis the teacher decides exactly what skills the students should be mastering). Instruction is designed to provide immediate reinforcement for performance (i.e., questions have right or wrong answers, letters are printed correctly or not). Smith (1983) calls this approach "outside in" because the material is selected and the motivation provided by the teacher.

In contrast, whole language proponents encourage instructional methods that focus on encouraging children's internal motivation to learn about print. The teacher focuses on the child, fostering the development of literate behaviors from the "inside-out" (Smith, 1983). In this approach, rather than predetermining particular lessons, the preschool teacher provides a variety of literacy experiences and activities and allows plenty of time for the children to explore the ones they enjoy. The whole language teacher will converse with the child and observe play activities in an effort to assess his or her interests and will then find ways to facilitate skill development using these interests (e.g., a boy who is interested in dinosaurs is offered books about dinosaurs, is encouraged to write a story featuring prehistoric creatures, and to make a book of dinosaur pictures with captions). Such a teaching style can be called "facilitative" because the teacher's role is to support the child's learning, not tell the child what needs to be learnt.

Because the literature did not reveal any formal methods of assessing these differences in instructional approach, the author devised the third sub-scale based on her clinical assessment. Prior to undertaking any data analysis, the author rated each teacher on a seven point scale. Teachers rated a one, two or three were deemed to have a didactic style the author associates with the basic skills approach. Teachers rated four were classified in the eclectic category for style and were classified as (N). Ratings of five, six or seven indicated teachers whose style was perceived as facilitative and therefore considered by the author to be whole language (WL) oriented. (See Figure 3.)

Figure 3-- Placement on Sub-scale 3 (Instructional Style) Based on the Author's Rating of Instructional Interactions



Note: BS= Basic Skills Orientation, N=Neither, WL= Whole Language Orientation

Ratings on the three sub-scales were combined according to the decision rules described earlier (i.e., two or three sub-scale ratings of (BS) = Group I; two or three sub-scale ratings of (WL) = Group III; others = Group II.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS OF THE STUDY

As discussed in Chapter 1, the major objective of this study was to describe the potential resources and supports for literacy development in a sample of twenty-six Chicago Head Start centers. A secondary objective of the study was to see if teachers who had experienced the Erikson Early Literacy Training Program seemed to offer classroom environments literacy environments that were different from teachers who had not experienced this training.

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section includes descriptive data about four aspects of the subject classrooms' literacy environment: (1) demographics, which includes information from the interview regarding the teacher's personal experiences with literacy; (2) the physical literacy environment; (3) the teachers' reports of activities offered for literacy development; (4) the teachers' expressed attitudes and beliefs about literacy development. The second section of the chapter discusses the teachers' theoretical orientation as assessed by the study's group placement procedures. The third section presents the results of the statistical procedure, discriminant analysis, on the three theoretical groups identified by the study. The fourth section presents a discussion of the qualitative characteristics of each group and is illustrated by three case studies. The fifth section presents statistical data regarding possible differences between teachers in the study who had experienced Erikson Institute training and those who had not.

## Descriptive Data

### Demographics Of The Sample

#### Enrollment and Attendance

The data presented here regarding the preschool student population is, unless otherwise noted, derived from teacher responses to the first section of the structured interview (Appendix A). The reporting classrooms (N=24, because there were two subjects who did not participate in the interview portion of the study) had a combined enrollment of 454 students (Mean= 18.91; Range 14-22). According to teacher report the mean daily attendance was 16.6 (Range 12-20). However, the observer's tally of the number of children actually present on the day of observation resulted in a mean of 14.0 (Range 7-19). The teachers generally attributed the low attendance during the research period to it being close to the end of the school year. Of the children enrolled in these classes 391 (86.1%) were African-American, thirty-seven (8.1%) Hispanic, eleven (2.4%) white, nine (1.98%) Asian, and six (1.3%) of mixed or unknown background.

#### Adults in the Classroom

According to their self report, eighteen of the teachers had one regular assistant, and six frequently had two other adults in the classroom. It should be noted that no classroom observed actually had three adults present, and in four classrooms the head teacher was the only adult in the room during the time of the observation. Although eighteen teachers reported having parent volunteers regularly in the classroom, parent helpers were only observed at three centers, and at one of those the mother was serving in the role of a substitute teacher.



### Teacher Description

Personal data about the subject teachers (N=24), was taken from their written responses on the questionnaire (Appendix B). All were female and their ages ranged from twenty-eight to fifty-nine; twenty-one (87.5 %) identified themselves (according to the categories on the form) as Black, two as Hispanic (8.3%) and one as White (4.2%). The mean years of teaching experience among those reporting (N=16) was 11.25 (Range = 3-23). Eleven teachers had completed High Scope Training. Seventeen (65.4%) of the twenty-six teachers in the study had participated in at least some aspect of the Erikson Institute's Early Literacy Training Project. Data regarding education and certification is summarized in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1.-- Sample Head Start Teachers' Highest Level of Education

Bachelor's Degree	Associate's Degree	Some College Work
37.5%	20.8%	41.7%

Note: N=24

Table 2.-- Sample Head Start Teachers' Type of Certification

CDA	Illinois Early Childhood	Illinois Elementary	Illinois Special Education	Illinois Certificate & CDA
69.6%	17.4%	4.3%	4.3%	17.4%

Note: N=23. One teacher held no certification but was working toward a CDA.

### Teachers' Personal Experiences with Literacy

Section V of the interview asked the teachers to express some personal feelings about their experiences with literacy learning and their current uses of reading and writing. Although the responses varied among individuals, a few observations about the group can be made on the basis of the author's coding of the

replies. When asked "What do you remember about learning to read and write?" the most frequently mentioned (60%) memory was reading in school. Seven (30%) of the teachers discussed reading at home. In response to this question only five (21.7%) subjects referred to any kind of writing activity. Those who did most often mentioned learning to write their names.

The responses to the question "What did you like about learning to read and write" were extremely varied. Nine of the replies were coded by the author as belonging in a broad category identified as "expanding horizons." Seven teachers mentioned enjoying being able to read a particular book. When asked what they disliked about learning to read and write, six mentioned discipline or practice exercises; six cited trouble with skills; five made comments that the author coded as "disliking the pressure;" and three mentioned having been laughed at as a problem.

Most of the subjects remembered having been read to by at least two individuals including aunts, grandparents, baby-sitters and neighbors. Fourteen of the twenty-one teachers who responded to this question said they were read to by their mothers; twelve recalled a teacher or teachers who read to them; six mentioned siblings. It is of note that only two of the teachers mentioned remembering being read to by their fathers.

When asked "Is reading an activity you enjoy today?" twenty (83.3 %) responded affirmatively. The types of reading done outside of work mentioned most frequently were: newspapers (50%), magazines (50%), novels (41.7%), books on early childhood education (29.2%). In reply to the question, "Is writing an activity you enjoy today?" fourteen (63.6%) said it was. There was considerable variety in the kinds of writing done outside of work, letter writing being the most common (28.6%). Five of the subject teachers reported doing some sort of creative writing such as articles, poetry or stories for children.

In general, the subjects seemed to remember basically positive experiences during the process of becoming literate. Most had clear recollections of being read to by family members. The teachers all did recreational and/or informational reading and a unexpected number reported some kind of authorship. It is speculated that there is a relationship between the personal literacy experiences of this group of Head Start teachers and their willingness to participate in the study. It is possible that a random sample of Chicago Head Start teachers would reveal different personal literacy attitudes and behaviors.

### The Physical Literacy Environment in the Head Start Classrooms

The classroom observation form developed for the study was used to gather data on the physical literacy environment of the sample centers. (Because of end of the year scheduling problems and teacher attrition it was only possible to complete observations of twenty-two of the sample centers.) Appendix C is a copy of the observation form with the statistical results for all observations inserted. Data of particular interest is discussed in the following section.

#### Books in the Classroom

Each of the classrooms observed had a book display. The observer rated the majority of the books at nine of the twenty-two sites (41%) to be in excellent condition, and at thirteen sites (59%) to be in average condition (i.e. well used but not damaged). In no classroom was the majority of books judged to be in poor condition, although some centers did display a few books that were in very poor condition i.e. covers off, ripped, written on, etc. At all centers the books were, in general, considered to be appropriate for preschoolers. The mean number of books available to the children was twenty-seven (Range 10 - 66). Eighteen centers reported having an additional supply of books in a storage area and/or shared with other classrooms. These supplementary books were available to

change the classroom display and to use for story reading. Seventeen (77%) of the observed centers had a clearly defined space for reading. This reading area was typically adjacent to the book display but varied greatly in size and organization from classroom to classroom.

### Drawing/Writing Equipment

All but one of the classrooms contained a drawing/writing table. Any table area available to the children which offered convenient access to materials necessary for drawing and/or writing (e.g. markers, crayons, pencils, paper) was classified as a drawing/writing table. In some classrooms this table was separate from other art areas, and in others the space was shared with activities such as collage making and teacher directed art projects. The drawing/writing table was, in various centers, also used for story dictation, book making, and/or looking at picture books.

Most of the classrooms (see Appendix C for specific data) had some basic writing/drawing materials; for example, pencils, crayons, markers and some kind of paper "readily available" (i.e., within clear sight and easy reach of the children). Paint and brushes were "readily available" in seventeen classrooms and "somewhat available" (i.e., the children had to ask for them) in two more. There were, however, three classrooms with no provision for painting. While most classrooms had paint and brushes, the variety and quality of the paint varied considerably between sites, ranging from the presence of one jar of somewhat dried up red to an array of six freshly mixed pastel hues each with its own brush.

### Computers

Five centers (22.7%) possessed computers. They were utilized in very different ways in these classrooms. In one center the computer was placed on a small desk with three child-sized chairs close to it. The desk was close to the draw-

ing/writing table where the teacher was stationed during most of free play time. The computer was loaded with the "Gummy Bear Alphabet" software program. Children came singly and in groups during free play to use the program. Most of the children seemed quite familiar with the procedures so the teacher only needed to give verbal reminders when they had problems. In this classroom, the computer was used as another free choice activity and seemed to receive about the same amount of attention as story dictation.

In another classroom, where the computer was a new addition, the assistant teacher devoted her entire attention to controlling turns and directing the children in using a beginning reading program emphasizing phonics. (The program had been given to them with the computer and had no instructions or documentation. This seemed to be frustrating the assistant teacher.) In a third classroom the computer took most of the space on the drawing/writing table (which also contained paper and pencils) but no one touched it during the observation period. When asked about it, the teacher said no one knew how to make it "do anything interesting." In two other classrooms the computers were tucked in back corners of the room and although visible were not available for the children's use.

#### Classroom Print/Displayed Literacy

A summary of the items in the classroom print/displayed literacy section of the observation form is presented in Table 3.

Table 3.--Classroom Print/Displayed Literacy Items from the Structured Observation Sheet Found in the Sample Head Start Classrooms

	YES	NO
Is there a drawing/ writing table?	21 (95.5%)	1 (4.5 %)
Is there a display of books and/or book covers?	22 (100%)	0
Is there a clearly defined space for reading ?	17 (77.3%)	5 (22.7%)
Sign-up or waiting list for activity (easel, cooking etc)	3 (13.6%)	18 (81.8%)
References for children use and/or information (chart with children's names, color names, letter formation cards etc.)	16 (72.7%)	6 (27.3%)
Record keeping for children's benefit (songs we know, books we've read, etc.)	5 (22.7%)	17 (77.3%)
Schedules for children's benefit	8 (36.4%)	13 (59.1%)
Labels for children's benefit (functional, working labels that give information about contents, use, possession i.e. names on cubbies )	19 (86.4%)	3 (13.6%)
Directions for children's benefit (classroom rules, use of centers, recipes etc.)	10 (45.5%)	12 (54.5%)
Communication (notes, messages, letters)	3 (13.6%)	18 (81.8%)
Display of children's recent writing and/or drawing	16 (72.7%)	6 (27.3%)

Note: N=22

As Table 3 indicates, the type of classroom print (other than books) most in evidence was "Labels for the children's benefit." The most common example of this kind of print was children's names on the cubbies where they kept their belongings. Two other frequently seen types of classroom print were "References for the children's use," such as birthday or leader charts, and "Children's recent drawing and/or writing." Although the observation form grouped the display of drawing and writing, it must be noted that the observer did not see many examples of displayed work that she considered examples of scribbling or early writing; most items displayed might be described as "art" projects. Only two classrooms displayed children's dictated stories.

### Activities Offered for Literacy Development in the Sample Classrooms

Because of the limited time of the observation, there was no way of determining whether the activities observed on the day of observation were typical, or of knowing whether the activities observed happened daily or on a less frequent schedule. Consequently the quantitative data on classroom literacy activities comes from teacher self-report via the interview. The teachers were read a list of twenty-one preschool literacy activities (see interview Appendix A) and were asked to report how frequently each occurred (the reply options were "4 or 5 times per week," "2 or 3 times per week," "1 time per week," "1 or 2 times per month," "1 or 2 times per year," or "Never takes place"). Complete data for all of the activities appears in Table I which is presented in Appendix D. Table 4 summarizes this data.

Table 4.-- Relative Frequency of A Selected Group of Literacy Activities Compiled from the Report of Sample Head Start Teachers

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**The Five Most Frequently Occurring Classroom Literacy Activities (#1 is most frequent)**

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1. Teacher reads story to large (5 or more) group of children
  2. Children use writing materials such as pens, pencils and markers freely (i.e. without an assigned task)
  3. Children paint or draw at easels
  4. Teacher prints for children's benefit (names, captions on art, lists of children waiting for an activity etc.)
  5. Children draw and/or paint at a table
- 

**The Five Least Frequently Occurring Classroom Literacy Activities (#1 is least frequent)**

---

1. Children work on prepared workbook or ditto sheets on directionality, letter formation or other "readiness" exercises
  2. Children complete prepared readiness worksheets
  3. Children take trips to the library (note - 45.8 % do go at least monthly)
  4. Children copy letters or words from charts or blackboard
  5. Teacher conducts oral lessons in letter or word recognition (flash cards, letter or picture identification etc.)
- 

Note: Data was gathered from a structured interview which mentioned 21 common preschool literacy activities and asked the teachers to indicate how often each occurred in their classrooms.

Sample Head Start Teachers' Expressed Attitudes and Beliefs About Early Literacy Development

Teacher's attitudes and beliefs about early literacy learning and development were assessed using the structured interview (Appendix A). Question 2 asked the teachers to rate the value of nineteen possible literacy development activities on a seven point scale ranging from "Essential" to "Of no value at all." The results are presented in Table 5.



Table 5.-- Twenty Four Head Start Teachers' Rating of the Value of Selected Preschool Literacy Activities

	Essential	Extremely Imp.	Very Imp.	Somewhat Imp.	Not Very Imp.	Not At All Imp.	Of No Value at All
Drawing and painting	20.8%	45.8%	25%	8.3%	0%	0%	0%
Practice in forming letter shapes	0%	20.8%	12.5%	45.8%	12.5%	4.2%	4.2%
Story dictation	8.3%	41.7%	25%	25%	0%	0%	0%
Practice on shape discrimination	8.3%	12.5%	37.5%	25%	12.5%	4.2%	0%
Sharing books with adults	25%	29.2%	33.3%	12.5%	0%	0%	0%
Exercises stressing directionality	4.2%	25%	41.7%	20.8%	8.3%	0%	0%
Opportunities to look at books by oneself or with classmates	37.5%	45.8%	12.5%	4.2%	0%	0%	0%
Dramatic play with miniature figures	20.8%	20.8%	41.7%	16.7%	0%	0%	0%
Opportunities for the children to write or pretend write for communication	29.2%	33.3%	25%	8.3%	0%	4.2%	0%
Story reading by a teacher	37.5%	45.8%	16.7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Copying letters, words, etc from blackboard or other model	0%	8.3%	16.7%	16.7%	33.3%	20.8%	4.2%
Pretend play	33.3%	33.3%	29.2%	4.2%	0%	0%	0%
Tracing letters	0%	12.5%	25%	37.5%	16.7%	8.3%	0%
Copying letters	0%	8.3%	12.5%	50%	20.8%	8.3%	0%
Scribbling and/or pretend writing	25%	41.7%	25%	4.2%	0%	4.2%	0%
Small motor development activities	37.5%	41.7%	16.7%	4.2%	0%	0%	0%
Having print that is meaningful to the children in the environment	25%	25%	45.8%	0%	4.2%	0%	0%
Group conversations with teachers and children	45.8%	29.2%	25%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Oral language exercises (flash cards, picture identification etc.)	8.3%	33.3%	37.5%	8.3%	4.2%	4.2%	4.2%

An unanticipated finding in these data is that the activity called "Group conversations with teachers and children" received the most (eleven) essential ratings. Other highly valued activities for literacy development were those related to books (i.e., "Story reading by a teacher" "Opportunities to look at books by oneself or with classmates;" and "Sharing books with adults"), play (i.e., "Pretend play" and "Dramatic play with miniature figures"), and small motor development.

Interpretation and possible implications of these findings are discussed in Chapter 5.

The three sections of Question 3 of the interview explored the subject teachers' theoretical orientation to literacy. In 3A the teachers were asked to respond to a list of statements expressing various points of view about literacy development. Response choices included a seven point scale with "Completely agree" at one extreme and "Completely disagree" at the other. Results of this inquiry are presented in Table 6. The statements receiving particularly strong agreement were: "Being read to is extremely important for children's success in learning to read;" "Children's 'pretend' reading of story books is a valuable early literacy experience;" and "Scribbling is an important part of writing development."

Table 6.-- Twenty-four Head Start Teachers' Reactions to Various Statements About Literacy Development

	Com- pletely Agree	Strong- ly Agree	Agree Some- what	Neutral	Dis- agree Some- what	Strong- ly Dis- agree	Com- pletely Dis- agree
Children must be able to identify the letters of the alphabet before they can begin to read or write.	20.8%	4.2%	12.5%	8.3%	20.8%	16.7%	16.7%
Scribbling is an important part of writing development.	62.5%	33.3%	4.2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
The first step in learning to read is decoding sounds.	12.5%	16.7%	37.5%	8.3%	12.5%	4.2%	8.3%
Experience in writing often helps children learn to read.	25%	45.8%	16.7%	4.2%	4.2%	4.2%	0%
Writing begins when the child learns to form some recognizable letter shapes.	12.5%	20.8%	25%	8.3%	20.8%	8.3%	4.2%
Children's "pretend" reading of storybooks is a valuable early literacy experience.	50%	45.8%	4.2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
An important reason for children learning to write is their wanting to use print to communicate.	16.7%	41.7%	25%	4.2%	8.3%	4.2%	0%
Children sometimes learn to write before they learn to read.	20.8%	50%	25%	0%	0%	4.2%	0%
Being read to is extremely important for children's success in learning to read.	62.5%	33.3%	4.2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Preschool children are too young for a literacy program.	0%	4.2%	0%	8.3%	4.2%	37.5%	45.8%
Work sheets in word recognition and letter formation are important reading and writing readiness activities.	4.2%	20.8%	4.2%	4.2%	25%	37.5%	4.2%

Question 3B was open ended, inquiring if the teachers felt "there are any ways that play may help children eventually learn to read and write?" Although the examples and explanations given by the subjects varied greatly, 91.3% of the twenty-three teachers responding to this question agreed that play in some way helped literacy development. Some of their affirmative replies were: "They picked up letter formation because [they were] involved in role play." "If they can

play they can tell stories about things they act out, real things." "Imagination is a form of communication." "Pretending to read encourages them to learn and want this [ability]." "Using writing in play...having paper and pencil in the play house."

Question 3C asked teachers to comment on the connection between "children's oral language development and their literacy development." Twenty-one of the twenty-three teachers (91.3%) thought that there was a connection between oral language development and literacy development. Some comments describing the connection were: "Speaking and reading are closely linked [you] have to know how to sound and know words to read them." "Everything relates to literacy development." "The language the child speaks is how they learn new words, vocabulary develops." "They learn to read pictures."

#### Teachers' Group Placement

A preliminary intention of this study had been to describe the subject teachers' theoretical orientation to literacy development relative to a continuum with basic skills at one end and whole language at the other. During the course of data gathering it became apparent that many of the subject teachers were extremely eclectic in their approach, in some cases combining some clearly basic skills techniques with whole language practices. The presence of so many combinations of approach made the study's original strategy of individual placement on the theoretical continuum unrealistic. An alternative technique was developed in an effort to identify the teachers close to each end of the continuum, i.e. those who appeared strongly basic skills or whole language. Each subject was placed in one of three theoretical groups using a set of predetermined criteria. Group I (Basic Skills) consists of teachers who exhibited strong characteristics of the traditional/basic skills approach. Group II (Eclectic) contains all subjects who exhibited a fairly balanced mixture of the approaches. Group III (Whole Language) is made

up of the teachers who showed dominant characteristics of the whole language/emergent literacy approach. Three aspects of the data: attitudes about literacy development; classroom literacy environment; and instructional style were assessed for group placement. (See Chapter 3, Figures 1 and 2). Ratings on three sub-scales, each reflecting one of these aspects, were combined to make the group placements. Thus placement on three separate continuums were combined to establish the final groupings.

Sub-scale 1 (Teacher Attitudes) reflects the teachers' responses to a cluster of eight interview items believed to reflect basic skills attitudes and a cluster of eight interview items believed to reflect whole language attitudes. Table 7 lists the interview items that were used for this analysis.

Table 7.--Two Clusters of Items from Teacher Interview That Were Used to Determine Sub-scale 1-(Teacher Attitudes)

Basic Skills Cluster:	Whole Language Cluster:
<p>Teachers' rating of the value of the following activities for literacy development: (7=essential to 1=of no value at all)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•practice in forming letter shapes</li> <li>•practice on shape discrimination</li> <li>•exercises stressing directionality (left to right)</li> <li>•copying letters, words, etc from blackboard or other model</li> </ul> <p>Teacher's agreement with the following statements: (7=completely agree to 1=completely disagree)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Children must be able to identify the letters of the alphabet before they can begin to read or write.</li> <li>•The first step in learning to read is decoding sounds.</li> <li>•Writing begins when the child learns to form some recognizable letter shapes.</li> <li>•Work sheets in word recognition and letter formation are important reading and writing readiness activities.</li> </ul>	<p>Teachers rating of the value of the following activities for literacy development: (7=essential to 1=of no value at all)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•story dictation</li> <li>•opportunities for the children to write or pretend write for communication (stories, signs, notes, greeting cards, reminders, etc.)</li> <li>•scribbling and/or pretend writing</li> <li>•having print that is meaningful to the children in the environment (e.g. signs, lists of names, etc.)</li> </ul> <p>Teachers' agreement with the following statements: (7=completely agree to 1=completely disagree)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Scribbling is an important part of writing development</li> <li>•Experience in writing often helps children learn to read</li> <li>•Children's "pretend" reading of storybooks is a valuable early literacy experience</li> <li>•An important reason for children learning to write is their wanting to use print to communicate.</li> </ul>

Note: The total possible score for each cluster was 56 points. The higher the cluster score the more the teacher was believed to favor that approach.

In making evaluations regarding Sub-scale 1 (Teacher Attitudes), the teachers' responses (1-7 for each item) to each cluster of questions (basic skills and whole language) were totaled separately (maximum possible score for each cluster was fifty-six). Scores on each cluster were classified as high, medium or low relative to the distribution of the entire sample. The results of that analysis is presented in Table 8. Note that overall scores for the whole language items were

higher than the basic skills items, suggesting that the sample teachers tended to favor whole language approaches over basic skills.

Table 8.-- Proportion of Teachers Who Scored High, Medium or Low on Two Clusters of Items That Suggested Basic Skills or Whole Language Orientation

Scores on Basic Skills Items			Scores on Whole Language Items		
High (39-47)	Medium (35-38)	Low (13-34)	High (50-54)	Medium (47-49)	Low (46-38)
25%	29.2%	45.8%	37.5%	20.8%	41.7%

Note 1: N for each = 24

Note 2: High scores on basic skills items indicate strong agreement with statements expressing a basic skills perspective and high rating regarding the value of basic skills activities.

Note 3: High scores on whole language items indicate strong agreement with statements expressing a whole language perspective and high rating regarding the value of whole language activities.

Teachers whose response totals were in the high basic skills range and either medium or low in whole language were rated as BS for Sub-scale 1. Teachers' whose response total was in the high whole language range and either medium or low for basic skills were rated as WL for Sub-scale 1. All other teachers (i.e. those not in the high range for either basic skills or whole language) were considered N for Sub-scale 1. (Data regarding all sub-scale placements appears in Table 9.)

The placement on Sub-scale 2 (Classroom Literacy Environment) was determined by a two step process. First the number of "yes" items checked on the sections of the observation form assessing "Classroom Literacy Environment" and "Classroom Print/Displayed Literacy" (for specific items see Appendix C, items marked §) were totaled. Because the literature suggests, and the author believes, creating a rich classroom literacy environment is a high priority for teachers with a whole language orientation the scores were then classified as follows: 0-6= (BS); 7=(N); 8-11= (WL).

Sub-scale 3 (Instructional style) was based on the observer's rating (made before any other data analysis) of teacher-child interactions. The teacher's style of instructional interaction was rated on a scale with 1= extremely didactic (as evidenced by behaviors such as teacher directed lessons and verbal interactions where the teacher questions and the child is expected to answer) to 7= extremely facilitative (as evidenced by teacher behaviors such as encouraging children to initiate learning activities and conversational verbal interactions). Ratings were grouped as follows: 1-3=(BS); 4=(N); 5-7=(WL). (See Chapter 3, Figure 3.)

Table 9.-- Number and Proportion of the 20 Grouped Subject Teachers in the Three Sub-scale Categories

	(BS)	(N)	(WL)
<b>Sub-scale 1</b>	N=5 (25%)	N=10 (50%)	N=5 (25%)
<b>Sub-scale 2</b>	N=7 (35%)	N=5 (25%)	N=8 (40%)
<b>Sub-scale 3</b>	N=6 (30%)	N=5 (25%)	N=9 (45%)
<b>Totals</b>	N=18 (30%)	N=20 (33%)	N=22 (37%)

Ratings on the three sub-scales were combined to place teachers in one of the three pre-established groups. A summary of the individual teachers' placement on the three sub-scales and their group classification appears in Table 10 (Note that because of some subjects lack of participation in either the interview or the observation portion of the study, adequate data to complete group placement was only available on twenty of the subject teachers.) The number and proportion of group placements appear in Table 11.



Table 10.--Individual Subject Teachers' Placement on Sub-scales and Group Classification

Subject #	Sub-scale 1 Teacher Attitudes	Sub-scale 2 Classroom Literacy Environment	Sub-scale 3 Instructional Style	Resulting Group
01	(N)	(BS)	(BS)	I
02	(BS)	(N)	(WL)	II
03	(N)	(N)	(WL)	II
06	(N)	(WL)	(WL)	III
07	(WL)	(N)	(BS)	II
08	(N)	(BS)	(WL)	II
09	(WL)	(WL)	(WL)	III
10	(BS)	(WL)	(N)	II
12	(N)	(BS)	(N)	II
13	(N)	(N)	(WL)	II
15	(N)	(BS)	(WL)	II
16	(BS)	(WL)	(N)	II
20	(BS)	(BS)	(BS)	I
21	(N)	(WL)	(N)	II
23	(N)	(N)	(BS)	II
24	(WL)	(WL)	(WL)	III
25	(N)	(WL)	(BS)	II
26	(BS)	(BS)	(BS)	I
27	(WL)	(WL)	(WL)	III
30	(WL)	(BS)	(N)	II

Notes: (BS) = Basic Skills Orientation; (WL) = Whole Language Orientation; (N) = No clear indication that either orientation is dominant Group I= 2 or more (BS) Group III= 2 or more (WL) Group II= all others

Table 11.-- Number and Proportion of Sample Head Start Teachers in Each of Three Groups Developed to Reflect Theoretical Stance

Basic Skills (Group I)	Eclectic (Group II)	Whole Language (Group III)
N=3 (15%)	N=13 (65%)	N=4 (20%)

Note: Group I = Characteristics of Basic Skills approach predominate  
Group II = Eclectic - characteristics of neither approach predominate  
Group III = Characteristics of Whole Language approach predominate

### Statistical Confirmation of Group Membership

In an effort to confirm the statistical reality of the three theoretical groups established by this study, discriminant analysis was used to determine if there were actual differences between the members of the basic skills (Group I) eclectic (Group II) and whole language (Group III) groups. Discriminant analysis is a two part statistical procedure that first analyses the suggested variables and determines which, if any, of them are significant in separating the subjects according to the groups identified by the researcher. In the second part of the analysis the statistical "description" developed in the first phase of the program is compared to the known group membership (in this case Group I, II or III). If the placement agrees more than 75 percent of the time, it is generally believed that there are, in a statistical sense, real differences in the pre-established groups in terms of the selected variables.

For this analysis a stepwise RAO V selection method was used (Nie et al., 1975) which requested the statistical program to enter the variables in the order that maximized the variability accounted for by the procedure. In a discriminant analysis, the function(s) are derived in such a way that the discriminant scores produced are in standard (Z) score form and the absolute value of the coefficient indicates the relative contribution of each variable to the function(s). The Wilks' Lambda indicates the amount of variance left unaccounted after each step. It is therefore desirable to have the smallest possible Wilks' Lambda after the last significant step in the analysis.

This analysis was conducted with a sizeable group of variables representing both the interview and observation portions of the study. The significant variables accounted for one hundred percent of the variance. Contributions of the significant variables are presented in Appendix D, Table II. Means and standard deviations for the significant variables appear below in Table 12.

Table 12.-- Means and Standard Deviations of Variables That Are Statistically Significant in Discriminating Between Groups I, II, and III

Variable	Mean			Standard Deviation		
	Group I	Group II	Group III	Group I	Group II	Group III
Children dramatize stories they have written	3.00	4.80	5.00	1.63	.63	.82
Children complete readiness worksheets	3.50	1.40	1.50	2.08	1.26	1.00
Importance of teacher reading to children	6.25	6.00	6.75	.50	.81	.50
Children dramatize story books	4.50	4.60	5.25	1.29	1.26	.50
Opportunities to write or pre-tend write	5.75	6.10	6.00	1.26	.99	.82
Scribbling is an important part of writing development	6.00	6.50	7.00	.82	.53	.00
Importance of opportunities to look at books	6.25	6.10	6.50	.50	.99	.58
Tracing letters	3.75	4.60	4.00	1.71	.97	.82
Teacher conducts oral lessons	4.25	3.70	3.75	2.36	1.95	2.22

Note 1: Group I = basic skills; Group II = eclectic; Group III = whole language.

Note 2: Variables are listed in order of their entry into the analysis.

When the group centroids for these data were plotted, clear separation between the groups was evident, suggesting that there are statistically identifiable distinctions between the groups. Centroid locations for Function I were: Group I = -88.82889; Group II = -3.53406; and Group III = 55.01661. This analysis correctly classified 90% of cases according to group (i.e., the independent statistical analysis of variables predicted eighteen of the subjects would be in the group in which the author's classification system had placed them). Table 13 presents a classification chart indicating the accuracy of placement in each group.

Table 13.---Classification of Subjects according to Predicted and Actual Group Membership according to a Discriminant Analysis

Actual Group	Number of Cases	Predicted for Basic skills (Group I)	Predicted for Eclectic (Group II)	Predicted for Whole Language (Group III)
Basic Skills	3	2 (67.0 %)	1 (33.0 %)	0 (0.0 %)
Eclectic	13	1 (7.7 %)	12 (93.3 %)	0 (0.0 %)
Whole Language	4	0 (0.0 %)	0 (0.0 %)	4 (100.0 %)

The results of this discriminant analysis suggest that using the selected variables, subjects can be quite accurately placed in one of the three theoretical groups created by the author for the descriptive purposes of this study.

#### Case Studies and Group Descriptions

To further develop the descriptive nature of this dissertation this section will offer a qualitative discussion of the general characteristics of the basic skills, whole language and eclectic groups. Case studies of three teachers, one from each of the groups, will offer a more detailed picture of the literacy development in three diverse Head Start Classrooms. The profiled teachers and their classrooms were selected both because they illustrate characteristics of their respective groups and because they were particularly confident and interesting teachers. Margaret (all names are fictitious) who represents Group I has a basic skills orientation. Florence, the Group II teacher, operates in a very eclectic literacy environment which combines basic skills and whole language approaches. Kim is a clear example of the Group III, whole language orientation. These three have much in common. All are mature African-American women and experienced teachers. They clearly enjoy their work and are concerned about providing a learning envi-

ronment that will help their students succeed in school, both now and as they move into kindergarten. Despite these similarities there are real differences in the way they present language and literacy activities in their classrooms.

All of the observations for the case studies were made in May of 1990. Most of the children in the groups observed were four or five years old and had been in the program since September, so many would be entering kindergarten in the fall. Each case study will begin with a profile of the teacher and her expressed (through the interview and any other comments) attitudes about language and literacy development. This will be followed by a description of all aspects of the classroom literacy environment: physical, temporal and interpersonal. Next will be a discussion of the teacher's rating on each of the sub-scales used for group placement. Each case will conclude with some impressions and interpretations by the author.

### The Basic Skills Group

The most obvious characteristic of the teachers placed in the basic skills group was their emphasis upon didactic, teacher directed instruction. These teachers clearly knew what response they expected from the children. Verbal interactions were largely in the three part sequence of teacher initiation, student response, teacher evaluation (IRE) (Cazden, 1988). Informal conversational interactions between teachers and children in these classroom were almost never observed.

The basic skills group's classrooms contained little or no print for the children's benefit and exhibited few or no examples of the children's graphic efforts. In the interview, teachers in this group tended to give higher ratings to literacy activities in the basic skills cluster. They did, however, also give approval to some whole language activities such as story reading and scribbling/pretend writing. The group included teachers with different levels of education and experience.

One of the basic skills group teachers had received on site training from the Erikson Institute Early Literacy Program. The following case study portrays an interesting member of this group.

### Case Study: "Margaret"

#### Teacher Profile

Margaret, at 59, was the oldest of the teachers in the study but she was also one of the most energetic. For example, during group time, much to the children's delight, she demonstrated push-ups. Her enthusiasm for her work was obvious as she bounded rapidly around the classroom supervising and often redirecting children's activities.

"My mother was a teacher, there are lots of teachers in my family," Margaret told the author. She has taught in Head Start for eight years and said she had been a volunteer before that. Her teaching credential is a CDA (the nationally recognized "Child Development Associate") and she also holds an associate's degree. Margaret said she had never had any particular training or courses regarding preschool literacy but indicated she had heard some suggestions about the topic at various seminars given by curriculum advisors from their delegate agency. Although she had never had any direct contact with the Erikson Institute, she said she was aware of its programs through friends. She was a willing research subject and expressed strong interest in reading the results of this study.

#### *Personal literacy*

Margaret's comments about her own literacy were interesting: when asked what she remembered about learning to read and write, she said. "It was too structured. If I couldn't say the ABC's I got hit on the knuckles." She didn't like the knuckle rapping but commented, "I did learn. Some children have to be pushed." A positive motivating factor in her own literacy education was her de-

sire to read to other children. She also said she loved getting information from her reading. Her memories of those who read to her when she was young included her mother and grandfather. Early favorite books were Jack and Jill and Little Red Riding Hood. She recalled that when she was growing up, "Everyone at home read the newspaper." In commenting on her current literacy activities she said decisively, "Reading is part of me." Favorite reading includes medical and health books, newspapers and Money magazine. She reported that writing is an activity she enjoys today and that she writes a good deal as the secretary of a church organization.

#### *Attitudes And Beliefs About Literacy Learning/Development*

One of the interview questions went as follows: "Some teachers think there is a connection between children's oral language development and their literacy development. Do you agree or disagree?" Margaret did not directly answer this question. Instead she talked about children learning oral language by hearing a role model and having opportunities to express themselves. She advised "Never be too busy to listen to a child. If you give them the idea [that you are interested] they want to come back." The author had the sense that developing the children's oral language was a serious concern of hers (she taught several children whose first language was not English) and that she was not particularly interested in its potential connection to reading and writing.

When asked about the possible relationship between pretend play and literacy development, she replied she felt there was a connection. "Children learn to read picture labels" was offered as an example of how this might occur. She also mentioned that games such as "Memory" and "Sesame Street" help children learn to read. In elaborating her response to the question about play and literacy she introduced a concept that seemed to have a strong influence on her teaching style. She suggested that learning was especially strong when children helped each

other. Several times I observed her enlisting another child to help a classmate who asked a question or needed assistance.

While she was eager to cooperate and very responsive to the open ended questions, Margaret was one of the subject teachers who seemed to find the scaled, fixed response questions frustrating. On the first set of questions she chose the response "extremely important" and repeated it, for all but two items, making the validity of this portion of the data somewhat questionable. The portion of the interview (Section III) inquiring about the frequency of various literacy/writing activity provoked answers suggesting that almost all of the suggested activities were done several times a week. Since it is unlikely that any half day program would be able to offer such frequency in all of the listed activities her replies are believed to have been influenced by problems coping with the scale and/or a "social desirability" response set (Achenbach, 1978). The three activities that she indicated occurred fewer than four or five times a week were story dramatization, making books, and workbooks or ditto sheets. Her incidental comment about readiness worksheets, "We're not supposed to do them," which was made almost wistfully, suggested that she does not have any personal objection to them.

### Classroom Literacy Environment

Margaret teaches two five-day-a-week, half day programs. Each session lasts three and one half hours. The morning class the author observed had an enrollment of twenty children, 75% African-American and 25% Hispanic. On the day of the observation nine of the twelve children in attendance appeared to be African-American. Margaret told the observer that ordinarily there is both an assistant teacher and a parent helper in the classroom. However, on the morning of the observation the assistant teacher was absent and the parent volunteer was serving as the other staff person (it is not known if she were being paid as a substitute teacher). Since attendance was low there was no lack of supervision; how-



ever the parent did not seem very experienced in classroom routines, such as mixing paint, and did not spend much time interacting with the children.

### *Physical Environment*

Margaret's classroom was one of two housed side by side in a storefront located in a busy commercial area. The resulting space was long and narrow and activities were arranged in a sort of railroad car style, one behind the other. The door to the center opened into the space in front of this classroom. Inside the door there was a counter with sheets for parents to sign children in and out. Also on top of the counter were some notices for parents (times for a field trip, etc.). The author did not see any evidence of the sort of bulletin board offering information for parents that was present in most of the other centers. The children's cubbies were close to the door.

Adjacent to the entrance was an unusual piece of equipment --a merry-go-round type apparatus with three tricycles set up so that when the children pedaled the whole unit went in circles around the center post. Margaret explained that her site had no outdoor play area and this was an effort to provide the children with some gross motor activity. It was very popular with the children but when it was in use it required almost constant supervision by an adult to monitor turns and control the speed and style of riding.

The tables used for meals and snacks were in back of the counter area. Along the wall near the tables, there were low shelves containing some games and manipulatives which the children could use at the tables. On the opposite wall stood one bookcase containing assorted blocks, some wooden and some plastic. The space in front of the block shelf was in the traffic pattern to the bike-go-round and the entrance. Behind the group of tables was "housekeeping" which contained the typical child sized wooden furniture and play house equipment. Although Margaret mentioned labels in housekeeping as a literacy learning de-

vice, the observer did not see any evidence of such items or any other print or writing materials in this area. On the day of the observation, no one played in housekeeping.

A sizable space behind the housekeeping area was left open for group activities. Along the wall opposite this open area was a small table with three chairs and a shelf display of developmentally appropriate children's books. Toward the back of the room there was desk with a computer but it was covered and had things piled around it suggesting it had not been used recently. The children seemed to ignore it.

At the very back of the room, close to the sinks and bathrooms was the art area. This space contained a table, some chairs and two one sided easels. Art and writing materials were stored on high shelves and apparently brought down by the teacher according to the day's activity. Several pieces of children's art work were displayed in this area. This was the only place in the classroom where children's work was in evidence. The displayed paintings, which were not dated, seemed to be quite immature for a four year old group. The author did not see any examples of clearly representational art or letter formation among the pictures exhibited.

Print in the Classroom. The classroom contained a well organized display of developmentally appropriate books which looked well used but not tattered. The books were available to the children during free play time (no children were observed looking at them during this period) and were distributed to them during the transition to lunch and while they were waiting to be picked up.

An interesting facet of the literacy environment of this program was the use of name/symbol cards. This seemed to be a method suggested (required?) by the curriculum coordinator of the delegate agency because the same system was observed being used at another center administered by the same agency. At the

beginning of the year each child is assigned a simple symbol such as the outline of a truck, turtle or flower. The children's cubbies are identified by both the child's printed first name and the symbol. Each child also has a laminated card printed with his or her name and symbol (e.g. SUSIE ♥). During "planning time" (Margaret had not participated High Scope training but did use a planning scheme resembling its approach) the teacher held up one of the children's cards and asked the child to identify it. Because this was late in the school year she covered the picture symbol and hoped the children could recognize their printed names. If they did not she uncovered the symbol as a reminder. Most children managed on the letters alone and many read other children's names.

As each child collected his or her card it was decided where they would play first. Some children were permitted to go to the area of their expressed choice, others were directed to different areas. On the wall near each play area were cardboard pockets to hold the name cards and indicate the number of children who could be in that area at one time. When the children entered an area they put their card in a pocket; when the pockets were full it meant that no more children could play there until someone left. A good deal of this teacher's interactions with children were spent reminding them about moving their cards as they changed activities and redirecting them to different areas.

Aside from the name cards and labels on the cubbies, the children in this classroom did not encounter much functional print. There were a few informational items posted on the wall, e.g., schedules and calendars, but they were placed up high and clearly were designed for adult reading. There was in fact, other than books, very little print to be seen.

### *Literacy Activities*

When the author arrived at about 9:00 AM, the children had finished breakfast and were gathered in the group area. It was obvious Margaret had been

waiting until the guest arrived before she began "Show and Tell." She introduced the observer and cautioned the children to speak clearly "So the lady can see how well you all do." Margaret was the only teacher in the study who made an issue of the observer's presence with the children and the only one who seemed to adjust her schedule for the author's benefit. "Show and Tell," which she reported occurs once a week, was a lengthy event on the morning of the observation, lasting about twenty-five minutes. Each of the children present that morning was expected to contribute in some way. Margaret prompted the children, "Where is your left hand?" as she reminded them to pass shared items to the left. For some children, such as the little girl who had brought an elaborate grocery store check-out toy, it was easy to talk. For others, such as a boy clutching a small statue, words had to be pried out. Children who had not brought anything and didn't have anything special to say were asked to describe the colors of the clothes they were wearing. They were encouraged with remarks like "What color is that?" "Show me another color." It was obvious that English was difficult for the Hispanic children.

The children were quiet and attentive for the first fifteen minutes of this session. When they eventually began to get restless and spoke out of turn the teacher shushed them saying "Excuse me! Excuse me! You know I hear everything." Looking hard at a child who continued to talk she queried, "Excuse me. What does that mean?" The child replied, "Be quiet." Margaret, nodding her head vigorously affirmed, "That's right!" There were many "Excuse me's" heard during the morning. At the end of "Show and Tell," about five minutes were spent in "planning" as described earlier. The bikes seemed to be the most popular choice and many children who asked for bikes were directed to another activity. Four of those who had asked for bikes were sent to the art area.

When the children had moved to their designated areas and put their cards in the pockets, some settled down and became involved in play activities

such as building with bristle blocks. Others soon began moving about and were reminded to take their cards. The author does not know how long the card system had been in use but it was clear that a number of the children were having trouble with the process.

The four children who had been sent to the art table began to work with the markers and lined paper that the teacher placed on the table. Margaret had commented to the volunteer "I'm going to let them write while you mix up the paint." When Margaret came back to check on the paint mixing she looked over one girl's shoulder and asked "Tell me what you wrote." The child responded pointing to the page "S- O- J- S." A boy working with markers asked Margaret how to make an "L." Instead of responding directly she called a girl who was playing nearby and directed, "Andrea, show Billy how to make the letter 'L.'" Andrea did not look pleased to be interrupted but sat down and drew several "L's," saying rather curtly, "That the way it look." Andrea was the only child who moved to the art area after the free play period had begun.

When the two colors of paint were finally ready (it took the parent much of free choice time to get it organized) they were placed in muffin tins at the table not at the easels. Only one child actually painted. The other children who had been assigned to the area either continued with markers or moved to other areas.

Margaret spent most of her time during the twenty-five minute free play monitoring the bicycle device. When the children would ride too fast she would spell out "S-T-O-P," then say, "You are going too fast." She would let them start again by spelling "G-O". Many children came wanting turns and stood around watching. Some of them were sent off to find something else to do. After about fifteen minutes, but before everyone had had a turn, she announced that the bikes were not going to be used any more that day.

The children were given a ten minute warning for clean up which seemed to set many of them wandering around aimlessly. It took a good deal of teacher direction to get things picked up and to organize the children in a circle for group time. When everyone was finally assembled group activities were begun. The first activity was push-ups. Margaret demonstrated and then invited groups of children to come into the center of the circle and do some while the class counted. The children enthusiastically participated and encouraged the others. The push-ups were followed by a song about hugs. Each child was called individually to hug the parent volunteer and then the whole group joined in a giant hug. This was a lively and warm activity.

Next Margaret appointed a child to be the "teacher" and lead the group. She told the author later that each child gets a chance for this role fairly frequently. The child-teacher led a sort of rap version of "I'm a Little Tea Pot" with words and motions that the children clearly knew well and enjoyed. After quieting the group with a few "Excuse me's" Margaret read a brief story (the observer inadvertently neglected to record the title) with enthusiasm and expression. The children were very attentive. When she had finished she chose another child to act as "teacher." This child, the daughter of the parent helper, was instructed to select a book and share it with the class. This girl chose Corduroy and did a competent job of "pretend" reading it to the group. Several children who were beginning to become disruptive were sent to sit in the table area where the parent volunteer was setting up for lunch. As some children went to wash their hands, the others were instructed to take books and look at them while sitting on the floor. The children handled the books appropriately and seemed to enjoy looking at them. After lunch while they were waiting to be picked up (and some waited a long time) they went back to the books. Some of the children paired up and looked at a book with a classmate.

### *Interpersonal Environment*

A large proportion of Margaret's verbal interactions were managerial (e.g., "Little boys do not wear caps inside." "What are you doing with your hat on backward?"). Many of her inquiries were actually directives with the intent to control ("What should we say beside shut up?" "Why you puttin' your hands over your mouth instead of listening?"). When she did ask questions seeking information they were most often of the "closed" type where only one answer was appropriate (e.g., "What color is that?" "What did she do that was different?"). Many of Margaret's instructional interactions were what might be described as "lessons." Several of these occurred during lunch regarding proper eating habits ("If you eat all your food you'll get big muscles"). As Margaret was attempting to get the children organized to go home she offered this puzzling "lesson" to the group: "You have to learn to listen at school so when you go out you listen. Suppose you were at the zoo and I said stop walking and an animal got out of the cage. It would eat you-- and you'd be dead!"

Although Margaret's words were often quite directive, her tone was usually warm. She was quick to give a hug or a pat and frequently praised positive behavior (e.g., "I like the way you are walking. You walk like a big boy"). She smiled a lot, laughed a lot and generally conveyed a aura of love for the children that softened her rather controlling approach.

### Group Placement

Margaret was identified as a clearly basic skills (Group I) teacher- because she was classified as (BS) on all three sub-scales. It must, however, be noted that because of her possible difficulties in handling the forced response portion of the interview, the validity of the data from Margaret's interview (and therefore Sub-scale 1) is somewhat suspect. However even if her rating on Sub-scale 1 were different her other two BS ratings would still place her as a Group I teacher. Her re-

sponses to the designated interview questions used for Sub-scale 1 are listed in Tables 14 and 15:

Table 14.--Margaret's Evaluation of Selected Activities for Literacy Development (Items from Interview Question 2)

Practice in forming letter shapes (BS)	Extremely Important (6)
Story Dictation (WL)	Extremely Important (6)
Practice on Shape Discrimination (BS)	Extremely Important (6)
Exercises stressing directionality (BS)	Extremely Important (6)
Opportunities for the children to write or pretend write for communication (WL)	Extremely Important (6)
Copying letters, words etc. (BS)	Very Important (5)
Scribbling and/or pretend writing (WL)	Extremely Important (6)
Having print that is meaningful to the children in the environment (WL)	Not Very Important (3)

Table 15.--Margaret's Reaction to Statements about Literacy Development (Items from Interview Question 3A)

Children must be able to identify the letters of the alphabet before they can begin to read or write. (BS)	Disagree Somewhat (3)
Scribbling is an important part of writing development. (WL)	Strongly Agree (6)
The first step in learning to read is decoding sounds. (BS)	Agree Somewhat (5)
Experience in writing often helps children learn to read. (WL)	Strongly Agree (6)
Writing begins when the child learns to form some recognizable letter shapes. (BS)	Disagree Somewhat (3)
Children's "pretend" reading of storybooks is a valuable early literacy experience. (WL)	Strongly Agree (6)
An important reason for children learning to write is their wanting to use print to communicate. (WL)	Agree Somewhat (5)
Work sheets in word recognition and letter formation are important reading and writing readiness activities. (BS)	Strongly Agree (6)

Notes for Tables 14 & 15: (BS)= item used to compute Basic skills score for Sub-scale 1; (WL)= item used to compute Whole Language score for Sub-scale 1; (number)= numerical rating of response, possible range = 1-7 on each item.

Margaret's score of (4) on Sub-scale 2 put her in the (BS) classification.

This score was determined because her classroom had four of the eleven items



listed on the observation chart under the categories of Classroom Literacy Environment and Classroom Print/ Displayed Literacy. (See Appendix C, items marked with § for the complete list.) The range among all subjects for Sub-scale 2 was 4-9, those below 7 were classified as (BS). (See chapter 3 for a discussion of the rationale.) The items from this list that were present in Margaret's classroom were:

- Drawing/writing table
- Display of books and/or book covers
- Labels for children's benefit
- Display of children's recent writing and/or drawing

The observer's rating of Margaret's interactional style was a (1) on a scale where 1= most didactic to 7= most conversational (see Chapter 3 for a discussion). This rating indicates that the observer saw a heavy emphasis upon didactic interactions. Ratings on this scale of (3) or below are classified as (BS).

### Impressions and Interpretations

Although Margaret was, in this classification system, clearly a Group I teacher, it is important to note that her approach to literacy development was still somewhat eclectic and included several whole language techniques. Her encouragement of the children's pretend reading to the class suggests an appreciation of some of the concepts of emergent literacy although she might not be specifically aware of the approach. Her use of children in the role of teacher has a social-interactionist flavor and resembles some of the whole language approaches used by Graves (1983) with older children.

In general, it seems that Margaret's emphasis in language and literacy curriculum is on improving the children's oral language and encouraging an appreciation of books. While experimentation with printing is permitted, the inaccessibility of materials does not encourage it. The children's exposure to any type of print (other than books) in the classroom is very limited. There does not appear

to be any use of functional print for the children's benefit. Nor does the program seem to offer opportunities for the children to experiment with authorship.

It is interesting to speculate about how Margaret's own literacy development may have influenced her teaching approach. Growing up with a teacher-mother Margaret must have had a vivid role model of the teacher as a potent force in the environment. Having learned her ABC 's through authoritarian teaching ("If I don't learn I get my knuckles rapped!"), it is easy to understand why she might be most familiar with a rather didactic approach. Her enjoyment of books and her remembered pleasure in reading to others shows clearly in her classroom emphasis upon book sharing.

#### The Whole Language Group

At the other end of the theoretical continuum from basic skills is the whole language group. The four teachers placed in this group are distinguished by the amount of literacy development activity that was seen in their classrooms. Print for the children's benefit such as charts, lists and messages is in clear evidence. Many children in these classrooms were observed actively engaged in literacy activities such as looking at books, experimenting with drawing/writing materials, and dictating material for the teachers to write down.

The classroom language interactions of this group were observed to be more conversational than didactic. Open ended questions such as "What did you do last night?" and "How do you think the girl [in the story] felt?" were heard frequently. During the interviews the teachers in this group tended to rate all literacy development activities fairly highly (including some in the basic skills cluster). They also reported a high frequency of occurrence for most of the mentioned activities. Two of the teachers were active mediators of literacy experiences through direct interaction such as volunteering to write signs appropriate for play activities. The other two could be described more as facilitators, i.e. providing materi-

als and support of the children's efforts. The following case study describes a whole language group teacher and her program.

### Case Study: "Kim"

Kim and her classroom were chosen to represent the whole language group because so many interesting examples of whole language style literacy activities were observed in her classroom. This program was sponsored by a religious, social service agency, and it was housed in the basement of a church in a neighborhood consisting mostly of three and six flat apartment buildings. The children enrolled at the center were all African-American and most came from working families.

### Teacher Profile

Kim is the most experienced of the three profiled teachers. Although she indicated her age to be 40, she reported 23 years of preschool teaching experience. She has a bachelor's degree, an Illinois Early Childhood teaching certificate, has completed High Scope training, and participated in the full Erikson Early Literacy training program. Recently, Kim has been involved in this program as a teacher trainer.

### *Personal Literacy*

With characteristic enthusiasm, Kim recalled learning to read and write when she was about six years old. "I liked to read everything, even what I wasn't supposed to. .. In first grade I remember getting stars. I tried to do my best so I got lots of stars." Her aunt, mother and Sunday school teachers read to her. She recalls spending a lot of time playing school and by the time she was ten or twelve dreaming of being a teacher.

Kim enjoys both reading and writing as an adult. She chooses to read lots of child development books and is currently compiling a resource book of

preschool curriculum activities which she hopes to share with other teachers. For recreational reading, Kim enjoys Ebony and Life magazines. She likes to write letters to friends and family.

#### *Attitudes and Beliefs about Literacy Learning/Development*

Kim was very decisive in her responses to Question 2 regarding the value of various literacy development activities. She rated thirteen of the activities as "Essential," far more than were so rated by any of the other teachers in the study. She rated as essential: drawing and painting; story dictation; sharing books with adults; opportunities to look at books; dramatic play with miniature figures; opportunities for the children to write or pretend write for communication; story reading by a teacher; pretend play; scribbling and or pretend writing; small motor development activities; having meaningful print in the environment; and group conversations with teachers and children. She was equally decisive in rating two activities (practice in forming letter shape and practice on shape discrimination) "Of no value at all."

Kim's approach to question 3A, which asked the teachers to react to statements reflecting various theories of literacy development, was also decisive. She chose the extreme ends of the scale on ten of the eleven items. She completely agreed with these statements: "Scribbling is an important part of writing development;" "Experience in writing often helps children learn to read;" "Children's 'pretend' reading of story books is a valuable early literacy experience"; "Children sometimes learn to write before they learn to read;" and "Being read to is extremely important for children's success in learning to read." She completely disagreed with the following statements: "Children must be able to identify the letters of the alphabet before they can begin to read or write;" "The first step in learning to read is decoding sounds"; "Writing begins when the child learns to form some recognizable letter shapes;" "Preschool children are too young for a lit-

eracy program;" and "Worksheets in word recognition and letter formation are important reading and writing readiness activities."

Kim's response to the question regarding the possible connection between pretend play and literacy development was more explicit than most of the other teachers'. She commented, "In dramatic play children can put words into action. .. It is an opportunity to be creative and to understand that words have meaning." [When playing] "children can take charge, control the action.. begin it..end it." She went on to say that play gives children a chance to express themselves. When asked about the connection between children's oral language development and their literacy development Kim suggested: "A person needs to be able to listen to words-- hear language-- to feel it-- to be able to see it written."

#### *Techniques for Encouraging Literacy Development*

When asked "Are there other activities you offer that you feel contribute to literacy development?" she was eager to share her ideas. Her first comments described a variety of ways she incorporates literacy into the housekeeping area. These included: always having plenty of writing materials available, making telephone books and address lists, and creating files for pretend recipes. Another idea she suggested was that, in order to encourage story dictation, she sometimes writes the stories on paper cut in a familiar shape such as a bunny or a kite. She believes this is an especially effective way to prompt three year olds to begin telling stories. Also mentioned but not observed were a variety of teacher made games which use letters and simple print.

An especially interesting idea was the technique this program has devised to both encourage attendance at parent meetings and inform parents about story dictation/dramatization as a literacy activity. Several times a month the director videotapes the children dramatizing stories they have dictated. The parents are then invited to parent meeting to see these "movies" featuring their children.

Kim reports the response to these videos has been positive. Parents love to see their children on tape and the meetings give the staff a chance to show parents the written stories and talk about encouraging early literacy activities.

## Classroom Literacy Environment

### *Physical Environment*

The church basement area was divided in half lengthwise by shelf units and partitions about five feet high which created two long narrow classrooms. The space closest to the entrance to Kim's room contained tables that were used for lunch. On shelves close to these tables were baskets with pencils, pens, crayons, markers and stacks of assorted paper including plenty of old computer printouts. Most of the children's cubbies were also in this area. The wall space and partitions in this space were covered with teacher made replicas of Jet magazine covers featuring pictures of the children, their names and a few headline style words such as "Big Hit" or "Important". Beyond this area, along the outside wall, was the housekeeping center, containing typical dramatic play props and equipment such as a child sized stove with miniature cooking utensils. Of special literacy note in this area was a roladex telephone file with spare cards for the children to make entries, and a child created recipe book hanging next to the stove. Several baskets containing scratch paper and pencils were on various shelves in this area.

Literacy Materials. Opposite the housekeeping area, along the partition to the other classroom was a reading space containing a shelf with an assortment of developmentally appropriate books. A number of colorful book jackets were displayed nearby on the room divider. The limited floor space in this narrow area was carpeted and contained two child sized rocking chairs and several floor cushions for reading. In addition to the commercial books, a group of children's stories was displayed. Some of these were the children's dictated versions of favorite

stories which were made into books by stapling them onto photocopies of the original book jacket. (Because most of the children's dictated stories were routinely photocopied before being sent home the author was able to collect some samples.)

The following is one child's version of Where the Wild Things Are:

Mark got up in the night. He saw the monsters roll their eyes. There were 5 monsters. They said they were going to eat Mark up. Mark ran away in the boat. And then he went back home. The monsters started crying. The monsters ran to get Mark at his house. They did not get in the house. The monsters were mad because the door was locked. The monsters went away. Mark was very happy. The End

At the back of the room was another table surrounded by shelves containing many kinds of art materials. Close by were two easels, each set up with five colors of paint and a container of markers. There was a large bulletin board on the back wall which held children's art and writing (and, above these, messages of importance for the staff). Children's drawing and writing was displayed on almost all the available wall space. Some children asked that their work be hung up as soon as it was completed. The staff seemed to find room for them.

Across from the art area were blocks, stacked adjacent to an open, carpeted area which was also used for group time and story dramatization. The space in this area was limited and the children each had a small rug with their name on it which they used to define their sitting area during group activities. The children seemed fond of their rugs and several children were observed taking them out to sit on during free time.

Print in the Environment. All of the vertical surfaces in this room seemed to be covered with graphic material. In addition to the children's work there were a number of charts (e.g. how plants grow) and colorful posters with the alphabet in large uppercase letters next to simple, appropriate illustrations (e.g. the illustra-

tion for "A" was a shiny red apple). Most classroom items were labeled. Despite the quantity of print and pictures in the environment, to this observer, the effect was not cluttered or overwhelming, just cheerful and interesting.

### *Literacy Activities*

This was a half day program. As the observer arrived at about 9:00 A.M. the twelve children in attendance were just coming in from outdoors. (Enrollment is 20, but it was a beautiful spring day and the director suggested that a number of the children were probably out doing things with their parents.) Kim came in first and gave the author a brief introduction to the schedule for the morning. The children had been served breakfast and had an outdoor play period before she had arrived. As free play began, Kim stationed herself in the art area at the back of the room, which made her accessible to both the children working with art materials and the children using the blocks. The assistant teacher moved around the room but spent much of her time interacting with children who were using the easels.

Free play lasted about forty-five minutes and was filled with children involved in literacy related activities. Here are some examples. Kim, observing that Tom was playing the role of a fireman in the block area, asked if he would like a sign for his block structure. He said "Yes! Say 'Fire Truck.' " She made the sign and he taped it to the front of his "vehicle." As another boy entered the area Tom proudly pointed to the sign and said "See this is my fire truck." As a girl put the finishing touches on a rather complex, multicolored painting at the easel, she called the assistant teacher over. As the child described each section the assistant wrote a description close to it (e.g., "Mary's house," "lake"). Another child wandered over to the shelves where their rugs were kept, looked through several, checking the large printed letters that identified them. When he found his own



he flopped down on the floor, and used his right forefinger to trace over the letters of his name on the rug, as he seemed to take a short rest from play activity.

The drawing/writing table at the back of the room was one of the most popular free choice activities. At least eight of the twelve children spent considerable periods of time there, apparently concentrating hard on their drawing/writing efforts. It was also at this table that Kim took dictation from two children and promised a third that he could "do" a story the next day. One of the dictated stories follows:

The little bitty Ebony went outside to play. And then she didn't do her homework. She came back in the house. She said Mama can I go out and ride my bike? Mama can you read a story to me? Please Mommy. Mommy can I go outside and play with my friends? Could I go outside and play with Mina and Dora. My Mommy said Okay. So I went outside. Jacklyn kitty cat went outside to play. I did my hair today. Mommy and I put on some of my biking shorts. Mommy said yes. The End

During clean up time one boy neatly placed all his manipulatives in their transparent plastic box, took it to the shelf and compared the lettering on the end of the box, "Rig-a-Jigs," with the letters on the shelf. Apparently not finding anything that looked right, he carefully put it in a space with no label. Clean up was accomplished efficiently with all the children seeming to help out. As the children finished they joined one of two small groups. One was with Kim in the block area, the other with the assistant teacher in the reading center. As the children assembled, each group had some some general conversation about what the children had been doing that morning. Each teacher then did a finger play and read a story. Kim read The Carrot Seed and the group acted it out with gusto. The assistant teacher read There Was An Old Woman Who Swallowed A Fly and the children were encouraged to recite along with the poem. After the stories the two groups joined in the block area (it was crowded even with this low attendance) and dramatized the children's stories that had been dictated earlier. The child-au-

thors selected individuals to play various roles. The actors were energetic and expressive and those serving as audience were attentive.

The next group event was a motor activity that involved dancing and then "freezing," as directed by a record. Concluding group time, the class sang a train song and "tickets" made of colored construction paper were handed out by the teacher as a transition to hand washing and lunch. As the children finished hand washing they helped set the tables using laminated placemats with their names and the outline of utensils in the proper location.

Lunch was a relaxed affair with the children helping themselves as dishes were passed. Conversation at the lunch table was animated. Kim asked "Did anyone see 'The Simpson's' last night?" One child said something about another show and Kim probed: " 'Batteries Not Included' [apparently the name of the show] what was that about?"

After eating and independently clearing their places, many of the children went and got paper and pencils or markers and sat back down at the lunch table (among children who were still eating) and did drawing and/or writing, experimenting in various ways with the materials and discussing their work. After all the children had finished eating the assistant teacher cleaned up the food while Kim sat at the table. She told Jim, the boy who had wanted to dictate a story earlier, that she had time to write his story now but that they couldn't dramatize it until tomorrow. He eagerly began telling her his tale. The parents still had not begun to arrive when Kim finished writing his story, so she agreed to "do" (write down) an "Old Lady and the Fly" story for Kewana who had been sitting nearby listening to Jim dictate. After Kewana had finished dictating, Kim said, "This is a funny story, can I read it back?" The girl agreed and Kim began reading it to the remaining children just as Kewana's mother arrived. She listened to the story, smiling, and asked to take it home.

When parents arrived they took care of getting the children ready to leave, allowing the teachers to continue interacting with the remaining children. Most of the children were sitting at the table close to Kim drawing and/or writing. Kim encouraged one boy: "I like the way you write your name." To another child doing less conventional printing Kim commented, "Those are nice letters." One girl was talking out loud while printing strings of letters. Her style led the observer to think she was pretending to take dictation.

As the parents arrived they saw their children busily using writing materials. Kim later told the author this was planned as a way of modeling appropriate literacy activities for the parents' benefit. To one parent she pointed out. "See how Tawny is writing the letters of her name?" A grandmother who was picking up a child chuckled: "She's writin' all the time at home-- even on the wall." One child did not want to stop his work when his father arrived. Kim mediated by suggesting: "You could finish that tomorrow or you could finish it at home."

### *Interpersonal Environment*

Kim's instructional style was what the author would describe as facilitative. She encouraged the children to help themselves and problem solve. Her genuine interest in the children's ideas and projects was consistently evident in her interactions. It seemed to the observer that she was flexible and creative in developing curriculum that followed the children's interests and at the same time maximized opportunities for presenting literacy development activities. Her language interactions were, in general, conversational, yet geared to expanding the children's ability to think and express their ideas.

### *Group Placement*

Kim was identified as clearly a whole language group member, because she was classified as (WL) on all three sub-scales. (In fact Kim's scores made her

placement the most definitive of any of the teachers in any of the groups.) On Sub-scale 1 her responses on whole language items totaled fifty-six while she had only twelve basic skills points. Her responses to the designated interview questions used for Sub-scale 1 are listed in Tables 16 and 17:

Table 16.--Kim's Evaluation of Selected Activities for Literacy Development (Items from Interview Question 2)

Practice in forming letter shapes (BS)	Of No Value At All (1)
Story Dictation (WL)	Essential (7)
Practice on Shape Discrimination (BS)	Of No Value At All (1)
Exercises stressing directionality (BS)	Not Very Important (3)
Opportunities for the children to write or pretend write for communication (WL)	Essential (7)
Copying letters, words etc. (BS)	Not Very Important (3)
Scribbling and/or pretend writing (WL)	Essential (7)
Having print that is meaningful to the children in the environment (WL)	Essential (7)

Table 17.--Kim's Reaction to Statements about Literacy Development (Items from Interview Question 3A)

Children must be able to identify the letters of the alphabet before they can begin to read or write. (BS)	Completely Disagree (1)
Scribbling is an important part of writing development. (WL)	Completely Agree (7)
The first step in learning to read is decoding sounds. (BS)	Completely Disagree (1)
Experience in writing often helps children learn to read. (WL)	Completely Agree (7)
Writing begins when the child learns to form some recognizable letter shapes. (BS)	Completely Disagree (1)
Children's "pretend" reading of storybooks is a valuable early literacy experience. (WL)	Completely Agree (7)
An important reason for children learning to write is their wanting to use print to communicate. (WL)	Disagree Somewhat (3)
Work sheets in word recognition and letter formation are important reading and writing readiness activities. (BS)	Completely Disagree (1)

Notes on Tables 16 & 17: (BS)= item used to compute Basic skills score for Sub-scale 1; (WL)= item used to compute Whole Language score for Sub-scale 1; (number)= numerical rating of response, possible range = 1-7 on each item.

On Sub-scale 2, relating to classroom literacy environment, this program had a score of (9), placing it at the top of the range for this evaluation. This score clearly classified the program as (WL). The items observed in this classroom (See Appendix C, items marked with § for the complete list) were:

- Drawing/writing table
- Display of books and/or book covers
- Clearly defined space for reading
- References for children use and/or information
- Labels for children's benefit
- Directions for children's benefit
- Communication (notes, messages, letters)
- Display of children's recent writing and/or drawing
- Other (magazine format with headlines and children's pictures)

Kim's interactional style was rated (7) by the observer suggesting it was most facilitative. This rating, at the high end of the (WL) range makes this a clear (WL) on Sub-scale 3.

### Impressions and Interpretations

This classroom was particularly literacy-rich, both in terms of print for the children to see and use, and in terms of opportunities for the children to use literacy materials. Every child who was present on the day of observation, through personal choice, participated in some sort of writing/drawing activity. It was clear that print was emphasized as an interesting and powerful means of communication in this classroom. The observer saw no examples of teacher directed skill or practice oriented reading or writing activities.

Kim's extensive involvement in the Erikson Literacy Training Project was evident in her emphasis upon story dictation and the use of print in the environment. Her strategies for acquainting parents with ways of encouraging appropriate literacy activities were particularly creative and revealed her commitment to and understanding of the concepts of emergent literacy.

### The Eclectic Group

Analysis of the subject teachers found that most of them (65%) were categorized as belonging to the eclectic group. Within this eclectic group there is great variation. It contains a range of teachers, from those whose curriculum seems to place very little emphasis upon literacy learning and development (of either the basic skills or whole language sort), to programs which seem to offer many, theoretically varied, literacy learning experiences.

Two classrooms were observed where, although materials were available, there was no evidence that children ever participated in any literacy activities (i.e. no children were observed using books or writing materials and there was not any children's' previous work on display). In several eclectic group classrooms the physical literacy environment was limited (i.e., little print was displayed or modeled, materials for drawing/writing were limited or inaccessible) although their teachers rated the importance of such factors highly during the interview.

Two of the eclectic group teachers seemed to exhibit particular theoretical diversity as assessed by of the study's sub-scales. One teacher was rated BS (basic skills oriented) on the teacher attitude sub-scale but was rated WL (whole language oriented) on teaching style. Another scored high on the whole language cluster in Sub-scale 1 (teacher attitudes) but was very didactic in her teaching approach and was rated BS on Sub-scale 3.

It would be impossible to describe a typical eclectic group classroom or teacher because of the group's enormous variation. The classroom described in the following case study was chosen to illustrate the eclectic group because the program, and its two teachers, offered such an interesting combination of basic skills and whole language approaches.

### Case Study: "Florence"

On the afternoon of the visit Florence greeted the author warmly, introduced her to the site director and asked if the interview could begin immediately. Her style was efficient and professional; she briskly but thoughtfully responded to the questions. At the conclusion of the interview she invited the observer to make herself at home and went about the business of working with Pat, the assistant teacher, getting the classroom ready for the afternoon group. (While Florence, who was the head teacher in this program, was the identified subject teacher for this program, it is important to realize that this classroom used a team teaching situation. Florence and Pat had taught together for ten years and seemed to have a balanced and smoothly coordinated system. It would have been hard for a newcomer to determine who was the head teacher.)

#### Teacher Profile

Florence is the youngest of the profiled teachers. She holds a CDA, a bachelor's degree and, at the time of the interview, had been a Head Start teacher for 11 years. In 1987 she attended a seminar which introduced the Erikson Early Literacy Training Project but she was not involved in the extended on-site training. In her personal life she is an avid reader, particularly enjoying newspapers, novels and biographies. She commented that she does not enjoy writing as much as reading and couldn't think of any writing that she did outside of work.

Her recollections of literacy learning were very positive. She recalled making books by drawing pictures and creating stories and liking phonics and spelling bees. Reading "opened new avenues" for her: "I could visit any where just reading." She also remembers spending free time just going through an encyclopedia. She was read to by her older brothers and her sister. The siblings used to to play

school, and often she was the pupil. The early favorite book she remembered was Blueberrys for Sal.

### *Attitudes about Literacy Development /Learning*

In response to Question 2 of the interview regarding the value of various literacy activities, Florence considered all of the items on the list as having at least some importance for Head Start children's literacy development. She rated most of them as "Extremely Important". Those she indicated were "Very Important" were: exercises stressing directionality, dramatic play with miniature figures, tracing letters and copying letters. Rated lowest by her, in the "Somewhat Important" category were: practice in forming letter shapes, story dictation, and copying letters or words from a model.

Florence was quite decisive in her reactions to the various statements about literacy development in Question 3A. She completely agreed with four statements. These were: "Scribbling is an important part of writing development;" "The first step in learning to read is decoding sounds;" "Pretend reading is a valuable early literacy activity"; and "Being read to is extremely important for success in learning to read." She strongly agreed with the statements suggesting that: "Experience in writing helps children learn to read;" "Writing begins when the child learns to form some recognizable letter shapes;" "An important reason for children learning to write is their desire to communicate;" and "Children sometimes learn to write before they learn to read." In response to both question 3B, about the relationship between play and literacy development, and 3C regarding oral language and literacy development, Florence referred to enhancing communication skills. She suggested that dramatic play helps children's speech and language skills and that oral and written language work "hand in hand" as communication tools.



## Classroom Literacy Environment

This was one of two Head Start classrooms located in an old multipurpose, settlement house. The facility was difficult to locate because it was tucked in an industrial area adjacent to a busy expressway. Public housing projects several blocks away provided the clientele. All of the children enrolled at the time of the observation were African-American.

## *Physical Environment*

Florence's classroom was very small but very well organized. On the day of the observation there were only thirteen children present and the room seemed barely large enough. It was hard to imagine how it could accommodate the full enrollment of twenty students.

The room was generally square in shape and was divided into areas by storage cabinets and low shelf units. The area closest to the door contained the children's cubbies, a book display, and a table which, when the children arrived, held drawing and writing materials. Beyond this area was a section devoted to art containing a single easel, low open shelves holding crayons, markers, scissors, glue, and assorted paper. In this area was another table which was used during free play for free choice art and story dictation. Directly across from the art area was a section defined by shelves containing games and manipulatives. In this section was a third table where the assistant teacher spent most of her time during free play encouraging the children in letter recognition and directing a game of Alphabet Bingo.

Approximately one third of the room furthest from the entrance was essentially open. The floor in this space was carpeted and used for group time. At one side of this space was housekeeping equipment and an old typewriter with many broken keys. The typewriter was pounded enthusiastically by several children as part of dramatic play but there was no paper and it appeared too broken to actu-

ally print. At the opposite side of the carpeted area were shelves containing an assortment of unit blocks. During free time the children built with the blocks in the carpeted space.

High on the walls there were many neatly labeled open shelves containing equipment and supplies for the class. It was obvious that storage, as well as floor space was at a premium. Because of the placement of windows and the need for storage shelves there was very little wall space for bulletin boards and/or display of children's work.

Print in the Environment . The print in the children's immediate environment was limited. Two tall metal storage lockers were decorated with colorful posters, one said "Comb your hair neatly" and another "Watch your weight." There was a chart with the alphabet in upper and lower case lettering displayed near the art area. The children's names were printed on their cubbies. There was no children's art or writing displayed and no lists, charts or other print for the children to look at or use. After lunch one girl was struggling to identify her toothbrush and it occurred to the observer that it would have been very helpful (for both literacy and sanitary reasons) to label the rack with the children's names. Perhaps the strongest aspect of the literacy environment was the prominent and attractive book display. The books were colorful, developmentally appropriate and clearly popular with the children.

### *Literacy Activities*

As the children began entering the classroom they immediately became involved in either looking at books or working at the writing table. One boy excitedly picked up a colorful picture book and exclaimed to the room at large "Hey! This is a new book." After looking at it for a moment, he showed it to another boy and they began discussing whether the pictured creatures were crocodiles or alli-

gators. They resolved it by deciding "One crocodile, one alligator." Another boy took a book to Pat, the assistant teacher, who was sitting at the table being used for books and writing and asked her a question. The first girl who came into the classroom that afternoon took a book and sat at the table next to the assistant teacher, holding the book upside down and carefully turning pages. Pat gently turned the book right side up. The girl immediately turned it upside down again, looked hard at it and then turned it to the correct position. The children handled the books carefully and seemed to find pleasure in looking at them. The children who did not take books sat at the writing table and helped themselves to paper and markers. Pat immediately lettered the children's names at the bottom of their papers. The author did not see any child attempt to write his or her own name. (In fact during the whole observation only one child, a five year old girl, was observed attempting to print her name.) Pat drew a simple face model and instructed the children "Let's see who can make a happy face. Who can make eyes, nose and mouth?" Most of the children managed to make fairly accurate copies of her drawing as she reminded them about specific details. When they had finished their creations they proudly took them to their cubbies and later took them home.

After all the children had arrived there was a smooth transition into lunch. The tables in the art and manipulative areas were used for eating. Lunch service was quite casual with the children helping themselves. The teachers sat down with the children. I overheard some informal conversational interchanges between Florence and the children at her table (e.g. "Did you go shopping last night?"). The children helped clean up after lunch, took their toothbrushes from a rack, and went to brush their teeth and wash their hands.

After lunch the children were permitted free choice of the available activities for about an hour and a half. A number of literacy related activities were ob-

served. The paper and writing materials which had been on the table near the door were replaced with play dough, but similar writing materials were available in the art area. The book display continued to be popular and there were several groups of children who wandered over, took a book and looked at it together, chatting about the pictures. Three boys were observed looking at a nature book, two viewing it upside down, one right side up. Another boy compared two books that both had pictures of school buses on their covers. He pointed at the cover of one of the books, assumed an exaggerated "teacher" style, and said to no one in particular, "OH, OH, Look, Look-- School Bus." Putting that book down, he continued his monologue picking up another book, "Let's read Spider." At this point his teacher role-play ended as his attention was diverted to the play dough table.

At the beginning of free time Florence put out construction paper and magazine pictures on the art table and suggested the children could make books. She did not, however, have a model or demonstrate what she meant. Some children cut the pictures and the paper but no one made anything resembling a book. Several children used letter shape stencils from a basket on the shelf to draw around, but the author heard no discussion of the names of the letters. After all the children were comfortably involved in play activities Florence asked the room in general, "Who wants to tell a story today?" Two boys came immediately to the art table. One dictated while the other listened. Later they traded roles. A third boy came for a turn just as the first two were finishing. A fourth was invited by the teacher near the end of free time. The children, all boys, who chose to dictate stories seemed familiar with the process. Florence was effective in helping the boys slow their speech to a rate that she could transcribe and to clarify their thoughts (e.g., "Wait. Who took him to the hospital?"). The stories were all action oriented. During the dictation process the first two boys eagerly discussed who would play the parts when the story was acted out. All four stories were drama-

tized at the end of the group time just before the children were ready to leave. In fact, two mothers who had arrived early to pick up their children watched the dramatizations.

At about the same time Florence was facilitating story dictation at the art table, Pat went to the book area and told the children to put all the books away, which they did. She stopped at the table where the children were using play dough and invited the children to come play alphabet bingo. Several children immediately went to the table in the manipulative area and waited for Pat. She attempted to encourage one boy, who showed no sign of moving, to come with her, "I want you to play." He shook his head and she went on. She reinvited him several times during the course of the activity but he never joined the game.

With a group assembled, Pat settled herself at side of the table close to the wall with the children across the table facing her. She began the activity by asking, "Does every one know his ABC's?" The letter cards were introduced by saying "This is an \_\_\_\_." She pointed out to each child the letter that his or her name began with. Then she talked about some other letters, e.g. "That's what a "U" looks like-- like an umbrella." Although presented as a game, the initial period of this activity had a very didactic, teacher directed style. After almost fifteen minutes of letter instruction Pat began calling letters and actually playing the bingo game.

By the end of the ninety minute free play time some of the children were getting restless and wandering aimlessly about. After a brief clean-up period Florence called the children together into a group on the carpeted area and Pat finished clearing up the classroom. The group time consisted of a motor activity following the directions on a record, singing a song, and a brief name recognition game in which the children held up their hands when a card with their first name on it was shown. Florence then read Caps for Sale in an expressive manner, using gestures and facial expressions to add to the drama. This story was clearly famil-

lar to the group. The children spontaneously did many appropriate gestures and chimed in with some of the phrases.

At the end of group time the four stories which had been dictated by children earlier in the session were dramatized. Each child author chose his own cast, so that some children were in all the stories, and some were in none. It was apparent that the class was familiar with the dramatization procedure, suggesting to the observer that they had been doing it during the course of the year.

### Interpersonal Environment

The interpersonal environment of this classroom was warm and relaxed. Pat and Florence worked so well as a team that they spent very little time interacting with each other, as each seemed to know what she was to be doing at all times. This coordination combined with good preparation and organization of materials allowed plenty of time for attention to and interaction with the children. While both teachers were attentive and friendly to the children, Florence and Pat presented a real contrast in classroom style. Florence's interactions tended to be conversational and facilitative, geared toward helping children figure things out for themselves. She asked lots of open ended questions and seemed to spend a good deal of time of listening to the children and extending their speech. Pat, on the other hand, was more directive, asked many closed questions and had a more didactic approach.

### Group Placement

The sub-scale ratings for this program will be discussed here briefly but it is not believed they are as meaningful in this case as in the examples of Group I and III teachers. As head teacher, Florence was the subject of the interview, her responses to the items used for Sub-scale 1, on which she was rated (N) are listed in Tables 18 and 19 below:

Table 18.--Florence's Evaluation of Selected Activities for Literacy Development  
(Items from Interview Question 2)

Practice in forming letter shapes (BS)	Somewhat Important (4)
Story Dictation (WL)	Somewhat Important (4)
Practice on Shape Discrimination (BS)	Extremely Important (6)
Exercises stressing directionality (BS)	Very Important (5)
Opportunities for the children to write or pretend write for communication (WL)	Extremely Important (6)
Copying letters, words etc. (BS)	Somewhat Important (4)
Scribbling and/or pretend writing (WL)	Extremely Important (6)
Having print that is meaningful to the children in the environment (WL)	Extremely Important (6)

Table 19.-- Florence's Reaction to Statements about Literacy Development (Items from Interview Question 3A)

Children must be able to identify the letters of the alphabet before they can begin to read or write. (BS)	Disagree Somewhat (3)
Scribbling is an important part of writing development. (WL)	Completely Agree (7)
The first step in learning to read is decoding sounds. (BS)	Completely Agree (7)
Experience in writing often helps children learn to read. (WL)	Strongly Agree (6)
Writing begins when the child learns to form some recognizable letter shapes. (BS)	Strongly Agree (6)
Children's "pretend" reading of storybooks is a valuable early literacy experience. (WL)	Completely Agree (7)
An important reason for children learning to write is their wanting to use print to communicate. (WL)	Strongly Agree (6)
Work sheets in word recognition and letter formation are important reading and writing readiness activities. (BS)	Strongly Disagree (2)

Notes on Tables 18 & 19: (BS)= item used to compute Basic skills score for Sub-scale 1; (WL)= item used to compute Whole Language score for Sub-scale 1; (number)= numerical rating of response, possible range = 1-7 on each item.

On Sub-scale 2, relating to classroom literacy environment, this program had a score of (4) which classified it as (BS). The items observed (See Appendix C, Page 1, items marked with § for the complete list) were:

- Drawing/writing table
- Display of books and/or book covers
- Clearly defined space for reading
- Labels for children's benefit

Because of the strong impact of both Florence and Pat in this classroom, the observer assigned a Sub-scale 3 rating of (4) indicating a middle ground between Pat's didactic style and Florence's facilitative approach. A rating of Florence alone would have been a (6). Had her rating alone been used the Sub-scale 3 rating would have been (WL), but this would not have changed group placement.

### Impressions and Interpretations

Although there are some distinctly whole language aspects of Florence's approach to literacy the author believes that she is clearly an eclectic, Group II teacher. Florence as head teacher appeared to accept Pat's more didactic approach even though she does not share it. In the interview, Florence indicated that "teacher directed lessons" in letter or word recognition, similar to the one observed, occur two or three times a week. She also indicated that the children use writing materials for teacher assigned tasks several times a week. It is important to note that in the interview Florence expressed complete agreement with the essentially basic skills notion that "The first step in learning to read is decoding sounds." She also expressed strong agreement with the idea that "Writing begins when the child learns to form some recognizable letter shapes."

On the other hand, many of Florence's interview responses also suggest agreement with many whole language/emergent literacy approaches. The group's clear enthusiasm for books and book sharing suggest an appreciation for early reading behaviors. Her facilitative instructional style and emphasis on conversational interactions are more typical of a whole language rather than a basic skills program. While the author believes story dictation was offered on the day of ob-



ervation for her benefit, it was clear that this activity occurs regularly in the classroom.

It was somewhat surprising that even though Florence indicated that functional print in the environment was extremely important for children's literacy development, this classroom had almost none. Although space was limited, arrangements could have been made to incorporate print that was meaningful to the children in the classroom. This seems to be the one area of contrast between expressed beliefs and practice.

Florence is one of a considerable group of the subject teachers who seemed to feel that a wide variety of activities, both teacher directed and child generated, are useful and appropriate for Head Start children's literacy development. Such an attitude leads to the sort of eclectic curriculum that is typical of many preschool classrooms. It should, however, be noted that this classroom is an example of a Head Start program with a particularly strong emphasis upon literacy related activities.

#### Case Study Summary

While representing different groups as defined by this study, Margaret, Kim and Florence-- as did most of the teachers in the study-- presented important literacy development activities for their students. All three programs offer the children a good selection of developmentally appropriate books to look at, pretend read or share with a friend. Each teacher reads stories to her class every day. In each classroom there is at least one place where children can experiment with drawing and writing materials during free play time. There are, however, some notable differences in instructional approach, literacy activities offered and print (other than books) in the environment.

As would be anticipated from a basic skills oriented, teacher, Margaret's instructional style is quite didactic and she seems particularly interested in devel-

oping skills. Her emphasis in language development (likely reflecting her assessment of the particular needs of her group) is on speech rather than print. The functional print available to the children in her classroom environment is limited to books. The observer felt that experimenting with drawing/writing was presented as a "time filler," i.e., something the children can do while they are waiting for an art activity to be set up. The drawing/writing table was an activity that was assigned more times than it was chosen. The children in this group were only observed to look at books during transition times when it was required behavior.

Kim's classroom reflected her whole language orientation, especially in terms of the amount of print there was in the children's environment and in the amount of time the children spent involved in literacy-related activities. Commercial, teacher and child produced printed materials covered the available wall space. Drawing/writing materials were available in several areas of the classroom in addition to a well supplied drawing/writing table. Experimentation with writing was an activity frequently chosen by the children throughout the session and was consistently supported and encouraged by the staff.

Florence (as was typical of many of the eclectic group teachers) offers a curriculum that combines whole language activities such as making books and story dictation with the more didactic, skill building instruction presented by her assistant, Pat. The children in this class seemed to be particularly enthusiastic about looking at books and sharing them with their classmates during free choice periods. They also enjoyed using writing materials in an attempt to match Pat's drawn model. There is little print displayed for the children's benefit in this classroom.

The variety of teacher attitudes, classroom literacy environments, and instructional style illustrated by these three teachers is merely a sample of the great diversity the author encountered during the course of this research.

Differences Between Teachers Trained By The Erikson Institute Early Literacy Project And Those Who Have Not Undergone The Training

One of the objectives of this study was to see if the group of subjects who had participated in the Erikson Institute's Early Literacy Training Program seemed to be different from the group who had not experienced the training. In an effort to find objective answers to that question, discriminant analysis was selected as the most appropriate technique to evaluate for quantifiable group differences combining a number of variables. Analyses were performed on three subsets of variables (i.e., those reflecting teacher attitudes, the frequency of certain literacy activities, and the classroom literacy environment) to see if there were differences between the seventeen teachers who had participated in the training program (trained group) and the nine teachers who had not (untrained group). These analyses were designed to further the descriptive nature of this study by offering a statistical picture of the two groups in this sample. It is recognized that because discriminant analysis is a "mathematical maximization" procedure there is a strong opportunity for "capitalization on chance." "That is, the results found on one sample may well not replicate on another independent sample" (Stevens, 1986 p. 233). It is not intended that results of these analyses be used to evaluate the training program, test any hypothesis or make predictions about other groups. The presence of statistically identifiable group differences, while not necessarily useful in and of itself, would encourage further research and analysis designed to capture the nature and possible causes of such differences.

Because the research objective was to look for group differences rather than examine the contribution of individual factors, in each of the three discriminant analyses, a stepwise procedure was utilized. This procedure instructs the program to enter the variables in the order that maximizes the variability. The first phase of each analysis determined which of the selected variables were actually

able to discriminate between the trained and untrained teachers. The second phase classified the subjects according to their responses on the discriminating variables and compared this classification with their known group membership (i.e., trained or untrained).

#### Discriminant Analysis Of The Teacher Attitude Variables

The first analysis considered the sample teachers' attitudes and beliefs about early literacy development as expressed in the interview portion of the study. It used as variables the same sixteen items employed in developing Sub-scale 1 (See Table 7). Group means and standard deviations for scores on those variables are found in Table 20. The significant variables accounted for eighty-three percent of the variance. Statistical contributions of those variables which were found to discriminant between the groups are presented in detail in Appendix D, Table III.

Table 20.-- Group Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Variables from Sub-scale 1 (Teacher Attitudes) That Discriminate Between the Trained and Untrained Groups

Variable	Mean		Standard Deviation	
	Trained Group	Untrained Group	Trained Group	Untrained Group
† Story dictation	5.00	5.89	0.92	0.78
† Exercises stressing directionality	5.07	4.78	.80	1.30
§ Children's "pretend" reading of storybooks is a valuable early literacy experience.	6.53	6.33	.64	.50
† Practice in forming letter shapes	4.13	4.33	1.25	1.41
§ The first step in learning to read is decoding sounds.	4.33	5.11	1.88	1.36
† Scribbling and/or pretend writing.	5.60	6.00	1.24	1.00
§ An important reason for children learning to write is their wanting to use print to communicate.	5.67	5.00	1.18	1.50
§ Children must be able to identify the letters of the alphabet before they can begin to read or write.	3.60	4.11	2.35	1.90
§ Scribbling is an important part of writing development	6.67	6.67	.82	.50
§ Children must be able to identify the letters of the alphabet before they can begin to read or write	4.00	4.11	2.70	1.90
§ Experience in writing often helps children learn to read.	5.87	5.44	.83	1.81
§ Work sheets in word recognition and letter formation are important reading and writing readiness activities.	3.47	3.44	1.96	1.59

Note 1: Variables are listed in order of their stepwise entry into the analysis.

Note 2: Items marked † asked teachers to rate (7= essential to 1= of no value at all) importance of the activity. Items marked § asked teachers to respond (7= agree completely to 1 disagree completely)

"Story dictation" is the variable entered first by the stepwise procedure indicating that it assumes the greatest percent of the variance accounted for. The group means suggest that the untrained group rated this activity more highly

(5.89) as a literacy development activity than did the trained group (5.00). This finding is unexpected since story dictation is an activity strongly encouraged by the Erikson training program. This finding will be discussed in Chapter V.

When the group centroids, reflecting the grand mean of scores for Function 1 of each group, were plotted, clear separation between the trained and untrained groups was evident, suggesting group differences on these variables. Centroid location for the trained group was -1.70048 and the untrained group was 2.83413. A histogram of this data is presented in Appendix D, Figure A. This analysis correctly classified 100% of cases according to group. In other words, it was, on the basis of their responses on this group of variables, able to accurately predict which of the teachers had actually experienced the Erikson training. Table 21 is a classification chart indicating group membership as predicted by the statistical analysis as compared to actual membership in the trained or untrained group.

Table 21---Classification of Subjects according to Predicted and Actual Group Membership according to a Discriminant Analysis Using Variables from Sub-scale 1 (teacher attitudes).

Actual Group	Number of Cases	Predicted for Trained Group	Predicted for Untrained Group
Erikson Trained (Group 1)	15	15 100 %	0 0.0%
Not Erikson Trained (Group 2)	9	0 0.0%	9 100%

#### Discriminant Analysis Of Teacher Report Of The Frequency Of Literacy Activities Variables

The second analysis of the trained and untrained groups used variables reflecting the teachers' report of the frequency of twenty-one literacy activities in their classrooms (see Appendix A, items marked ¶). Seventy-five percent of the variance was accounted for by the significant variables. Table 22 indicates the group means and standard deviations for the discriminating variables. Table IV

in Appendix D presents a more detailed report of the contribution of the discriminating variables.

Table 22.-- Group Means and Standard Deviations for Variables from Teachers' Report of the Frequency of Literacy Activities That Discriminate Between the Trained and Untrained Groups.

Variable	Mean		Standard Deviation	
	Trained Group	Untrained Group	Trained Group	Untrained Group
Children use writing materials for a specific teacher assigned task	4.33	2.67	1.80	2.00
Teacher reads books with an individual or small group of children	5.20	5.56	.68	.53
Children dictate stories to adult who writes them down	4.87	4.22	1.41	1.56
Children make books	3.13	3.67	1.36	1.58
Teacher reads story to large (5 or more) group of children	5.93	6.00	.26	.00
Teacher conducts oral lessons in letter or word recognition	3.67	3.11	2.02	2.20
Children paint or draw at easels	5.87	5.89	.35	.34
Children use books and/or writing materials in dramatic or pretend play	5.47	5.44	1.46	.73
Teacher prints for children's benefit	5.80	5.44	.41	1.67
Children listen to story tapes with books	3.93	4.22	1.58	1.99
Children take trips to the library	2.53	2.33	1.23	1.22
Children write and/or pretend write for information and/or for communication and self-expression	5.47	5.33	.92	.87
Children dramatize (act out) stories they have written	4.13	3.89	1.46	1.90
GRAND MEAN	4.64	4.44		

Note 1: Variables are listed in order of their stepwise entry into the analysis.

Note 2: Scale is: 4 or 5 times per week = (6); 2 or 3 times per week = (5); 1 time per week = (4) 1 or 2 times per month = (3); 1 or 2 times per year = (2); never takes place = (1).

The variable "Children use writing materials for a specific teacher assigned task" was the first entered stepwise into the analysis because it accounts for the most variance. This item also had by far the greatest difference in mean (trained group = 4.33; untrained group = 2.67). The high frequency reported by the trained group for this kind of activity was unexpected. It is likely that the teachers only "heard" the beginning of the question i.e., "Children use writing materials" and did not react to the idea of an *assigned* task as the author had intended.

The second phase of this analysis indicated clear distinctions between the trained and untrained groups on the discriminating variables with 100% of the subjects correctly classified by group. Centroid location for the trained group was -1.36853 and the untrained group was 2.28089. Figure B in Appendix D is a histogram illustrating individual placement. Table 23 is a classification chart.

Table 23.---Classification of Subjects according to Predicted and Actual Group Membership according to a Discriminant Analysis Using Variables from Teachers' Report of the Frequency of Various Literacy Activities.

Actual Group	Number of Cases	Predicted for Trained Group	Predicted for Untrained Group
Erikson Trained (Group 1)	15	15 100 %	0 0.0%
Not Erikson Trained (Group 2)	9	0 0.0%	9 100%

#### Discriminant Analysis Of Classroom Literacy Environment Variables

A third discriminant analysis utilized the eleven variables (see Appendix C items marked ¶) from the observation form used to assess the classroom literacy environment (and to determine Sub-scale 2 placement). Fifty-eight percent of the variance was accounted for by the significant variables. Means and standard deviations are presented in Table 24. Contributions of the significant variables for this analysis can be found in Appendix D, Table V.



Table 24.-- Group Means and Standard Deviations for Variables from Observer Report of Classroom Literacy Environment That Discriminate Between the Trained and Untrained Groups

Variable	Mean		Standard Deviation	
	Trained Group	Untrained Group	Trained Group	Untrained Group
Is there a clearly defined space for reading	1.13	1.43	.35	.53
Is there a drawing/ writing table?	1.00	1.14	.00	.37
Record keeping for children's benefit	1.87	1.57	.35	.53
Schedules for children's benefit	1.87	1.43	.74	.53
Communication (notes, messages, letters)	1.93	2.00	.70	.00
Display of children's recent writing and/or drawing	1.33	1.14	.49	.37

Note 1: Variables are listed in order of their stepwise entry into the analysis.

Note 2: 1= item is present 2 = item was not observed

When looking at Table 24 it is necessary to note that a lower number indicates the item was observed in more of the classrooms of the respective groups. More classrooms in the trained group had defined space for reading and drawing writing tables (which were present in all classrooms). These two items were also the most discriminating variables.

Although not as clear-cut as the first two, this analysis was able to correctly classify 90.91% of the cases by comparing predicted group with actual group membership. Correct classification of more than 75% of the subjects is believed to indicate important group differences. Centroid location for the trained group was .72916 and the untrained group was -1.56249. A histogram illustrating the position of all subjects is presented in Figure C, Appendix D. Table 25 shows the classification by group.

Table 25.—Classification of Subjects according to Predicted and Actual Group Membership according to a Discriminant Analysis Using Variables from Observer Report of Classroom Literacy Environment.

Actual Group	Number of Cases	Predicted for Trained Group	Predicted for Untrained Group
Erikson Trained (Group 1)	15	14 93.3%	1 6.7%
Not Erikson Trained (Group 2)	7	1 14.3%	6 85.7%

Note: missing data prevented classification of more than 22 subjects

In keeping with the descriptive nature of this study these statistical procedures were exploratory in nature. Examination of the results of these three analyses indicate that there are differences between the trained and untrained groups in this sample. While group differences on a few variables may be unexpected, the fact that this multivariate statistical procedure consistently indicates that the groups are distinctive at a high level of discrimination on three important aspects of the research (teacher beliefs, report of frequency of literacy activities and classroom literacy environment) is an important finding. It is unlikely that the three constructs would come out in the predicted direction if there were not true differences.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussion of the findings of this study will begin with some comments about the methodology employed; the rest of the chapter will be organized around the research questions that were presented in Chapter 1.

#### Methodology

In general the methods, including the instruments that were developed for this study were found to be effective and appropriate. There was, however, one major methodological issue in the connected with this dissertation which requires special comment. Early in the design of this study it was decided that an effective way of describing the teacher's apparent theoretical stance would be to place them upon a hypothetical continuum with basic skills at one end and whole language at the other. Soon after data gathering began it became clear that there were many teachers whose approach was such an eclectic combination of basic skills and whole language that individual placement on such a continuum would be impossible. Instead of abandoning the notion of identifying teachers in terms of the continuum, it was decided to attempt to place teachers in groupings relative to their theoretical position. Three groups were established. Group I was identified as containing teachers who exhibited a strong basic skills orientation; Group III consisted of teachers with a clear whole language approach; and Group II (Eclectic) emerged as the default category, containing all teachers who could not be placed in either of the other groups.

Because any such theoretical groupings must reflect various aspects of a teaching approach, the subject teachers' theoretical orientation was evaluated in

terms of: their attitudes about literacy development, the physical literacy environment in their classrooms, and their instructional style. The methods used in evaluating each of these components of Head Start literacy education were necessarily different. In order to assess the data relevant to each of these aspects three separate and unique sub-scales were created. It must be noted that placements upon each of these sub-scales actually represents a separate theoretical continuum. The three sub-scale ratings (and thus the three continua) were combined to make final group placements. The development of appropriate ways of making sub-scale placements was challenging and the procedure of making sub-scale and group placement became quite complex (as illustrated in Chapter 3, Figure 1). The process was successful in a statistical sense because discriminant analysis confirmed the integrity of the three groups.

The work of this study suggests that because of the variety and eclecticism of their classroom literacy development approaches, efforts to classify Head Start teachers theoretically are problematic at best. In addition, the large percentage of subjects who were classified in the eclectic group indicates that such classifications may not be particularly helpful in understanding Head Start teachers' approaches to literacy development. Perhaps future researchers interested in this kind of assessment might attempt to gather different kinds of data. The researcher does, however, believe that the sub-scale ratings and group placements are as effective a technique of assessing the theoretical inclinations of the sample teachers in this study as could be derived from the data gathered.

#### The Physical Literacy Environment And Its Effects

One aspect of the observation portion of this study considered concrete, physical aspects of the Head Start classrooms which the literature suggests might have an impact upon the children's literacy development/learning. Data from classroom observations must be considered with caution because of the limited

time spent in each classroom. The impressions gained do have value as a basis for speculation and possible further study. The discussion of the data regarding the physical literacy environment will be grouped into three sections: books and space for their use; drawing/writing equipment; and classroom print and displayed literacy.

### Books

All of the sample classrooms contained the basic element of a preschool literacy program, a display of developmentally appropriate books. This was an anticipated finding because a book display is not only a long standing part of Head Start's educational component, it is also a mandated and easily verifiable aspect of Illinois preschool licensing requirements. Although there was a selection of colorful preschool books readily available in every classroom, children in only four of the centers were observed to choose to look at books during free play time.

It is impossible to determine what factors (e.g., children's personalities, previous teacher suggestions, appeal of other available activities, etc.) may have contributed to children's decisions to (or not to) look at books during free choice time on the days of observation. There are, however, some comments that can be made. First, in the seven classes where the children had a time (e.g., before lunch, waiting for parents to come) when they were instructed to occupy themselves looking at books, no children looked at books during free choice time. These data correspond to observations the author has made in other settings that in preschool classes the presence of a "required" time for children to look at books seems to diminish enthusiasm for exploration of books at other times during the school day.

A second impression was that there did not appear to be a clear relationship between the accessibility or comfort of a designated "reading area" and the number of children who choose to look at books. Several of the most inviting read-

ing "centers" were never occupied. At two of the five centers that did not have a "clearly defined space for reading" a number of children were observed to take books during free time and find a place to look at them. In one center children shared books on the short flight of stairs leading to the restrooms and in two other classrooms they simply flopped on the rug used for group times.

Finally, children's interactions with books during free time seemed to occur most often in pairs (and occasionally in groups of three children). In some cases the children looked at one book together, in others they each took a book and seemed to "compare notes." The process was quite social, often accompanied by lively conversation and/or some pretend oral reading. There was only one observation of a solitary child looking at a book during free play. It should be noted that, although in the interview teachers reported that teachers reading a book with individual or small groups of children was a frequently occurring activity, it was never observed during this research.

These observations about the use of books in the sample Head Start classroom added to the author's conviction that simple physical availability is not adequate motivation for children to become independently involved with books. If it is important for young children to develop an appreciation for books, more work needs to be done investigating the factors that contribute to children's enthusiasm for book exploration. Current research suggests that social interactions, both with both mature readers and with peers, may be a significant factor (McLane and McNamee, 1990; Cochran-Smith, 1984).

#### Drawing/Writing Equipment

The raw data indicating that twenty-one of the twenty-two centers observed in this study had drawing/writing tables needs to be clarified. The definition used to identify a "drawing/writing" table was very broad (i.e., any table area available to the children which offered convenient access to materials necessary

for drawing and/or writing, e.g., markers, crayons, pencils, paper). In most classrooms the typical preschool art table qualified by this definition as a "drawing/writing" table even though its primary use might be for art "projects."

While children in most of the classes had access to paper and writing implements during free choice time, children at only about a third of the centers were observed to actually produce graphic material, and in only four classrooms did the author observe behavior she would describe as some level of writing. Although each situation was unique, the observer noticed some similarities within the programs where drawing and writing seemed to be popular activities. The most striking impression (and one that confirmed other less formal observations) was that the greatest number of children participated in free choice drawing and writing in programs where an adult, (usually the assistant teacher, but in some cases the head teacher or a parent), stationed herself close to the drawing/writing table and talked with the children about their work. Conversely, programs that offered a teacher-directed structured activity during free time tended to have large numbers of children involved in that and few, if any, choosing to use drawing/writing materials on their own.

A second observation was that writing behaviors seemed most evident in programs where the written product was valued. In Kim's classroom (see the case study in Chapter 4) children were eager to have their drawing and writing displayed. Their parents were also being encouraged to appreciate the value of the often messy and imperfect writing products the children proudly brought home. In another classroom a popular activity was working in personal "composition books." Each child had a sturdy book of lined paper in which to experiment with drawing and/or writing. An adult was nearby to offer encouragement and (if asked) create models of letters or words for copying.

As with books, the mere physical presence of the equipment necessary for drawing/writing did not appear to be adequate to assure that children would participate in those activities. The frequency of early writing behavior in the sample classrooms seemed to be related to adult interest in their efforts. These impressions tend to confirm the social-interactionists view of the importance of teacher involvement and support in encouraging children's pursuit of valued activities. The implication is that if one believes that scribbling and pretend writing are important early literacy activities it is important that an adult be available to encourage and facilitate the children's efforts.

#### Classroom Print and Displayed Literacy

One aspect of the classroom observation form was an assessment of the ways in which the teacher had incorporated "functional" print (i.e., print that was in some way useful and had meaning for the children) into the classroom environment. The study revealed (See Appendix C, for quantitative data) that while most classrooms had some examples of print intended for the children's benefit (i.e., names on cubbies, labels on shelves, and/or birthday lists), these appeared to be long standing displays, probably put in place before the school year began. In very few classrooms was the use of functional print a dynamic part of the classroom literacy environment. In only five classrooms was there any kind of child-directed print that seemed current (e.g., a schedule for the week, daily helper lists, a list of books to be read out loud, a sign-up list for a popular activity).

Displays of writing and/or drawing, although present in sixteen of the classrooms, were, in most cases, neatly mounted, at adult eye level and seemed to be semi-permanent. Most of the displays consisted of specimens of teacher directed art projects and appeared, to the observer, to be more for parents than for children's appreciation. In only a few classes was current and spontaneous children's art work displayed, and even less evident was any kind of children's writing



(scribbling, early writing or dictated material). A good example of a classroom with a child-oriented display was Kim's (case study in Chapter 4). In this room the children's work was hung all over the lower part of the walls in the art area and extended into other parts of the classroom. During free play any graphic creation was (if the child wanted it to be) immediately hung up. After a few days papers were sent home to make room for newer products. While this display might be considered somewhat chaotic, the children in this class seemed especially interested in and proud of their graphic creations. They also seemed to enjoy looking at and talking about other children's work.

Although the decision rules regarding Sub-scale 2-literacy environment, (which totalled all of the items from the classroom/print displayed literacy section of the observation form) determined that eight of the subject teachers be classified WL (whole language oriented), in the observer's clinical judgment there were only five classes that offered an environment truly "rich" in print for the children. The author speculates that the lack of dynamic, functional print in many of these classrooms was not the result of teachers' conscious, theoretically based decisions. More likely, because the emergent literacy/whole language approach, which stresses the value of exposing young children to meaningful print, has only recently been disseminated, it did not occur to many of these teachers that it might be valuable to use functional print in a classroom serving children who can not yet read independently.

If one were interested in getting children more actively involved in literacy activities, encouraging teachers to increase the use of functional print in their classrooms seems like an appropriate way to begin. Enhancing the literacy environment through the use of relevant functional, print is an inexpensive and relatively uncomplicated process.

### Activities Offered For Literacy Development In The Sample Classrooms

Data regarding literacy activities in the sample classrooms was gathered using both the classroom observation form and the structured teacher interview.

When this study was conceived, it was hoped that classroom observation would be particularly useful in describing the kinds of literacy activities that occur in Head Start programs. Unfortunately, as the logistical limitations of the research project were recognized it became apparent that there would be certain problems regarding the validity of the observation data concerning literacy activities. Because it was only feasible to visit each classroom once, and teachers generally vary some activities from day to day, the scope of observed activities was limited.

Additionally, because the visit was arranged well in advance, it is likely that some of the teachers planned what they viewed as their "best" literacy activities for the day of the observation. The data is further confounded by the fact that the observations took place close to the end of the school year and in some classrooms normal routines had been altered to provide for special activities such as additional outdoor play, field trips or practice for "graduation" or other presentations for parents. An additional consideration is that attendance tended to be very low on the days of observation (teachers speculated that nice weather and perhaps waning enthusiasm for daily "school" attendance had reduced the student population) making the data gathered regarding the number of children participating in various free choice literacy activities difficult to interpret.

In addition to observation, data regarding literacy activities was assessed using the teacher interview. A section of the interview asked the subject teachers how often each item on a list of literacy activities (see Appendix A) occurred in their classrooms. (Replies were limited to the following categories: 4 or 5 times per week; 2 or 3 times per week; 1 time per week; 1 or 2 times per month; 1 or 2 times per year; never takes place.) Although there are definite limitations to the

validity of any self-report data (i.e the subject may have an inclination to please the interviewer and/or put him or herself in a favorable light), the information gathered through the structured interview is useful in learning what kind of literacy activities these teachers believe they should emphasize and those they feel are unimportant.

### Activities Observed

Only one of the list of literacy activities from the observation form (Appendix C.), "free choice (play) period", was observed in all the classrooms. This activity, which was characterized by children having the option of using a variety of materials (e.g., blocks, housekeeping play, easel painting, drawing/writing, etc.) lasted at least thirty minutes in every class and in some groups as long as ninety minutes (mean time was 54 minutes). In all observed classes except Margaret's (see case study, Chapter 4), the children had freedom to choose activities. In some classes children were rather strongly encouraged to participate in particular offerings (see the case study of Florence, Chapter 4), and in some situations children were asked to change activities during the period.

The second most frequently observed (in twenty classrooms) activity was group time. Any period where all the children were brought together for some sort of activity (beside eating or just receiving information) was considered a group time. There was, as expected, tremendous variation in the structure and style of these group times. Activities seen frequently were finger plays, singing, story dramatization and movement activities that required the children to follow directions accompanying music from records or tapes.

Although 95.8 % of the teachers reported that story reading to a large group of children occurred "4 or 5 times per week" (the other 4.2% reported it occurred 2-3 times per week) it was observed in only 16 of the classrooms on the day of observation. This statistic was puzzling to the author who had anticipated that,

if any activity were planned for the day of an observation with the announced intention of looking at literacy development, it would be story time. It may be that Head Start teachers do not actually read to children as often as they say they do and that other activities sometimes crowd story time out of the schedule.

Another observation of interest is related to story dictation and dramatization. In seven of the classrooms (all of their teachers were from the Erikson trained group) children dictated stories. These stories were also read out loud and dramatized by the class. Because this activity is emphasized in the Erikson Early Literacy Training Project the trained teachers may have made a special effort to include this activity on the day of observation. It was, however, clear from the children's familiarity with the dictation-dramatization procedure that in each of these seven classrooms story dictation and dramatization was a regularly occurring activity. This finding suggests that the story dictation activity was an influential aspect of the Erikson training.

Seven of the observed programs featured some sort of teacher structured project or activity during the class period. In three classes it was an art project (e.g., a Mother's Day hat) that all children were required to complete. In four other classes it was an optional activity offered during free choice time. (See Chapter 4, case study of Florence, for an example of a teacher structured game activity.)

### Observer Impressions

The classroom observations did provide the author with some general impressions of the nature of literacy activities in the sample classrooms which were not evident from the teacher reports. One strong impression was that although all the classrooms had accessible book displays, very few children were seen choosing to look at books during free play time. In general, children looked at books when these were offered as part of a limited choice option or when they were used to fill

transition periods (e.g., waiting for parents to come, waiting to wash hands).

Another impression was that, while most classrooms had a drawing/writing table, in only a few classrooms were children observed to be experimenting with writing or quasi-writing behavior. Although the study provided no quantitative data regarding teacher-child interactions at the writing table (other than story dictation), the classrooms which appeared have the most drawing/writing activity were those in which one of the adults in the room stationed herself at or near the drawing/writing table and expressed interest in and encouragement for the children's efforts. This seems to support the idea that the social context as well as the availability of literacy materials affects the amount of time children spend in literacy activities.

#### Activities Reported

Specific data regarding the teachers' report of literacy activities is presented in Chapter 4, Table 4. Literacy activities that were reported to occur most frequently were: story reading to the whole class; children using writing materials freely; children drawing and painting at easels; and teacher's printing for the children's benefit. Items from the list that were reported to occur least frequently were children doing workbook or ditto sheets, teachers conducted oral lessons in letter or word recognition, and children using writing materials for a teacher assigned task. In general these reports suggest that (with the exception of story reading) these Head Start teachers tend to emphasize child directed activities and avoid teacher organized literacy tasks. There were, however, a number of teachers who did report doing one or more of the following teacher directed activities: having the children use writing materials for a teacher assigned task (58.3%), oral language lessons (45.9%), and/or having children copy letters or words (41.7%), several times a week. This data confirms the idea that Head Start teachers tend to be quite eclectic and offer a variety of activities designed to support the literacy

development of their students. It should be mentioned that several teachers indicated, during the interview, that parents pushed them to offer more instruction on the alphabet. Oral drills and written work sheets seemed to be the form parents favored.

A somewhat surprising finding was that all of the subject teachers reported having the children dictate some kind of material at least once a month and 70.9 percent reported dictation to be an activity that occurred at least twice a week. Dictation of stories was reported to take place at least once a week in 83.3 percent of the classrooms and dramatization of the children's stories at least once a week in 75 percent. It had been expected that the trained group would emphasize dictation, since that is a strong element of the Erikson Early Literacy project. The high percentage of subject teachers who indicated frequent use of story dictation and dramatization is interesting, but could be influenced by a tendency for subjects to respond in a way that they believe will please the interviewer.

#### Relationship Between The Classroom Observation And The Teacher Report Data

As previously suggested, because of the limited time spent in each classroom, the reader must be cautious about using this observation data to make any assessment of typical literacy activities. There are, in addition, several observer impressions suggesting discrepancies with the teacher report data. The strongest contradiction between what was seen and what was reported regarded the item "Children use books and/or writing materials in dramatic or pretend play." Teacher reports indicated that in 75 percent of the classes this occurs four or five times a week and that in an additional 12.5 percent of the classes this activity occurs two or three times a week. The author only observed two very brief episodes of this behavior. In one situation a boy pretended to read a book out loud and in another a girl seemed to be pretending to take dictation as she experimented with writing. (See case studies of Florence and Kim in Chapter 4). The observer never

saw a child using books or writing materials as part of house play or other socio-dramatic play. In only two classrooms was there writing equipment (pencils, pads, etc.) available in the housekeeping area. It is, of course, possible that unfortunate timing prevented the observer from seeing the children using literacy materials in their pretend play, but a framework for that kind of activity (e.g., books in the doll corner, telephone message pads in the play house, menus in a restaurant prop box) was not seen in most of the classrooms observed. It may be appropriate for teacher trainers and curriculum developers to help teacher's find additional ways to incorporate the use of books and writing materials into children's dramatic play since it seems, on the basis of their report, to be an activity they value.

Two other areas of possible discrepancy between teacher report and observation data were discussed earlier. In six of the classes a book was not read to the class group on the day of observation. This seemed a high percentage of non-occurrence for an activity that 95.8 percent of the teachers said happened four or five days per week. In an even more glaring contradiction, the activity described as "Teacher reads book with an individual or small group of children" (which was reported by 41.7 percent of the teachers to occur four to five times a week and by an additional 50 percent to occur two to three times a week) was *never* observed. It seemed to the observer that low attendance in many of the classes provided a better than usual climate for teachers to share books with individuals or small groups of children during free choice time, making it more surprising that this activity was never seen during the research. Perhaps the importance of book reading and book sharing could to be stressed to assure that Head Start teachers' actually present books to the children as often as they say they do.

Although 95.8 percent of the teachers reported that children "use writing materials freely" four or five times a week, the author's observations suggest that this statistic may be particularly misleading. There were, indeed, writing mate-

rials at least somewhat available during free choice time in all classrooms, and in most classes there was at least a child or two who did choose to use those materials. However, the observer did not consider experimenting with drawing and writing materials to be a popular activity (one in which more than half the children participated) in most classrooms. If a program is interested in presenting a whole language curriculum it seems important that ways be found to encourage many more children to use the writing equipment that is provided.

It also seemed surprising that while a number of the teachers who had not experienced the Erikson training reported that story dictation and dramatization were activities that occurred in their classrooms at least once a week, such activity was only observed in classrooms of Erikson trained teachers. This might of course be explained by busy end of year schedules. It is also possible that teachers who had not been trained in story dictation and dramatization techniques might have been reluctant to conduct those activities in front of an observer.

Allowing for the fact that teacher report data might somewhat exaggerate the frequency of literacy activities, with the exception of the activities discussed above, the observation and teacher report data seemed to be basically compatible.

#### The Sample Head Start Teachers' Expressed Attitudes And Beliefs About Early Literacy Development

Section II of the teacher interview (Appendix A) was designed to explore the subject teacher's attitudes and beliefs about early literacy development and learning. The first set of questions asked the twenty-four interviewed teachers to give their opinion about the value of each of a list of literacy activities "for Head Start children's literacy development." So that the data could be evaluated quantitatively responses were designed on a seven point, balanced quasi-interval Likert scale. The response categories were: Essential, Extremely Important, Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not Very Important, Not at all Important, Of No



Value At All. The teachers were shown cards to help them remember the categories for responses. A second set of questions attempted to investigate the teachers' theoretical orientation by asking them to react to a number of statements reflecting different approaches to literacy development and learning.

Responses on these items were restricted to the following scaled choices:

Completely Agree, Strongly Agree, Agree Somewhat, Neutral-Neither Agree or Disagree, Disagree Somewhat, Strongly Disagree, Completely Disagree.

In considering the data in this section of the study it must be kept in mind that an individual's attitudes and beliefs are difficult to assess accurately, especially in the limited time available in this study. Some of the teachers may have been influenced by what they felt the interviewer wanted to hear, regardless of their true beliefs. The author suspects that even though a serious attempt was made to put the teachers at ease, the forced choice portion of the interview, especially the section dealing with attitudes and beliefs, was an uncomfortable situation for a few of the subject teachers. This discomfort may have provoked impulsive responses that did not necessarily reflect the teachers' true beliefs.

#### Relative Value Of Various Literacy Activities

Complete data regarding the teachers' rating of the value of various activities for literacy development can be found in Chapter 4, Table 5. This section will comment only upon some of the findings. The largest number of "Essential" ratings (45.8% of the teachers) was given to the activity described as "Group conversations with teachers and children." All of the teachers rated this activity as at least "Very important." The enthusiasm for this kind of classroom behavior suggests that many Head Start teachers believe that oral language development is one of the most important preschool literacy tasks and/or that conversational interactions provide excellent opportunities to teach. This finding also may indicate a discrepancy between beliefs and practice. During the observation portion of the

study the author observed very few conversational interchanges between teachers and children.

The next highest percentage of "Essential" ratings was shared by three items: "Story reading by teacher;" "Opportunities to look at books by oneself or with a classmate;" and "Small motor development activities." The book related activities (i.e., "Story reading by teacher" and "Opportunities to look at books by oneself or with a classmate") were rated as essential by 37.5 and extremely important by 45.8 percent of the teachers. While a high rating for book activities had been anticipated, the fact that "Small motor development activities" was also rated "Essential" by 37.5 percent (and "Extremely important" by 41.7 percent) was a surprise. The author does not fully understand the teachers' rationale for this rating but conjectures that it suggests a belief that small motor development is a precursor to the ability to accurately form letters.

Pretend play which was rated as "Essential" by 33.3 percent, "Extremely Important" by 33.3 percent, and "Very Important" by 29.2 percent was the next most highly valued activity for literacy development. In this case belief and practice seemed consistent, since every classroom in the study offered plenty of time and materials for the children's pretend play.

Story dictation, an activity emphasized by the Erikson Training Program, was rated as: Essential by 8.3%; Extremely Important by 41.7%; Very Important by 25%; and Somewhat Important by 25%.

The teachers tended to rate all of the listed activities as having at least some value for literacy development. Overall, the least valued activity seemed to be "Copying letters, words, etc. from blackboard or other model." This was rated "Of No Value At All" by 4.2 percent, "Not at All Important" by 20.8 percent, and "Not Very Important" by 33.3 percent. Other activities with relatively low ratings were: "Practice in Forming Letter Shapes," "Practice on Shape Discrimination,"

Tracing Letters" and "Copying Letters." In general, activities that involved practicing skills were least valued. This finding suggests to the author that, in general, these Head Start teachers did not believe that the instructional methods associated with a basic skills approach were particularly effective in encouraging the literacy development of their students.

#### Responses To Statements About Literacy Development

A full report of the teachers' responses to the various statements about literacy development is presented in Chapter 4, Table 6. Comments here will be limited to reactions to particular aspects of the data. There were three statements that received particularly strong agreement. First was the well established idea that "Being read to is extremely important for children's success in learning to read." Of the twenty-four subject teachers 62.5 percent "Completely Agree(d)," 33.3% "Strongly Agree(d)," and 4.2% "Agree(d) Somewhat." A related but more recent view of early literacy, "Children's 'pretend' reading of story books is a valuable early literacy experience" also received some level of agreement from all of the teachers. A more surprising finding was the high level of agreement (62.5% completely agreed, 33.3% strongly agreed) with the emergent literacy inspired statement, "Scribbling is an important part of writing development." The teachers' agreement with the statements regarding the role of pretend reading and scribbling in literacy development suggest that as a group they have at least an intuitive acceptance of important aspects of the emergent literacy perspective.

There was no such consensus on most of the other items and there was a wide variety of opinion regarding the statements relating to the role of specific skills in learning to read and write. The statement, "Children must be able to identify the letters of the alphabet before they can begin to read and write" found some level of agreement (completely, strongly or somewhat) from 37.5 percent of the teachers, was received neutrally by 8.3% and was, to some extent, disagreed

with by 54.2 percent (20.8% "Completely Agree(d)" and 16.7% "Completely Disagree(d)"). Agreement with another skill oriented statement, "The first step in learning to read is decoding sounds" was 66.7 percent, 8.3 percent were neutral and 25 percent disagreed (12.5% "Completely Agree(d)" and 8.3% "Completely Disagree(d)"). It was not surprising that Head Start teachers hold a variety of beliefs about the role of specific skills in literacy development, since scholars in the field have a similar diversity of opinions.

#### Relationship Between Beliefs And Practice

It is possible to use the data from the sub-scale assessments (Chapter 4, Table 10) to make some general observations about the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their practice. Each of the three sub-scales rated the subject teachers as either WL (whole language) N (neither) or BS (basic skills). Sub-scale 1 assessed teacher attitudes from responses to the interview questions, Sub-scale 2 evaluated the literacy environment, and Sub-scale 3 rated instructional style (see Chapters 3 and 4 for discussion of the sub-scales). There were three teachers who were rated BS on Sub-scale 1 which reflected beliefs and were rated WL on either Sub-scale 2 or 3 that reflected practice (and N on the other). In addition there were two teachers who were rated WL on Sub-scale 1 (Teacher attitudes) and BS on Sub-scale 2 or 3 regarding practice. The other fifteen teachers who were assessed had either combinations of WL's and N's or BS's and N's. It is possible that the five teacher's who had a contradiction between their rating on attitudes and practice do have some conflict between what they believe and what they do. It is also possible that the instruments were simply not sensitive enough to accurately capture either the beliefs, the behavior or both.

### Teachers' Personal Experiences With Literacy

When considering the Head Start teacher's comments about literacy it must be remembered that this is basically a self-selected sample. All of these teachers agreed to participate in the study knowing it dealt with literacy. The sample teachers may well be individuals who have a particular interest in literacy development and/or education. The author suspects that some of the teachers who declined to participate may not have been comfortable with the concept of "literacy" education in their classrooms, perhaps feeling it meant formal reading and writing instruction. Although each teacher in the study had her own story to tell, it is possible to make some generalizations about these women's experiences with literacy.

All of the teachers remembered someone having read to them when they were young. In general, the reading they recalled took place at home and the readers were women: mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters. A few mentioned teachers and Sunday school teachers who had read to them. Perhaps this is why as a group the subjects seemed to strongly value story reading as a literacy development activity. Most of the subject teachers had pleasant memories of learning to read, even those who reported some problems such as being embarrassed to read out loud or "being hollered at," and seemed to feel learning to read had been a positive process. The question which asked what they liked about learning to read produced many comments about their pleasure and excitement in reading books.

In contrast to the usually enthusiastic responses regarding reading, not many of the teachers seemed to recall much about "learning to write." Of those who had specific memories most were negative ones. Several teachers complained about skill practice such as "writing fifty W's" or memorizing spelling words. Not one of the teacher's mentioned anything about learning to write in the sense of

authorship (i.e., writing to communicate something). It was interesting that while "learning to read" was generally interpreted by the teachers as acquiring the ability to get meaning from books, it seemed that the phrase "learning to write" suggested the mechanical process of penmanship rather than writing's creative or communicative aspects. This interpretation of what it means to write may reflect the way writing has traditionally taught in many American schools.

In response to the question which asked "What kind of reading do you do outside of work?" most of the subject teachers reported being enthusiastic recreational readers. Magazines seemed to be the most popular reading material, but newspapers, novels and the Bible were also mentioned by several of the teachers. More than half the teachers reported doing a good deal of writing besides what was required for work. Of particular interest was the variety of kinds of writing that these teachers reported doing. Two teachers wrote poetry and shared it with friends, two were working on educational materials to help other Head Start teachers, one wrote a weekly church newsletter, and another was attempting to write children's stories for publication.

As a group, the subject teachers seemed to have had an early introduction to story reading and positive experiences with learning to read. In addition, they were currently enjoying participation in recreational activities involving reading and/or writing. Perhaps it is because of their positive orientation to literacy that these women became teachers and were willing to participate in a study about early literacy.

#### Differences Between The Erikson Trained And Untrained Groups

When recruiting problems prevented balancing the Erikson trained and untrained groups in the sample, there was concern that it would be difficult to make any sort of meaningful group comparisons. However, despite the small size of the untrained group, discriminant analysis (see Chapter 4 for an explanation)

using several combinations of variables from the interview and/or observation data, detected important statistical differences between the groups.

Three discriminant analyses were done on individual groups of variables each reflecting a separate dimension of the data. (Tabular results of these analyses can be found in Appendix D, Tables III, IV, and V.) The first analysis was of the group of variables describing teachers' attitudes and beliefs (the same items from the structured interview that were used for determining Sub-scale 1). The second analysis examined variables from the interview in which the teachers reported the frequency of occurrence of a list of classroom literacy activities. The groups formed by each of these analyses corresponded exactly to the actual training status of the teachers studied. A third analysis used variables from the observation sheet which evaluated the classroom literacy environment. In this analysis there was agreement by group placement in 90.91 percent of the cases. These results indicate that the Erikson trained teachers in the sample really were distinguishable from the untrained group in terms of these factors.

Because of research limitations including sample size and the variety of levels of Erikson training among the trained group, it is impossible from this study to determine whether the Erikson training actually changes teachers or if the teachers who participated in the training were already different. Some of the group differences may be explained by teacher characteristics such as time spent reading professional literature rather than specific effects of the training. Because they had volunteered or been specially selected by their directors, the teachers in the trained group may have been, even before the training, particularly interested in literacy education. Such individuals would be expected to have stronger opinions about reading and writing and might (with or without special training) tend to devote more teaching effort to literacy development. In turn,

training would heightens the participating teachers' awareness of and emphasis upon specific literacy activities in their classrooms.

One puzzling finding was the counter-intuitive difference in mean scores on the variable regarding the importance of story dictation as a literacy activity. Since this is an activity stressed by the Erikson training program it was surprising to find the untrained group giving it a rating significantly higher than the trained group. A possible explanation is that more teachers in the untrained group, who had never attempted story dictation activities, thought it sounded like an "extremely important" activity, while Erikson trained teachers, who had actually done the activity, found it difficult to manage and therefore believed it was only "very important." It should be noted that the trained teachers reported a higher frequency of dictation activity in their classrooms and the activity was only observed in classrooms of teachers who had participated in the training. Another possible explanation is that at least some of the untrained teachers were (from conference programs, articles etc.) aware of Erikson Institute's interest in story dictation as a literacy development activity and felt they should rate it highly to please the interviewer who was identified as an Erikson student.

It is necessary to use great caution when considering the impact of singular variables, such as the importance of story dictation, in a multivariate analysis like this. It is the combination of group ratings on all of the selected variables which establishes the discrimination. While discriminant analysis can establish the existence of group differences, interpreting the nature of those differences is difficult. The scope of this work did not include more detailed statistical investigation of these analyses to identify specific ways in which the Erikson training might affect teachers. It is, however, possible to speculate on the nature of differences between the trained and untrained groups using trends observed in the data.



In terms of attitudes about literacy education, the trained teachers seem to consider more activities (of both the whole language and basic skills type) to be of high importance for literacy development than did teachers in the untrained group. There is a notable difference in mean scores for some of the more theoretical items. The responses of trained teachers were more positive for two important whole language/emergent literacy statements ("An important reason for children learning to write is their wanting to use print to communicate" and "Experience in writing often helps children learn to read"). The untrained group had higher levels of agreement with two statements suggesting more traditional notions about literacy learning ("The first step in learning to read is decoding sounds" and "Children must be able to identify the letters of the alphabet before they can begin to read or write"). This difference in response to the theoretical questions may suggest that the training had an impact on the participating teachers' understanding of the process of literacy acquisition.

Regarding practice, both groups are generally quite eclectic, but the data indicates a few differences. The untrained group reported offering somewhat fewer total literacy activities than the trained teachers. This may simply be a reflection of the trained group being more motivated regarding literacy education or it may reflect an impact of the training process. Two other observations seem likely to indicate particular impact of the training process: first, teachers in the trained group seem to place a stronger emphasis upon writing activities; and second, more of the trained group teachers had displays of the children's recent graphic efforts in their classrooms.

### Suggestions For Practice

Although descriptive in design, the findings of this study prompt the author to, at this point in the discussion, apply the research data and the current literature on emergent literacy and make a few suggestions for practice. Although

geared toward a whole language approach, none of these suggestions requires major curriculum revision. First, there are several ways in which teachers can enhance the richness of their classroom's print environment. They can make space at children's eye level to display children's graphic (drawing and writing) productions. Children's interest in having their work displayed can be enhanced by letting them hang up their own creations and by encouraging children's appreciation of the student "gallery." Displays can be kept current by sending home older works and replacing them with new efforts.

The print environment of classrooms can also be enriched by a deliberate and consistent effort to use print that has meaning for the children (even if they cannot yet read it). Graphics such as helper lists, signs which indicate what activities or materials are available for the day (e.g., "Blocks are closed," The water table is marked with a sign that says "OPEN") and sign-up lists for desirable activities give children a feel for the communicative power of print. Signs that the children dictate (e.g., "Jeff's castle" on a block structure) or that the teacher writes during a discussion with the children (e.g., "I think we should make a sign telling the afternoon children that the fish have been fed.") stress not only the power of print but illustrate the connection between the spoken and written word. It is important that such uses of functional print be dynamic and relevant. While the common practice of placing signs labeling materials and activity areas in the classroom does expose children to print, it does not seem to have the same impact on young children as seeing things written in their presence and/or about them.

A second way in which Head Start teachers may be able to enhance literacy development is by increasing the availability of materials suitable for early writing. By maintaining a supply of writing implements and appropriate paper in areas where dramatic play occurs (i.e. housekeeping, block area etc.) children are encouraged to do pretend writing as part of their play. If the children do not

spontaneously use the materials the teacher may need to suggest writing behaviors (i.e. "Why don't you make a shopping list?" "You could make a sign for your fire truck." "Most waitresses write down their orders on a pad.")

The third suggestion is that teachers who are interested in enhancing the literacy development of their students increase the level of adult interaction around literacy activities. Booksharing by teachers (or perhaps parents or other volunteers) and individual or small groups of children is a valuable early literacy activity quite different from the traditional large group story time. In this setting children may be able to take an active role by pretend reading, anticipating events or offering alternative endings. Student experimentation with drawing and writing seems to be encouraged by teachers' involvement in and support of such activities. Teachers who spend time sitting at the writing table, taking dictation or just interacting informally with the children, seem to have more students who chose to engage in early writing behaviors.

By increasing the amount of meaningful print, the availability of writing materials and the level of adult-child interaction, the literacy environment of any Head Start or other preschool program can be greatly enhanced. A strong literacy environment may be an important contributing factor in children's successful literacy development.

#### Questions For Further Research

Because there is so little literature on this subject the areas for further research are vast. The following is a list of a four interesting questions that this work identified but left essentially unexplored:

- Is there a negative correlation between defined periods when children are required to look at books and free choice time exploration of books in the classroom?
- Are there social-interactional factors that contribute to children's enthusiasm for voluntary book exploration?

- What is the relation between teachers' attitudes about literacy development/learning and their classroom practice?
- What factors distinguish Erikson Trained teachers from those who have not experienced the training?

### Summary

The Chicago area Head Start teachers who participated in this study, were in general, enthusiastic about and interested in literacy development. This attitude seems to have grown out of their early positive experiences with books and reading instruction and their current enjoyment of literacy related activities. There did not seem to be any pattern of age, education or teaching experience that had a significant effect on teachers' attitudes, beliefs, or practice.

Most of the teachers could be described as eclectic and atheoretical in approach, choosing to offer a variety of literacy activities that they have found successful. Free choice time, pretend play and reading stories to the class were activities valued by all of the teachers and were observed in most of the classes. However, no teacher was observed looking at or reading a book with individual or small groups of children during free choice time. Developmentally appropriate books and drawing/ writing equipment were available in all the classrooms but they were not, in most groups, popular free choice activities. In only a few classrooms were children observed to experiment with writing-like behaviors. Where writing was popular it was observed that there was an adult close by supporting the children's efforts. Children dictating stories to a teacher and then dramatizing them was an activity observed in a number of the classrooms where the teacher had been involved in the Erikson Early Literacy Training Program. While many classrooms had some child-oriented print, especially names on cubbies, most teachers did not seem to use print for the children's benefit (i.e. making lists, writing notes, etc.) on a regular basis .

The subject teachers who had participated in the Erikson Early Literacy Training Program were found to be statistically identifiable but it is still unclear what and how much of that difference is attributable to the training itself.

In general the level of literacy education in these classrooms was impressive. Suggestions for practice based on the literature regarding emerging literacy and the social context of literacy development are: enriching the print environment of classrooms and spending more time interacting with children around literacy behaviors.

## APPENDIX A

### Preschool Teacher Interview

#### SECTION I - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. "FIRST I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR CLASSES THIS YEAR."

\_\_\_\_\_ How many groups of children do you teach each day?

\_\_\_\_\_ How many children are enrolled in each of your classes?

\_\_\_\_\_ What is the average daily attendance?

\_\_\_\_\_ How many hours per day is each child in school?

Approximately how many children of these ethnic backgrounds do you have?

\_\_\_\_\_Asian \_\_\_\_\_Black \_\_\_\_\_Hispanic\_\_\_\_\_White

\_\_\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ How many children do you have whose first language is not English?

What languages do they speak?

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How many other adults are regularly in the classroom?

\_\_\_\_\_Co-teacher \_\_\_\_\_Teacher's Aid

\_\_\_\_\_Parents/Volunteers \_\_\_\_\_ Student Teacher

## SECTION II - TEACHERS' BELIEFS

2. "I AM GOING TO DESCRIBE TO YOU A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES. TEACHERS DO NOT AGREE ABOUT THE RELATIVE VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF EACH OF THESE ACTIVITIES FOR THE LITERACY DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILDREN THEY TEACH. I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE YOUR OPINION ABOUT THEIR VALUE FOR HEAD START CHILDREN'S LITERACY DEVELOPMENT. WOULD YOU INDICATE WHETHER YOU THINK EACH OF THESE IS:" (WE'LL USE THESE CARDS TO HELP YOU REMEMBER THE CATEGORIES.)

- (7) ESSENTIAL
- (6) EXTREMELY IMPORTANT
- (5) VERY IMPORTANT
- (4) SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
- (3) NOT VERY IMPORTANT
- (2) NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
- (1) OF NO VALUE AT ALL

- \* \_\_\_\_\_ drawing and painting
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ practice in forming letter shapes
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ story dictation (adults writing down stories children tell)
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ practice on shape discrimination
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ sharing books with adults
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ exercises stressing directionality (left to right)
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ opportunities to look at books by oneself or with classmates
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ dramatic play with miniature figures
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ opportunities for the children to write or pretend write for communication (stories, signs, notes, greeting cards, reminders etc.)
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ story reading by a teacher
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ copying letters, words, etc from blackboard or other model
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ pretend play
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ tracing letters
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ copying letters
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ scribbling and/or pretend writing
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ small motor development activities (manipulatives, working with clay.)
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ having print that is meaningful to the children in the environment (i.e. signs, , lists of names etc.)
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ group conversations with teachers and children
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ oral language exercises (flash cards, picture identification etc.)

**3 A. "THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT IDEAS AND THEORIES ABOUT HOW CHILDREN LEARN TO READ, WRITE AND THUS BECOME LITERATE. I AM GOING TO READ YOU SOME STATEMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE BY EDUCATORS WITH VARIOUS POINTS OF VIEW ABOUT LITERACY DEVELOPMENT. ON THE BASIS OF YOUR EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING, I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THESE IDEAS. WOULD YOU INDICATE THE PHRASE THAT COMES CLOSEST TO YOUR FEELING ABOUT EACH STATEMENT." (SHOW CARDS)**

- (7) COMPLETELY AGREE
- (6) STRONGLY AGREE
- (5) AGREE SOMEWHAT
- (4) NEUTRAL- NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE
- (3) DISAGREE SOMEWHAT
- (2) STRONGLY DISAGREE
- (1) COMPLETELY DISAGREE

- @\_\_\_\_\_ Children must be able to identify the letters of the alphabet before they can begin to read or write.
- @\_\_\_\_\_ Scribbling is an important part of writing development.
- @\_\_\_\_\_ The first step in learning to read is decoding sounds.
- @\_\_\_\_\_ Experience in writing often helps children learn to read.
- @\_\_\_\_\_ Writing begins when the child learns to form some recognizable letter shapes.
- @\_\_\_\_\_ Children's "pretend" reading of storybooks is a valuable early literacy experience.
- @\_\_\_\_\_ An important reason for children learning to write is their wanting to use print to communicate.
- @\_\_\_\_\_ Children sometimes learn to write before they learn to read.
- @\_\_\_\_\_ Being read to is extremely important for children's success in learning to read.
- @\_\_\_\_\_ Preschool children are too young for a literacy program.
- @\_\_\_\_\_ Work sheets in word recognition and letter formation are important reading and writing readiness activities.



**3B. "SOME PEOPLE FEEL THERE IS A CONNECTION BETWEEN PRETEND PLAY AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT OTHERS DISAGREE. DO YOU THINK THERE ARE ANY WAYS THAT PLAY MAY HELP CHILDREN EVENTUALLY LEARN TO READ AND WRITE?" (RECORD VERBATIM- ENCOURAGE TO GIVE EXAMPLES IF THEY AGREE)**

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**3C "SOME TEACHERS THINK THERE IS A CONNECTION BETWEEN CHILDREN'S ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR LITERACY DEVELOPMENT? DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE? CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHY YOU FEEL THAT WAY? (RECORD VERBATIM)**

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SECTION III  
TEACHER'S REPORT OF CLASSROOM WRITING/ LITERACY ACTIVITIES

4. I AM GOING TO LIST SOME ACTIVITIES THAT DIFFERENT TEACHERS HAVE USED FOR LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN VARIOUS PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS. WE KNOW THAT NOT ALL ACTIVITIES ARE APPROPRIATE FOR ALL GROUPS OF CHILDREN. I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT KIND OF LITERACY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES OCCUR IN YOUR CLASSROOM. WOULD YOU RESPOND TO EACH ACTIVITY I MENTION BY INDICATING HOW OFTEN THIS ACTIVITY USUALLY TAKES PLACE. (SHOW CARDS)

- (6) 4 OR 5 TIMES PER WEEK
- (5) 2 OR 3 TIMES PER WEEK
- (4) 1 TIME PER WEEK
- (3) 1 OR 2 TIMES PER MONTH
- (2) 1 OR 2 TIMES PER YEAR
- (1) NEVER TAKES PLACE

A. GENERAL LITERACY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

- ¶ \_\_\_\_\_ Children make books
- ¶ \_\_\_\_\_ Children dictate stories to adult who writes them down
- ¶ \_\_\_\_\_ Children dramatize (act out) stories they have written
- ¶ \_\_\_\_\_ Children use books and/or writing materials in dramatic or pretend play
- ¶ \_\_\_\_\_ Children dramatize storybooks.
- ¶ \_\_\_\_\_ Children take trips to the library

B. READING DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

- ¶ \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher reads story to large (5 or more) group of children
- ¶ \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher reads books with an individual or small group of children
- ¶ \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher conducts oral lessons in letter or word recognition (flash cards, letter or picture identification etc.)
- ¶ \_\_\_\_\_ Children complete prepared readiness worksheets

C. WRITING DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

- ¶\_\_\_\_\_ Children use writing materials such as pens, pencils and markers freely (i.e. without an assigned task)
  - ¶\_\_\_\_\_ Children use writing materials for a specific teacher assigned task (i.e. worksheet, art project, game etc.)
  - ¶\_\_\_\_\_ Children draw and/or paint at a table
  - ¶\_\_\_\_\_ Children paint or draw at easels
  - ¶\_\_\_\_\_ Children trace letters
  - ¶\_\_\_\_\_ Children listen to story tapes with books
  - ¶\_\_\_\_\_ Children write and/or pretend write for information and/or for communication and self-expression i.e. lists, signs, stories, notes, greeting cards, captioning art work etc..
  - ¶\_\_\_\_\_ Children dictate (have adults write down) for information and/or for communication and self-expression i.e. lists, signs, stories, notes, greeting cards, captioning art work etc..
  - ¶\_\_\_\_\_ Teacher prints for children's benefit (names, captions on art, lists of children waiting for an activity etc.)
  - ¶\_\_\_\_\_ Children copy letters or words from charts or blackboard
  - ¶\_\_\_\_\_ Children work on prepared workbook or ditto sheets on directionality, letter formation or other "readiness" exercises
5. "ARE THERE OTHER ACTIVITIES YOU OFFER THAT YOU FEEL CONTRIBUTE TO LITERACY DEVELOPMENT? HOW OFTEN DO THEY OCCUR?" (RECORD VERBATIM)

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SECTION IV  
PARENT INVOLVEMENT

6. "NOW I AM GOING TO LIST SOME ACTIVITIES PRESCHOOL TEACHERS HAVE USED TO GET PARENTS INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILDREN'S LITERACY DEVELOPMENT. AGAIN, THERE IS GREAT VARIATIONS IN GROUPS AND THE SAME APPROACH ISN'T EFFECTIVE WITH ALL PARENTS. I AM INTERESTED TO KNOW THE WAYS IN WHICH YOU INVOLVE PARENT IN LITERACY DEVELOPMENT. PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU TYPICALLY DO THIS ACTIVITY:" (SHOW CARDS)

- (5) DAILY OR ALMOST EVERY DAY
- (4) AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK
- (3) AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH
- (2) ONCE OR TWICE A YEAR
- (1) NEVER OR ALMOST NEVER

- Send home samples of children's writing (i.e. dictated stories, greeting cards etc.)
- Encourage children to take books home
- Invite parents to observe literacy activities
- Keeping samples of children's writing to share with parents at conferences
- Discuss the child's literacy activities at home visits or parent conferences
- Helping parents get library cards for themselves and/or their children
- Holding parent meetings at which you discuss children's literacy development
- Using parents to take story dictation in the classroom
- Having parents spend time in the classroom reading with individual or small groups of children
- Establishing a lending library so children can take books home with them
- Suggesting parents look at books and read to children

- 7 "ARE THERE ARE OTHER THINGS YOU DO TO INVOLVE PARENTS IN LITERACY DEVELOPMENT?" (RECORD VERBATIM)

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8. "WHAT CONCERNS ABOUT LITERACY DEVELOPMENT DO PARENTS EXPRESS TO YOU?" (RECORD VERBATIM)

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9. "WHAT DO YOU THINK PARENTS OF THE CHILDREN YOU TEACH ARE DOING TO SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN'S LITERACY DEVELOPMENT?" (RECORD VERBATIM)

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SECTION V-  
TEACHERS' PERSONAL LITERACY EXPERIENCES

10. "WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT LEARNING TO READ AND WRITE?" (RECORD VERBATIM)

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"WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT IT?"

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"WHAT DID YOU DISLIKE ABOUT IT?"

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"WHO CAN YOU REMEMBER READING TO YOU? PARENTS?  
SIBLINGS? TEACHERS? OTHERS?"

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"DO YOU REMEMBER AN EARLY FAVORITE BOOK?"

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"IS READING AN ACTIVITY YOU ENJOY TODAY?"

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"WHAT KIND OF READING DO YOU DO OUTSIDE OF WORK?"

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"IS WRITING AN ACTIVITY YOU ENJOY TODAY?"

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"WHAT KIND OF WRITING DO YOU DO OUTSIDE OF WORK?"  
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**APPENDIX B**  
Teacher Questionnaire

WOULD YOU PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS  
SEX? \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female AGE? \_\_\_\_\_

OF WHAT ETHNIC BACKGROUND DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF?

	Asian
	Black
	Hispanic
	White
	Other (please list) _____

WHAT IS YOUR HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION?

	High School
	Some college _____Credits ?
	Associate degree
	B.S. or B.A.
	M.S., M.A. or M.Ed

DO YOU HAVE A TEACHING CREDENTIAL? PLEASE INDICATE WHAT TYPE(S)

	CDA
	Early Childhood Certificate
	Elementary Certificate
	Special Education Certificate
	Other _____



HOW MANY YEARS OF TOTAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE?\_\_\_\_\_

HOW MANY YEARS OF PRESCHOOL TEACHING EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE?\_\_\_\_\_

HAVE YOU EVER PARTICIPATED IN HIGH SCOPE TRAINING?

YES\_\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

HAVE YOU EVER HAD ANY TRAINING OR EDUCATION (SEMINAR, CLASS, CONFERENCE, INSERVICE ETC) REGARDING PRESCHOOL LITERACY (READING AND/OR WRITING) CURRICULUM?

YES\_\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION PLEASE RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING:

WHEN DID YOU HAVE THIS TRAINING? (ESTIMATE IF YOU AREN'T SURE)  
YEAR\_\_\_\_\_ MONTH\_\_\_\_\_

WAS THIS LITERACY TRAINING ARRANGED BY YOUR PROGRAM?  
\_\_\_\_\_YES \_\_\_\_\_NO

WAS THIS TRAINING :  
PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE ANSWER (S):


A Graduate level college credit course?

An Undergraduate level college credit course?

Conducted in your classroom?

An extended program taking place in your classroom over several months or more?

A workshop or seminar lasting five hours or more?

A workshop or seminar lasting two to five hours?

A workshop or seminar lasting less than two hours?

WHAT WERE IT'S MAIN IDEAS? (AS CLOSELY AS YOU CAN REMEMBER)

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WHO PRESENTED IT? (THE PERSON AND/OR ORGANIZATION)

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## APPENDIX C

### Observation Form (with notations and data inserted)

Site \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Observer \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time entering \_\_\_\_\_ Time leaving \_\_\_\_\_

Enrollment in group \_\_\_\_\_ Number of children present \_\_\_\_\_

Age range \_\_\_\_\_

#### CLASSROOM LITERACY ENVIRONMENT

	YES	NO
§ Is there a drawing/ writing table?	21	1
§ Is there a display of books and/or book covers?	22	0
§ Is there a clearly defined space for reading (rug, pillows, etc.)	17	5

#### CLASSROOM PRINT/ DISPLAYED LITERACY

	YES	NO
§ Sign-up or waiting list for activity (easel, cooking etc)	3	18
§ References for children use and/or information (chart with children's names, color names, letter formation cards etc.)	16	6
§ Record keeping for children's benefit (songs we know, books we've read, etc.)	5	17
§ Schedules for children's benefit (calender, daily agenda etc.)	8	13
§ Labels for children's benefit (functional, working labels that give information about contents, use, possession i.e. names on cubbies )	19	3
§ Directions for children's benefit (classroom rules, use of centers, recipes etc.)	10	12
§ Communication (notes, messages, letters)	3	18
§ Display of children's recent writing and/or drawing	16	6
Other? (if so list)		

**MATERIALS-** PLEASE NOTE WHETHER THESE ITEMS ARE: (Check with the teacher about materials that you do not see.)

RA	<u>Readily available</u> to children (i.e. clearly visible and at child's eye level or below)
SA	<u>Somewhat available</u> to children (i.e. child can use it but must open cupboards or drawers or ask an adult to get it)
UA	<u>Unavailable</u> to children during free choice time although present in the center
NP	<u>Not present</u> in the center

WRITING MATERIALS	RA	SA	UA	NP
Pens	2	2	2	16
Pencils	17	0	0	5
Markers	18	2	0	2
Crayons	21			1
Chalk	7	2	0	13
Paint/brushes	17	2	0	3
Letter Stencils	7	1	0	14
Rubber stamp	7	0	0	15
Typewriter	3	2	1	16
Computer	3	2	0	17
Drawing paper	17	1	0	4
Colored paper	20	0	0	2
Assorted paper	15	0	0	7
Stationary	0	1	1	20
Envelopes	1	2	0	19
Chalkboard	8	1	1	12
Stapler/ staples	5	4	1	12
Scissors	20	1	0	1
Glue	11	5	0	6
Tape	6	3	1	12
Other? (if so list)				

<b>MATERIALS TO COPY</b>	<b>RA</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>UA</b>	<b>NP</b>
Cards or sheets with letters	3	1	0	18
Cards or sheets with children's names	7	3	0	13
Cards or sheets with words	5	1	0	16
Other? (if so list)				
<b>BOOKS (RECORD NUMBER)</b>	<b># RA</b>	<b># SA</b>	<b># UA</b>	<b>NP</b>
Picture books				
Story books				
"Big" books				
Child or group authored stories				
Story tapes				
Other? (if so list)				

**APPARENT CONDITION OF BOOKS -**

**EXCELLENT                  AVERAGE                  POOR**

**comments?** \_\_\_\_\_

**DO MOST BOOKS APPEAR TO BE DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE?**

**YES                  NO**

**comments?** \_\_\_\_\_

LITERACY RELATED GAMES	RA	SA	UA	NP
Alphabet bingo	3	5	0	14
Magnetic letters	4	2	0	16
Puzzles (alphabet etc)	7	3	0	12
Teacher made games	0	0	1	22
Flannel board	4	7	0	11
Blocks with letters	6	4	0	12
Other				

### CLASSROOM LITERACY ACTIVITIES

Is there a free choice (play) period?

Is there a teacher structured project ?

If yes is it required of all students?

Is there a group time?

Is a book read to the group?

If yes is the text followed closely?

Is a story told to the group without a book?

Is a book or story discussed?

Is there dramatization of books or stories?

Is there a group language activity i.e. flash cards?

Are any child authored stories read?

Are any child authored stories dramatized?

YES	NO	MINUTES
22	0	average = 54
7	15	
3	4	average = 15
20	2	
16	5	
16		
3	18	
8	13	
5	16	
5	16	
7	12	
7	12	

**WHAT IS HAPPENING AT THE DRAWING/WRITING TABLE** (or in other areas of the classroom if applicable) OBSERVE FOR APPROXIMATELY 1/2 OF FREE CHOICE PERIOD.

1. children at drawing/writing table
2. children doing some sort of drawing or writing activity
3. children drawing a picture
4. children doing pretend writing (including in dramatic play)
5. children doing conventional writing
6. children who dictate stories or to an adult
7. children who dictate material other than stories

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1																				
2																				
3																				
4																				
5																				
6																				
7																				

**WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE READING AREA** (or other areas of the classroom if applicable) OBSERVE FOR THESE ACTIVITIES AN EQUAL AMOUNT OF TIME OBSERVED FOR WRITING ACTIVITIES.

1. Children who look at or pretend read a book.
2. Children who use a book with classmates.
3. Children who interact with an adult around a book (book sharing)
4. Children who are read to by an adult

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1																				
2																				
3																				
4																				

**WHAT HAPPENS AT GROUP TIME (S)**

PLEASE RECORD THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS WITH TIME INTERVALS FOR EACH

ACTIVITIES	MINUTES

IF A STORY IS READ PLEASE RATE THE FOLLOWING:

	very	2	3	4	5	6	not at all
1) Fluency of reading	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2) Expressiveness of reading	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3) Comfort in handling book so children can see while she reads	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4) Children's attentiveness	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5) Children's interest in story	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

PLEASE RECORD ANY COMMENTS OR OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE STORY READING ACTIVITY.

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## APPENDIX D TABLES

Table I. -- Classroom Literacy Activities as Reported by Subject Teachers

	4 or 5 times per week	2 or 3 times per week	1 time per week	1 or 2 times per month	1 or 2 times per year	Never takes place
Children make books	12.5 %	12.5%	4.2%	41.7%	25%	4.2%
Children dictate stories to adult who writes them down	33.3%	29.2%	20.8%	8.3%	0%	8.3%
Children dramatize (act out) stories they have written	12.5%	37.5%	25%	8.3%	0%	16.7%
Children use books and/or writing materials in dramatic or pretend play	75%	12.5%	4.2%	4.2%	0%	4.2%
Children dramatize storybooks	20.8%	41.7%	20.8%	4.2%	8.3%	4.2%
Children take trips to the library	0%	0%	25%	20.8%	29.2%	25%
Teacher reads story to large (5 or more) group of children	95.8%	4.2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Teacher reads books with an individual or small group of children	41.7%	50%	8.3%	0%	0%	0%
Teacher conducts oral lessons in letter or word recognition (flash cards, letter or picture identification etc.)	16.7%	29.2%	12.5%	4.2%	0%	37.5%
Children complete prepared readiness worksheets	4.2%	4.2%	4.2%	12.5%	0%	75%
Children use writing materials such as pens, pencils and markers freely (i.e. without an assigned task)	95.8%	0%	0%	0%	4.2%	0%
Children use writing materials for a specific teacher assigned task (i.e. worksheet, art project, game etc.)	12.5%	45.8%	8.3%	0%	0%	33.3%
Children draw and/or paint at a table	70.8%	25%	4.2%	0%	0%	0%
Children paint or draw at easels	87.5%	12.5%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Children trace letters	33.3%	20.8%	12.5%	8.3%	0%	25%
Children listen to story tapes with books	25%	16.7%	29.2%	12.5%	0%	16.7%
Children write and/or pretend write for information and/or for communication and self-expression i.e. lists, signs, stories, notes, greeting cards, captioning art work etc.	62.5%	20.8%	12.5%	4.2%	0%	0%
Children dictate (have adults write down) for information and/or for communication and self-expression i.e. lists, signs, stories, notes, greeting cards, captioning art work etc.	29.2%	41.7%	16.7%	12.5%	0%	0%
Teacher prints for children's benefit (names, captions on art, lists of children waiting for an activity etc.)	83.3%	12.5%	0%	0%	0%	4.2%
Children copy letters or words from charts or blackboard	12.5%	29.2%	0%	8.3%	4.2%	45.8%
Children work on prepared workbook or ditto sheets on directionality, letter formation or other "readiness" exercises	0%	8.3%	4.2%	4.2%	4.2%	79.2%

Note: N=24



Table II.-- Standardized Discriminant Function Coefficients from Variables (from Observation and Interview Data) That Strongly Discriminate between Groups I, II, and III

Variable	Function I	Wilks' Lambda	RAO's V	Change in V
Children dramatize stories they have written	2.8967	.56	11.96	11.96*
Children complete readiness worksheets	-26.4667	.35	27.52	15.56*
Importance of teacher reading to children	31.4584	.20	50.18	22.67*
Children dramatize story books	2.8967	.08	111.32	61.13**
Opportunities to write or pretend write	-21.7488	.05	188.69	77.38**
Scribbling is an important part of writing development	24.4536	.03	348.11	159.42**
Importance of opportunities to look at books	-0.0181	.01	662.96	314.84**
Tracing letters	-14.4303	.01	956.543	293.59**
Teacher conducts oral lessons	-10.7882	.00	1504.86	548.32**

Note 1: \*  $p < .005$ . \*\* $p < .000$

Note 2: Function 1: Eigenvalue=1737.35263 Canonical Correlation= .9997123

Function 2: Eigen value= 14.12432 Canonical Correlation= .9663754

Table III.-- Standardized Discriminant Function Coefficients of the Variables from an Analysis Using Interview Items Assessing Teachers' Attitudes About Early Literacy Development That Discriminate Between Erikson Trained and Untrained Teachers

Variable	Function I	Wilks' Lambda	RAO's V	Change in V
Story dictation	0.2237	.79	5.79	5.79 **
Exercises stressing directionality	-0.1023	.71	8.98	3.19 *
Children's "pretend" reading of story-books is a valuable early literacy experience	-0.0744	.61	14.14	5.16**
Practice in forming letter shapes	1.8725	.55	17.99	3.84**
Practice on shape discrimination	-2.5866	.48	24.13	6.14**
The first step in learning to read is decoding sounds.	1.8959	.41	31.05	6.92**
Scribbling and/or pretend writing	1.3064	.35	40.83	9.77***
An important reason for children learning to write is their wanting to use print to communicate.	-1.3872	.29	53.15	12.32***
Children must be able to identify the letters of the alphabet before they can begin to read or write.	0.7009	.24	71.04	22.05****
Experience in writing often helps children learn to read	-0.7711	.20	86.30	15.25***
Work sheets in word recognition and letter formation are important reading and writing readiness activities.	0.8169	.17	104.89	24.63

Note 1: \*p <.5. \*\* p <.05. \*\*\* p <.005. \*\*\*\* p <.0001.

Note 2: Eigenvalue = 1245.19705 Canonical Correlation = .9995987



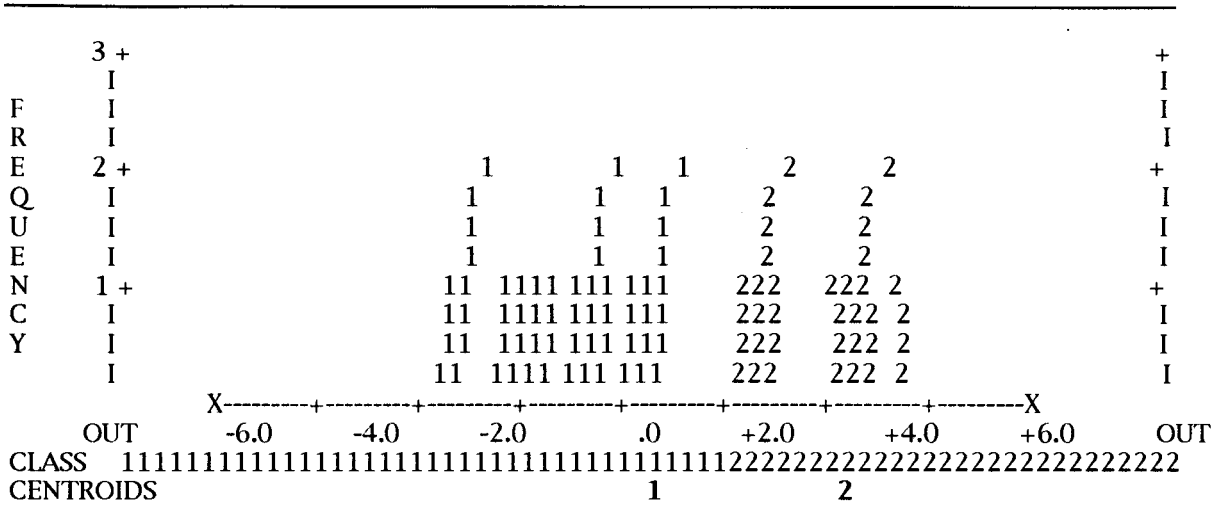
Table IV.-- Standardized Discriminant Function Coefficients of Variables from Teachers' Report of the Frequency of Literacy Activities That Discriminate Between Erikson Trained and Untrained Teachers

Variable	Function I	Wilks' Lambda	RAO's V	Change in V
Children use writing materials for a specific teacher assigned task	-0.2436	.83	4.45	4.45**
Teacher reads books with an individual or small group of children	0.1015	.74	7.53	3.07*
Children dictate stories to adult who writes them down	-0.1205	.67	10.77	3.24*
Children make books	-0.6837	.59	15.27	4.50**
Teacher reads story to large (5 or more) group of children	0.0887	.55	17.90	2.63*
Teacher conducts oral lessons in letter or word recognition	-0.0728	.46	25.52	7.62**
Children paint or draw at easels	0.0176	.42	29.39	3.87**
Children use books and/or writing materials in dramatic or pretend play	-0.0049	.36	38.52	12.06***
Teacher prints for children's benefit	-0.9209	.33	42.96	4.44**
Children listen to story tapes with books	0.0455	.31	48.42	5.47**
Children take trips to the library	-0.0471	.29	54.85	6.43**
Children write and/or pretend write for information and/or for communication and self-expression	-0.0407	.28	56.07	6.29**
Children dramatize (act out) stories they have written	-0.0410	.25	64.78	14.08***

Note 1: \*p <.5. \*\* p < .05. \*\*\* p < .005.

Note 2: Eigenvalue = 3.40524 Canonical Correlation = .8792027

Figure B.-- Stacked Histogram Illustrating Canonical Discriminant Function 1 for each subject from Analysis of Variables from Teachers' Report of the Frequency of Various Literacy Activities



Note 1: 1= member of trained group 2= member of untrained group  
 Note 2: Histogram replicated from SPSS printout therefore the scale may not be exact.

Table V.-- Standardized Discriminant Function Coefficients from Variables Reflecting Observer's Assessment of Classroom Literacy Environment That Discriminate Between Erikson Trained and Untrained Teachers

Variable	Function I	Wilks' Lambda	RAO's V	Change in V
Is there a clearly defined space for reading	-0.0432	.89	2.41	2.41*
Is there a drawing/ writing Table?	-0.3011	.76	6.24	3.83*
Record keeping for children's benefit	0.3103	.61	12.68	6.44**
Schedules for children's benefit	.2782	.50	20.09	7.41***
Communication (notes, messages, letters)	-0.0494	.46	23.44	3.35**
Display of children's recent writing and/or drawing	0.1816	.42	27.48	4.05***

Note 1: \*p <.5. \*\* p < .05. \*\*\* p < .005.  
 Note 2: Eigenvalue= 1.25324 Canonical Correlation = .7457846



**APPENDIX E**  
**ADDITIONAL LITERACY ACTIVITIES MENTIONED BY TEACHERS**

- written recipes used for real cooking and in housekeeping area
- story telling from picture flashcards
- oral and dictated story telling from a teacher selected theme (e.g. friends)
- puppet shows
- children write their own version of stories they have been read or told
- flannel board figures from stories for the children to manipulate
- shopping lists- pictures and words
- cut out letters in the collage box
- write down what is being built in the block area
- phone and address books in housekeeping (RolDEX is one version)
- use shaped paper (e.g. a bunny) for story dictation to prompt younger and less imaginative children
- teacher writing labels as dramatic and block play proceeds (e.g. "Bobby's fire truck"; "Sally and Keisha's castle"; "Pet Hospital.")
- teacher models printing of words the children want to write
- writing props in play house
- calling the drawing/writing table the "Do Anything Table" to encourage experimentation with materials
- take pretend trips, encourage conversation and imagination
- teacher (with children's suggestions) writes down things done and seen on field trips
- posters, pictures and art work for conversation
- family scrapbook, family tree with pictures and names
- rules list

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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