

A THEORY OF ENACTMENT:
THE CASE OF A FIRST-GRADE TEACHER

by

Abdulameer Dhahi Mohammed



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As members of the Final Examination Committee, we certify that we have
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and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation
requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Walter Doyle
Larry Carter
Paul Robinson

9-14-99
Date
9-14-99
Date
9/14/99
Date

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Date

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requirement.

Walter Doyle
Dissertation Director

3-1-00
Date

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THE CASE OF A FIRST-GRADE TEACHER

Abdulameer Dhahi Mohammed, Ed.D.

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Director: Walter Doyle

The purpose of this study was to examine a first grade teacher's personal theory about curriculum, and explore the ways in which this theory manifested itself about the content and the curriculum enactment process in a classroom context. Special attention was paid to analyze Sarah's (the teacher) classroom curriculum components in order to develop a theoretical model to describe Sarah's enactment theory of the curriculum in her context as a whole language teacher.

The primary mode for conducting this study was classroom observations and in-depth teacher interviews. Formal curriculum standards, lesson plans, and reflective journals were used as supplementary resources for the primary data in this study.

The analysis of the data suggested that this teacher had a well-developed theory about the content of her classroom curriculum that she

used to set up the stage for enacting the curriculum at the classroom level. The curriculum enactment was carried out in the forms of stories, songs, group work activities, and direct teaching as structured events. In addition, Sarah used her rhythmic knowledge to process the curriculum as different segments across the classroom day. Moreover, Sarah enacted the curriculum through organizing students in different forms of communities to establish a culture for learning. The three major implications of this study are: that prospective teachers need to understand curriculum enactment as structured events, to use rhythms to help students make sense of their classroom time and predict the flow of classroom activities, and to establish a culture of learning in which students work as partners in the enacting process of classroom curriculum.

Further research is needed to study the cognitive and social impacts of classroom tasks, conduct studies about curriculum enactment in different learning settings, or examine the impact of teachers' daily agenda on curriculum enactment in their context.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Sarah and other exemplary teachers
who strive for quality in their work
and make a difference in the lives
of their students everywhere.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine a first grade teacher's personal theory about curriculum, and explore the ways in which this theory manifested itself about the content and the curriculum enactment process in a classroom context. Special attention was paid to analyze Sarah's (the teacher) classroom curriculum components in order to develop a theoretical model to describe Sarah's enactment theory of the curriculum in her context as a whole language teacher.

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The analysis of the data suggested that this teacher had a well-developed theory about the content of her classroom curriculum that she used to set up the stage for enacting the curriculum at the classroom level. The curriculum enactment was carried out in the forms of stories, songs, group work activities, and direct teaching as structured events. In addition, Sarah used her rhythmic knowledge to process the curriculum as different segments

across the classroom day. Moreover, Sarah enacted the curriculum through organizing students in different forms of communities to establish a culture for learning. The three major implications of this study are: that prospective teachers need to understand curriculum enactment as structured events, to use rhythms to help students make sense of their classroom time and predict the flow of classroom activities, and to establish a culture of learning in which students work as partners in the enacting process of classroom curriculum.

Further research is needed to study the cognitive and social impacts of classroom tasks, conduct studies about curriculum enactment in different learning settings, or examine the impact of teachers' daily agenda on curriculum enactment in their context.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Until recently most educational research about teaching and curricula was guided by the technical rationality paradigm. Within this framework researchers used quantitative methods in studying effective teaching or curricula processing at the classroom level (see Brophy & Good, 1986; Gage, 1963; Good, 1979; Oliva, 1992; Tyler, 1950; Taba, 1962; Saylor et al., 1981). The focus in this line of research was to establish a relationship between a certain teacher's behavior and student achievements (see Brophy & Good, 1986), or to generate linear models that describe and specify for teachers how curricula can be developed and implemented at the classroom level (see Oliva, 1992).

However, during the last two decades, the attention of many scholars has shifted towards studying teachers and their work in naturalistic settings (Doyle, 1983; Doyle & Carter, 1984; Jackson, 1966; Kounin, 1970; Smith & Geoffrey, 1968). Three major features characterize this line of inquiry: (1) a long-term observation of participants' work in their work environment; (2) a view of the classroom in terms of what takes place in these settings; and

(3) a consideration for the local knowledge of participants about these events (see Doyle, 1981). The general conclusions that can be drawn from these studies are that teachers are working in complex environments, and in order to be effective teachers, they have to pay attention to the needs of their students, the demands of academic work and the social aspects of student learning. In other words, teachers need to set clear rules and define their expectations about classroom work to help involve students actively in the learning discourse and facilitate the movement of curriculum with less difficulties and minimal behavioral problems (Doyle, 1986a).

A second major development was made when some researchers started to look at teachers as rational persons and examine their thought process in the work environment. From this perspective, teachers work in complex situations in which they plan their lessons, design academic activities for their students, and evaluate their teaching (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Clark & Yinger, 1979; McCutcheon, 1980; Peterson et al., 1978; Shavelson & Stern, 1981; Yinger, 1980; Zahorik, 1970, 1975). A major contribution of this line of research was in developing constructs and models that advance our understanding about the relationship between a teacher's thoughts and actions in the teaching situation (Clark & Peterson, 1986).

Along similar lines, Shulman (1987) made a powerful argument about the role of knowledge in teaching subject matter. In his model, he views the curriculum as abstract content which a teacher needs to simplify, shape, and present in meaningful ways appropriate to the developmental levels of his or her students. Findings in this area of research have helped to reveal information about the richness of the structural knowledge of experienced teachers regarding subject matter. In addition, it has highlighted the importance of studying new teachers' conceptions about subject matter and preparing them with powerful content knowledge that helps them to assume their role in the classroom effectively (Ball, 1990; Grossman, 1989; Gudmundsdottir, 1991; Hollingsworth, 1989; Leinhardt et al., 1991).

Furthermore, new developments in the cognitive sciences about how people, at different ages, construct their knowledge in their learning environment (Brown et al., 1989), have encouraged many scholars to examine the informational systems of experienced teachers. Findings from these studies reveal that experienced teachers use a rich mental script that helps them to handle problematic situations, engage their students actively in the learning process, and use the time effectively according to their lesson plans (see Borko & Livingston, 1989; Carter et al., 1987; Leinhardt

et al., 1991). On the other hand, the concept of "Cognitive apprenticeship learning" had provided new ways to look at how students actually are learning. According to Brown and his colleagues (1989), learning is activity that takes place in an environment which allows narratives, conversations, and collaborations as tools to transfer beliefs and exchange ideas about a specific topic.

Focusing on the experiential world of teaching, Clandinin (1985) argues that by constructing narratives of teaching, one can identify the personal practical knowledge of a teacher and find out the rationale for his or her behavior in a classroom setting. Similarly, Connelly and Clandinin (1988) emphasize paying close attention to the images, rules, principles, and rhythms in a teacher's life as an avenue for understanding that teacher's actions and decisions about teaching and curricula (see also Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). Within this paradigm, teachers are studied as active persons who construct actively their meanings, theorize about their actions, and make deliberate decisions about what they are teaching (see Cornett, 1990; Elbaz, 1983; Sanders & McCutcheon, 1986).

In a similar vein, studies about curriculum implementation show that teachers are not blind adopters of the formal curricula, but they adapt or

adjust its guidelines to their needs in classrooms, despite specific mandates about content coverage (see Doyle & Ponder, 1977; Fullan, 1987; Lazerson et al., 1985). Doyle and Ponder (1977), in their analysis, show that teachers use practical reasons for selecting, deleting, and adapting these curriculum proposals in their classrooms. Moreover, a number of curriculum specialists have started to challenge the Tylerian model, and to argue that the shape of the formal curricula is determined by the participants in the learning environment, who decide how it should go into their shared context (see Doyle, 1992a; Carlson, 1988; Posner, 1998). From this point of view, the curriculum can be defined in terms of the experiences that are created jointly by students and the teacher in a specific context (see Synder et al., 1992).

In summary, recent developments in research about teaching and curriculum, tend to emphasize the role of a teacher's personal knowledge and the partnership between the teacher and his/her students in the learning discourse in a classroom setting (see Cambourne, 1988; Marshall & Sears, 1990; Salomon, 1992). However, as Doyle (1992a) indicated, most of this research has separated pedagogy from curriculum or vice versa. As an alternative, we need to look at the "experiential curriculum" which takes place in classrooms, and examine where students and their teacher together

construct its components as rules, activities, classroom tasks, and relationships (see Clandinin & Connelly, 1992; Doyle; 1986a; 1992b).

Building upon these theoretical frameworks, I designed this study to examine what can be called the “curriculum theory” of an experienced first grade teacher, and explore the ways that this “theory” manifests its contents in a classroom setting. To do so, I entered the field to observe, record, and interact with the teacher in her work setting for a period of three months. I used classroom observation to record my impressions and thoughts about the daily events of the classroom, such as classroom work, students' talk, students' movement, and different lesson structures. In addition, I used an open-ended interview technique to explore the teacher's beliefs that underlie the format of curriculum forms, the curriculum content, and curriculum enactment in her classroom.

Because there were few studies about curriculum enactment, this study was a contribution to the theoretical work in this field. Moreover, this study extended the previous work about “curriculum enactment” in a specific subject matter (Anders, 1995; Putnam, 1987) by exploring the “enactment theory” in a whole language setting, in which the pedagogy

embodies rules, rhythms, classroom activities, academic tasks, and social interaction.

Problem of the Study

In this study I was interested in examining how integrated curriculum works at the classroom level and how the teacher's theories underlie the enactment process. However, in the field I decided to take another stand and study the teacher's personal curriculum (whole language context) and pursue another direction for my investigation. In the following section, I explain how I came to my final decisions about the design and the purpose of this study.

A Stranger in a New Culture

When I started my early visits to Sarah's classroom in the Spring Semester, I was very confident that I could make it through and capture the picture of the "integrated curriculum" in this classroom. But very soon, I experienced culture shock, and I realized that I was a stranger within this community. I could not understand what was going on! So I started to ponder for sometime and asked myself: "Did I come to the right place?" What I saw was not teaching or learning, but a messy situation and a chaos theory of education! It was a situation in which I could not distinguish

between the roles of the teacher and her students or see those boundaries that identify subject matter, the objectives of learning, student work, and the authority of the teacher.

Why the Familiar Was Unfamiliar

For American educators this was probably an ordinary situation. Each teacher has his or her own ways of organizing the classroom day, based on their philosophies, and what they teach, such as “whole language,” “thematic unity,” or “subject-based” curriculum. So what is new here?

Coming from a different culture of learning and teaching, I was carrying a set of beliefs which values specific standards about teaching, learning, and the working of the teacher and his/her students in a classroom setting. Those cultural principles were so deeply rooted in my mind that, when I entered this classroom, I had already made my mind up about what I was going to observe. I was expecting to observe what I had experienced or read about as “integrated curriculum” and not the “personal curriculum” of this teacher.

As an elementary teacher, I used to be the authority in my classroom with some flexibility, but I would not allow my students to wander around and talk while they are working, or to leave their seats without permission.

In addition, I was required to cover the content of the national curriculum so there were few opportunities for individual learning or creative activities. Classroom activities, in other words, were ready-made in textbooks of reading, mathematics, social studies, or science. My integrated curriculum was a simple one. I used to make a correlation between subject matters by a story or a problem if it was possible, but most of the time I found it difficult to play out such unnecessary manipulations. So I found it more practical to teach my students by subject matter rather than integrated units! They were to spend different blocks of classroom time on math, language arts, science, or social studies. Because the National Curriculum is mandatory, every teacher was required to meet the deadlines for “content coverage.” Thus, the majority of the students’ time had to be invested in completing the drill assignments, and there was little or no time for any type of higher level thinking problems or novel work.

Although, as a lover of children, I tried my best to work out some plans that helped my students to feel excited about their work, I was never conscious of their role as partners in the learning environment. Part of that was what we inherited in our culture about the role of the teacher as the “wise man” or the “knowledgeable person.” In addition, we in the Middle

East still hold to the notion that we should pay our respect to the teacher and never talk until he or she allows us to do so.

With my cultural lens, I came as an “outsider” to this new culture and imposed my cultural paradigm for interpreting what was going on in this small community. But clearly I failed. I was a stranger in this classroom landscape and I started to wonder if there was a way to help me understand what in the world was going on.

A New Beginning (Framework for Understanding)

With all those frustrations, fears, and disappointments, I went to my advisor and told him the story. He suggested that I read a chapter by Bernstein (1990) about social class and pedagogic practice. As I started reading, many things immediately came to my mind, and I began to see a case for what he terms as “invisible pedagogy” in this classroom. I began to make connections between what he describes as the visibility of the learner, the dismantlement of the hierarchical rules, the flexibility of time, the relationship between work and space, and what was happening in this classroom. In reference to what I said about the “messy situation,” I started to look at the “hidden curriculum” in this case and to form new hypotheses about what I was observing in this classroom. Instead of studying a visible

pedagogy such as the integrated curriculum, I started to see that the teacher had a “theory” about enactment of the formal curriculum. From this point I started to pay attention to the role of this theory, and to the structures that this teacher used to move curriculum across time in her classroom context.

Another lens that enabled me to have a clearer picture about the life of the participants in this culture was whole language theory. This theory assumes that children construct their literacy and build their language in an active, constructive, and dynamic atmosphere (McCaslin, 1989). In addition, I had a very insightful conversation about whole language philosophy with Dr. Yetta Goodman, which helped me to look for and examine a teacher’s role and student work in this new situation for me, a whole language classroom context. Here is a passage from this conversation, which I paraphrase as follows:

Whole language is a philosophical way to look at education and is not a methodology or an approach for teaching. It is experiential-based curriculum, in which students are learning and negotiating the curriculum with the teacher. The teacher is assuming a variety of roles such as facilitator, curriculum maker, kid watcher, and developer of learning materials. In addition, she or he has the authority

(knowledge) to fulfill this role. On the other hand, students should actively be involved in the process of designing the curriculum and be responsible for their work.

Both these two perspectives, whole language and social class pedagogy, have helped me to look at the curriculum enactment theory in a social context, and to examine the ways in which this theory manifests itself at the classroom level.

How Interest Developed in This Study

These two theoretical perspectives have provided me with the cultural tools that I could use to interpret the learning discourse, the work of the participants, and social interaction in this community. Moreover, I was motivated to stay for three hours or more to observe the excitement, the joy, and the beauty of this classroom, as well as the problematic situations, and how the formal curriculum was enacted in this context. As I became gradually an “insider” in this culture, I was more interested in the “personal curriculum” of this teacher. In other words, I started over again to adjust my research design to what I had discovered in this classroom about how the teacher enacted the curriculum. Consequently, I focused my attention to

capture both the teacher's theory of enactment and the process of this enactment at classroom level.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study, then, was to examine the "curriculum theory" of an experienced first grade teacher, and explore the ways in which this theory manifested itself in a classroom setting. The special focus was on the analysis of a teacher's classroom curriculum components in order to develop a theoretical model to describe the teacher's theories about the content and curriculum enactment in her classroom context. The primary mode for conducting this study was classroom observations and in-depth teacher interviews. These interviews were developed and designed to explore major issues that had been identified in the observational fieldnotes. Formal curriculum standards, lesson plans, and reflective journals were used as additional resources to the primary data in this study.

Research Questions

The analysis of the collected data of interview transcripts, observational fieldnotes, and other resources was directed to providing an answer to the broad question: what is this teacher's curriculum theory? Within this broad question, however, the following questions were explored:

1. What is the “content theory” of this teacher?

- What images or metaphors does this teacher hold about her role in the classroom?
- What theoretical assumptions does this teacher have about her students?
- How does this teacher define a “curriculum?”
- What roles does this teacher believe that she/others play in curriculum development?
- What resources does this teacher use in planning for “curriculum events” in her classroom?

2. Using her “theory of content,” how does this teacher process the formal curriculum at the classroom level?

- What devices does this teacher use to bring the curriculum to her classroom?
- What structures does this teacher use to move curriculum across time?
- What rules govern the academic work in such an environment?
- What rhythms guide the process of curriculum events?

Overview of the Study

I divided the remainder of this dissertation into five sections: (a) review of the literature; (b) methodology; (c) the context of Sarah's curriculum; (d) curriculum enactment; and (e) summary and conclusions.

In the first two chapters, I lay out my argument about the importance of studying curriculum enactment at the classroom level and the validity of designing a qualitative model for this study. In Chapter 2 the reader will have a sense of the historical perspective about the status of research about classroom teaching and the recent developments in studying curriculum at the classroom level. In chapter 3, there is a description of the procedures and the methods that were utilized in conducting and presenting the findings of this study.

Following that, the reader will find in chapters 4 and 5 more detailed information about Sarah's curriculum context and curriculum enactment processes in her classroom. The analysis of data in chapter 4 about Sarah's work was devoted to describing the theory of content, while in chapter 5 the entire analysis was directed to developing a model about Sarah's theory of curriculum enactment.

Finally, in chapter 6 there is a summary of the findings of this study and its contributions to the literature, the pedagogical implications for prospective teachers, and the recommendations for future research about curriculum enactment.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Traditionally, most of the work about teaching and curriculum has been influenced by the scientific conceptions about human development, learning, and social engineering which flourished at the beginning of this century (see Kliebard, 1986). The scientific model was developed to prescribe, specify, and control what knowledge teachers should use at the school level (Doyle, 1990a). The underlying assumption for this line of thinking was that knowledge about teaching could be defined, classified, and formalized as distinctive units and measurable variables. These units of knowledge could be processed and observed in the actual worlds of classrooms, in the forms of desirable behaviors such as direct instructional strategies, development phases of the lesson or effective classroom practices (see Anderson et al., 1979; Good & Grouws, 1979; Hunter, 1984; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986). In a similar vein, the curriculum was conceptualized as a representation of the cultural knowledge which could be planned, processed, and evaluated through the rigorous application of the three-step formula of the linear models (see Bobbit, 1924; Taba, 1962). In both cases, it was taken for granted that by applying these standardized

methods, it could be possible to improve teaching, provide quality learning experiences, and increase student achievement across the nation. However, these proposals failed to achieve their promises because of the basic flaws in methodology, conceptions of teaching, and assumptions about classroom curriculum (see Doyle, 1977; Posner, 1998).

Recently, developments in the cognitive sciences about human learning, the increasing recognition of a teacher's personal knowledge, and new political perspectives about teaching, have all contributed to create a new era of theorizing and speculations about teaching based on a wide range of qualitative approaches. This includes using ethnographic, linguistic, or anthropological perspectives as a way to understand a teacher's work rather than test their efficiency in using a specific technique or method (see Carter & Doyle, 1995). Using this paradigm of thinking, this study was designed to explore the curriculum enactment at classroom level for an experienced first grade teacher.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a focused review of the literature about a teacher's knowledge as related to his/her work in the classroom. This includes selecting a representative sample of foundational studies in the field of effective teaching, teacher's thinking, classroom

management, pedagogical content knowledge, personal practical knowledge, and classroom knowledge. In addition, it provides a historical perspective about a variety of views about teaching and teachers' work from which I have learned and built upon my personal understanding as a learner in this long process.

Effective Teaching

The critical question for researchers who were interested in teaching effectiveness was: what is the relationship between the specific behavior of the teacher (process) and the learning of students (product)? I will discuss in this section two categories of teacher's effectiveness: (1) teacher's personal characteristics; (2) effective practices (see Doyle, 1985a).

Teacher's Personal Characteristics

The focus of this correlational type of research was determining the personal qualities that could be used as predictors for selecting the persons who have more potential to be effective teachers (see Doyle, 1985a). Rosenshine and Frust (1973) identified, in their synthesis, a number of characteristics of effective teachers that they claimed were related significantly to the measures of student growth. These characteristics included the use of a variety of materials and teaching methods by the

teacher, the use of statements that convey to students the progress of the lesson, the use of questions at multiple cognitive levels and exhibiting personal qualities such as enthusiasm, clarity, warmth feelings. It also included being task-oriented. More recently, Porter and Brophy (1988) provided similar descriptions and added that effective teachers teach their students metacognitive strategies, monitor students' understanding, and accept responsibility for their students' results.

Previous studies attempted to examine the relationship between certain personal traits, such as interest, analytical ability, and disciplinary control as measures for distinguishing effective teachers (Getzels & Jackson, 1963). As an example, the classic studies conducted by Barr in 1929 and Revans in 1960 represent this thinking (Anderson & Burns, 1989). However, in most of these studies there was no explanation offered about how a teacher's personal qualities affected student achievement in standardized testing (Doyle, 1985a).

In summary, the findings in this type of research have offered a superficial picture of teachers' effectiveness and did not provide enough evidence about how a teacher's personal qualities could influence student learning in classrooms. Dunkin and Biddle (1974) attributed the

shortcomings in this area to four reasons. First, the focus was observing discrete skills or qualities without taking into consideration the contextual aspect of teaching activities. Second, there was a lack of theoretical rationale on which these selected variables could be justified as indicators for effectiveness. Third, there was a complete reliance on using rating instruments without providing a clear definition for the concept of “effectiveness.” Finally, there was a tendency among researchers to generalize these findings across other contexts.

Effective Practices

Traditionally, the focus of many studies in the seventies and early eighties was on constructing descriptive lists of effective teaching practices which were believed to have an impact on student achievement or involvement in classroom work. Generally, the findings of this type of research suggest that effective teachers use certain classroom practices that can be signified before, during, and at the end of the lesson (Anderson et al., 1979; Good & Grouws, 1977, 1979). In these studies, the researchers used classroom observational techniques to record the behaviors of teachers and their students. Following that, researchers compared their observational records with students’ scores at the end of the year. Using correlation

procedures, researchers were able to identify the behavior which was related to student learning and report their findings in forms of categories about effective teacher's practices. The "effective teacher" in these studies was the one whose students scored higher than classes of similar students with other teachers (see Barnes, 1981). The findings of these studies suggest that effective teachers use different instructional strategies to involve students, present new material actively in small steps, ask questions that can be answered at different cognitive levels, check for students' understanding, give opportunities for individual practice and hold students accountable for their work. Good (1979), based on his review of process-product research, came up with similar descriptions of the effective teacher and confirmed the notion of "effectiveness" as something which can be generalized among teachers across the grades.

In a similar vein, Rosenshine (1986) integrated behavioral and cognitive perspectives about learning in his model "Explicit Teaching," which he believed could be applied at any level or for any subject matter. This model consists of six steps: (a) daily review; (b) presentation of new information; (c) guided-practice; (d) correction and feedback; (e) independent practice; and (f) weekly and monthly review.

Summary and Conclusions

The central focus for this line of research was to establish a direct relationship between teachers' behavior and student achievement on a standardized test. The outcomes of such research, as Gage (1978) summed up, are general statements about what teachers should do in their classroom in order to be effective teachers. However, there are ethical, technical, and practical problems associated with applying such findings in the schools. First, Fenstermacher (1978) observed that process-product research on teacher effectiveness lacked a normative theory of education. He asserted that:

. . . This research does not incorporate a conception or justification of what is ultimately worth knowing and doing, it includes no view or defense of right conduct or moral integrity, nor does it give consideration to, or argument for, the ethical obligations and reasonable expectations of persons who act in a specific historical, social, political, and economic setting" (p. 175)

Doyle (1985a) also raised another concern about the conceptual basis of this type of this research. He observed that the findings of effective teaching studies were contextually valid because they were based on actual events that occur in the classroom. However, these studies tended to give a narrow picture of the teaching processes by purposefully detecting some

variables as indicators for “effective teaching” and ignoring the others in the same situation.

According to Nuthall (1989), effective teaching research has been of little practical help to teachers because it is based on objectivity while teaching is a personal, moral, and creative endeavor. In addition, this type of research provides a false assumption about the relationship between teaching and learning, suggests that teaching is a matter of practical experiences and ignores the complexity of classrooms.

Teachers’ Thinking

A new shift was made in research about teaching when a group of researchers started to examine the mental life of teachers. According to Shavelson and Stern (1981), research on teachers’ mental processes rests on two fundamental assumptions: that teachers are rational persons who, like other professionals, carry out decisions in their work environment, and that teachers’ behaviors or actions are guided by a framework of their thoughts, judgments, and decisions. Studies in this field were typically directed towards the role of processing cognitive information in the classroom at different levels, such as judgment, decision making, and planning (Clark & Yinger, 1979).

Researchers have classified a teacher's decisions into two categories: (1) pre-planning decisions, which occur prior to teaching; and (2) interactive decisions, which the teacher makes during teaching time (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Peterson et al., 1978; Shavelson & Borko, 1979). Hunter (1979) postulated that teaching is a process in which teachers make and implement decisions before, during, and after instructions, to increase the probability of their student learning. She classified teachers' decisions in terms of subject matter, learning style, and teachers' behaviors. These assumptions about a teacher's thinking have been used by researchers as questions to explore in the following domains: (a) teachers' planning; (b) teachers' decision making; and (c) teachers' implicit theories.

Teachers' Planning

Teachers' planning refers to activities in which teachers formulate for themselves steps for carrying out instructions over a period of time, such as school year, a month, a week, a day, or a lesson (Shavelson, 1987). According to Clark and Yinger (1987), teachers plan to fulfill some personal needs, organize classroom activities, and organize their actions during teaching time.

Zahorik (1970) was the first investigator who used experimental design to examine the effect of structured planning on teachers' behaviors in the classroom. By comparing the two groups in his study, he found that those who followed a typical planned lesson were less sensitive to pupils' needs than those who have no specific plans during classroom interaction. Based on these results, Zahorik concluded that Atypical planning model - goals, activities, and evaluation . . . result in insensitivity to pupils on the part of the teacher" (p. 149). Continuing this line of inquiry, Zahorik (1975) conducted another study to examine the type of decisions that teachers make prior to the time they enter the classroom by using the following components: (1) objectives; (2) content; (3) activities; (4) materials; (5) checking for understanding; (6) evaluation; and (7) organization. It was found that teachers paid most of their attention to classroom activities and the content of the subject matter while objectives were not considered of any particular importance in their planning. These results suggest that teachers do not follow the rational model of Tyler, nor the modified model by Popham, nor the integrated model presented by Macdonald (Zahorik, 1975).

Peterson, Marx, and Clark (1978) found similar results from the group of teachers they studied. Their findings suggested that teachers are mostly

concerned in their planning about the content that they are going to teach, their instructional strategies, and student activities. In a similar vein, Yinger (1980) followed an experienced elementary teacher for a whole semester. Using extensive classroom observations and in-depth interviews, he found that his study showed similar results to those reported in previous studies. In addition, Yinger's findings suggested that experienced teachers use district objectives as guidelines and that they pay attention to their pupils' characteristics when they plan for their teaching in classrooms.

McCutcheon (1980) examined the process of planning of 12 elementary teachers who teach different grade levels. In her analysis, she described the planning as a process of taking different directions and juggling information about their students, content, policies, and norms of their schools. She added that teachers' planning is also shaped by other factors, such as their personal isolation, school administration, and local district policies. These findings were consistent with what Shavelson and Borko (1979) reported in their review of teachers' decisions in planning. More recently, in his review, Shavelson (1987) noticed the same consistency in the findings of different studies of teachers' planning and added that

teachers are more concerned about the selection of content for the purpose of building academic tasks.

Clark and Yinger (1987), who reviewed many studies about teacher planning, maintained that there is no empirical evidence for recommending any particular way of planning, for either novices or experienced teachers. However, they found that the results of such studies suggest that teachers need to have a full knowledge of their subject matter, awareness about their students' characteristics in their classrooms, consideration for the social and physical constraints in their schools, and the availability of routines for teacher actions.

Teachers' Decision-Making

The focus of research in this area was on how teachers process, select, and organize the relevant information in order to make their decisions about what they encounter while they are teaching. Shavelson and Stern (1981) identify this process as information selection. They found that teachers base their decisions on three points: (1) heuristic, which refers to personal rules that are used for classification and self-revision; (2) attribution, which is related to the estimate of students' abilities; and (3) conflict-stress, which describes the psycho-emotional process that might

affect the choice of information. Similarly, Clark and Yinger (1979) name this process as “interactive decision making,” in which teachers assess the situation by processing information, making decisions about what to do next, and guiding the actions of the students.

One of the basic questions that researchers explored was: to what extent do teachers consider other alternative plans for their actions during classroom instructions. Peterson and Clark (1978) found a difference between the two groups of teachers in their study. They named them as process-oriented or content-oriented teachers (their emphasis on the content or the process in their teaching). They found that the process-oriented teachers changed their behaviors more often than the other group during their classroom teaching. More specifically, Clark and Yinger (1979) found that teachers offer an alternative strategy only when the original plan was judged to be poor or there was less students involvement and participation. However, research found that teachers rarely change their plans, but usually “fine tune” them to adapt to the aspects of a specific situation which are unpredictable, such as students’ responses (Clark & Yinger, 1987).

In other studies, the attempt was made to find out the accuracy of teachers’ estimates of students’ aptitude, behavior problems, or learning

difficulties and how those estimates influence instructional decisions.

Shavelson and his colleagues (1979), who reviewed several studies in this area, concluded that teachers consider basically what relevant information is at hand when they make their decisions. For example, they look at previous reading scores of a student to estimate the likelihood of mastering reading skills at this new level. Shavelson and his colleagues found also that teachers' estimates were influenced by their personality, their beliefs, the nature of the students, and the type of the instructional objective.

One of the missing questions in these studies was about the rationality of teachers in making such decisions. In other words, on what personal grounds do teachers base their decisions? What things do teachers think about personally when they make a decision about curriculum, teaching, or grouping students in their classrooms? Doyle and Ponder (1977), in their exploratory study, found that teachers' decisions have three distinctive aspects. The first one is the instrumentality, which refers to clarity of purpose and procedures that are related to classroom contingencies. Secondly, the congruence, which refers to what extent teachers perceive the new procedure, and whether it can be adopted appropriately in their situation. Finally, teachers consider the ease and the practical benefits of

applying such procedure in their classrooms (cost). So teachers, in the realities of their classrooms, are more practically oriented, which means that they concentrate more on procedures and processes rather than applying theoretical or research findings (Lieberman & Miller, 1984).

Teachers' Implicit Theories

As another cluster of research on teacher's thinking, this line of inquiry rests on a basic assumption that teachers have perspectives, implicit theories, conceptual systems, or beliefs about teaching, learning, and content of subject matter (Borko et al., 1979; Clark & Yinger, 1979). Clark and Peterson (1986) classified this type of research into three major areas: research that is related to how teachers attribute students' behavior, research that is related to teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning, and research that is related to teachers' beliefs about their roles, education, or curricula.

As an example, Bussis, Chitternden, and Amarel (1976) interviewed 60 elementary teachers, who were implementing an "open education" or other "informal" programs in their schools, to examine their perceptions about curricula, children, and the learning environment. After the analysis of these interviews, they grouped their findings about teachers into categories according to priorities in curricula, perceptions of students' social needs, and

teachers' social orientation. In the first category, they found that teachers differ in their concerns about what content they wanted to teach, such as whether they emphasize facts and skills or go beyond that with enrichment activities or have the potential to do experimentation. The researchers also found that the teachers in this sample hold different perceptions about the needs or interests of their students. Teachers expressed a variety of opinions about whether they would have to consider the feelings and the needs of the students when teaching the content or would have to follow the interest of students when planning the content. In other words, this study showed that a teacher's hidden agenda, or theoretical constructs about curricula, was a key in understanding the teaching practices of those teachers in their classrooms.

Cornett (1990), based on the theoretical works of Elbaz (1981) and Clandinin (1985), examined the implicit theories of an experienced secondary school social studies teacher about instruction and instructional decisions. The researcher had spent about three months in Sue's (the teacher) classroom using non-participant observation and formal and informal interviews. The final analysis of the collected data suggested that this teacher had five primary implicit theories about her teaching and two sub-theories about her students. The first five included her beliefs about

respecting all children, treating them as individuals, using personal ways with them, making learning fun for them, and organizing teaching and learning activities. The latter two theories considered students as responsible individuals and as informed citizens. These theories played a key role in guiding her thinking and decisions about content selection and teaching methods in classroom. However, according to Cornett, this teacher has a tension between using the theory of systematic teaching and her theory of respecting children. In other words, sometimes there is a conflict between meeting the curriculum objectives of the subject matter and the students' personal concerns in the teacher's daily agenda. The author concludes that teachers need to explicitly address students' concerns by incorporating them as a legitimate part of their curriculum agenda.

Other studies of teachers' implicit theories presented in the literature include principles about teaching, beliefs about teacher's role, practical knowledge of classrooms, definitions of teacher's role, concerns, and hidden curriculum (see Clark & Peterson, 1986, p. 288).

Summary and Conclusions

Research about teacher's thinking has provided new avenues to look at teachers and their work. Researchers have been able to capture, to some

extent, the picture of teachers' beliefs, conceptions, or theoretical constructs that guide their practices in classrooms. In addition, the findings in this field have established a powerful argument against the simplistic view of teaching and teachers' work in schools. However, this type of research has been criticized morally and practically.

One of the criticisms that has been raised against some of these studies, was its inclination to use a jargon language (psychology terms) for presenting teachers' work and treating teachers as subjects in their studies (see Shulman, 1992). In addition, while this line of research had recognized teachers as rational persons, little attention has been paid to involve teachers as colleagues or partners in the studies. Shulman (1992) added that the missing point in this research was the teacher's knowledge, which he believes is an important issue to be considered when studying teachers in their classrooms.

Classroom Management

Another shift was made during the last two decades, when some researchers began to explore the complexity of teachers' work in their settings (see Jackson, 1966; Kounin, 1970; Smith & Geoffrey, 1968). From this point of view, classrooms are places where two groups of people

(teachers and students) are interacting, to presumably bring about some changes in the learning experience of every child, and help students to get along with each other as members of one community. Because these students are staying together for long periods to achieve some educational purposes, classrooms are governed by explicit and implicit rules which help to regulate the behavior of the participants towards these ends (see Doyle, 1986a; Jackson, 1966; Smith & Geoffrey, 1968).

Generally, teachers need rules and procedures to familiarize students with the demands of classroom activities as individuals or groups, and to help them maintain a more orderly and productive learning environment (Brophy, 1983; Doyle, 1985b; Emmer & Evertson, 1981; Sanford et al., 1983; Evertson & Harris, 1992). This includes planning the organization of materials in the classroom as well as the modes of learning activities which take place in that environment (Evertson et al., 1994).

Studies have indicated that effective teachers in elementary and high schools establish their classroom rules and procedures at the beginning of the year, and they spend their time in teaching, training, and monitoring students to implement these rules appropriately (Emmer et al., 1980; Evertson & Emmer, 1982). Using an experimental design, Evertson and her

colleagues (1983) studied the impact of applying classroom rules. One group of education students received training about management skills prior to the start of their teaching in the field. This group was compared with another group of student teachers (control). The results show that the trained teachers were significantly better able to describe their objectives clearly, monitor student understanding, reward appropriate behavior, stop disruptions or inappropriate behavior quickly, and manage effectively the interruptions in their classrooms.

Another important aspect of classroom management is planning for classroom activities or academic tasks as segments of classroom time, in which teachers have to make decisions about the use of time and space and clarify the work demands for participants to achieve the objectives of these activities (Gump, 1982). Doyle (1983), in his analysis, has pointed out that “academic task” could influence students involvement according to the levels of risk and ambiguity that students encounter while they are performing their work. He described four levels. One possibility is that the task has low levels of risk and ambiguity such as in the case of asking student to spell a small number of words. Another possibility is that the task has a high level of risk but a low level of ambiguity, such as asking students

to spell 60 words. A third possibility is that the task has high levels of risk and ambiguity, such as asking the student to solve a mathematical equation. Finally, the task might have a low level of risk but a high level of ambiguity such as asking students to express their personal opinions.

Doyle and Carter (1984) explored the impact of different formats of writing tasks on students' performance during seatwork time. They found that assignments with low levels of cognitive demands can be achieved easily and completed in time with minimal misunderstanding, while complex assignments are associated with problems of apprehension and are hard to be accomplished by all students within the time frame of that task.

Kounin's study (1970) suggested that in classes of effective managers, teachers minimize students' disengagement in classroom activities by providing them with a variety of learning incentives, such as noisy activities, seated activities, movement activities, and challenging problems to keep them alert and enthusiastic about doing their classroom work.

Kounin's notions of smoothness, momentum, and continuity of signal system (1970), on the other hand, had established another line of inquiry, which focused on the interactional nature of classroom events. In these studies, the researchers studied the relationship between the teacher's

managerial strategies and the quality of student participation in academic work (Arlin, 1979; Bossert, 1977; Kounin & Doyle, 1975; Kounin & Gump, 1974). The procedures for collecting data included actual observations, videotaping classroom lessons, and interviews. This was followed by a descriptive analysis to identify the subtle qualities of task formats that increase or decrease student involvement in doing their classroom assignments.

The findings of such studies suggested that the most successful lessons are those in which students received continuous information about the process of the work such as independent seatwork. The least successful lessons are those in which students receive little or discontinuous information about the progress of their work such as role-playing or playing a musical instrument (Kounin & Gump, 1974). On the other hand, the techniques which could increase continuity of involvement in an independent reading or seatwork differed from those that could be used for teacher demonstration or during recitation time (Kounin & Doyle, 1975).

Furthermore, the lesson format and poor transition between learning activities can increase the probability of misbehavior. Bossert (1977) found that teachers who wanted to be in control of the learning context (recitation

or assigning for their students the learning activity) tend to have a higher rate of desist in their classrooms. The other teachers who had less rate of desist appeared to use a variety of classroom activities such as independent reading, small group work, and independent projects.

Similarly, Arlin (1979), in his study of 50 student teachers, documented many classroom incidents of disruption and time wasting. The analysis of the data indicated that the performance of these teachers was influenced by their perception of time, using ineffective strategies for timing their transitions, or communicating incomplete instructions about the nature of student work.

Summary and Conclusions

Generally speaking, teachers need to establish rules and procedures that facilitate the students' work and give them authority or control over the events in the learning environment. However, these rules can be problematic for the teacher because they need to be flexible enough to suit different learning settings in the same classroom. In addition, they require the cooperation and willingness of students to implement them, and they demand the teacher to balance effectively both the requirements for accomplishing an

academic activity and enforcing these rules at the same time (see Doyle, 1986a).

Along similar lines, research has indicated that low ability or minority students have great difficulties in interpreting these rules and timing their behavior appropriately (Eder, 1982). In addition, students were found to be able to play the game of compliance to these rules in front of the teacher (Spencer-Hall, 1981), and they could use different strategies to engage themselves in non-academic activities with their peers during lesson time (de Voss, 1979). Scholars, however, suggest that teachers be more explicit about their rules, and enforce the consequences of breaking such rules as a way to deal with such complexities (Doyle, 1986a; Emmer & Evertson, 1981; Sanford et al., 1983). In addition, teachers need to adapt the patterns of communication interaction in their classrooms to other cultures of minority students (Erickson & Mohatt, 1982).

Pedagogical Content Knowledge

In a similar vein, the attention of a number of scholars since the last decade has been largely focused on subject matter, its peculiarities, and structures in order to develop some conceptual framework that provides teachers a better understanding of what they teach at the classroom level. In

addition, these frameworks should suggest for them some ways in which they can transform the curriculum into specific content knowledge at a certain developmental level (Shulman, 1987; Wilson et al., 1987).

Studies in this area of research were conducted to explore the ways in which student teachers learn about subject matter. On the other hand, researchers wanted to identify the instructional strategies that experienced teachers use to transform their knowledge into decisions about presenting the subject matter in a classroom setting (Ball, 1990; Grossman, 1989, Gudmundsottir, 1991; Hollingsworth, 1989; Leinhardt et al., 1991).

Gudmundsottir (1991) attempted to identify expert teachers' ways of representing subject matter. Four veteran, experienced teachers working in a high school were interviewed and observed for four months. The focus of those interviews was on the teachers' conception of subject matter, the course they were teaching, students in the class, and their approaches to transforming the content knowledge. The analysis of the data indicated that these teachers have similar models for teaching their subject matter in some way, given the fact that they are working in the same school and teaching at the same level. However, when they were asked about their models of teaching, it was obvious that each teacher conceptualized his or her model

differently. One of the two English teachers had viewed her way of teaching as moving through different circles of language skills: (1) understanding; (2) interpreting; and (3) connecting the meaning of the text. The second teacher had seen herself as moving across three layers of an onion, where the core is understanding the language, then the literal meaning, and finally the multiple representations.

The other two teachers were history teachers. The first teacher had viewed history as a piece of information that was learned by reading and personal experience, connected by interpretations, and extended as a “web” to make sense of the present events such as poverty, wars, and technology. The second teacher had presented his model of teaching American Revolution and Constitution as a “pie” which had started small and became larger and more inclusive as the growth of opportunities has been continuously increasing in the democratic society. These findings suggested that teachers’ theoretical constructs about the content affect how teachers perceive and select the content, organize the content for presentation, adapt the content to the student learning needs, and present the content and evaluate the content in their classrooms (Shulman, 1987).

In a similar vein, Ball (1990) attempted to identify the personal understanding of mathematics that teachers bring to their formal education program and how that might affect their practices in their classrooms. The participants were both elementary and secondary preservice teachers (252 teachers). The analysis of questionnaires and interviews data revealed that what basic knowledge these teachers had was a reflection of their pre-college and college experiences of mathematics. According to Ball, this “conceptual framework” is not adequate enough for learning mathematics. She suggested that educators should work with prospective teachers diligently on clarifying these misconceptions, and help them to move towards the kind of mathematical understanding that will enable them to be better teachers.

Building upon Shulman’s (1987) conception of teacher knowledge, Grossman (1989) examined the knowledge of teaching of two groups of novice English teachers who graduated with different academic backgrounds: liberal arts and professional education. Three entered teaching with a professional educational orientation, while the other three were graduates with major in other areas; English or journalism. Grossman used classroom observation and interviews to explore the teachers’ conceptions

of English, planning of the courses and teaching these courses in their classrooms. Findings suggest that both groups have differences in their conceptions about English as a school subject, their selection and organization of content for instruction, and their knowledge and beliefs about students. Moreover, she found that while all six teachers shared a common base of English, the graduates from a teacher education program referred to a “theoretical framework” when they were asked to articulate their decisions for teaching. In contrast, the second group based their decisions on personal opinions and their experiences of learning this subject at school. These findings show the critical role that subject matter preparation could play for prospective teachers in their professional life.

Summary and Conclusions

According to this line of inquiry, teachers should have a deep content knowledge of the subject matter that they teach, and a thorough understanding of how to transform this abstract knowledge into adaptable and meaningful learning experiences for their students’ needs. In addition they should have to be aware of what students bring to the learning situation such as their learning strategies and prior conceptions about the topics of the subject matter they teach (Leinhardt, Putnam, Stein, & Baxter, 1991).

Moreover, teachers should be able to evaluate the results of their work, analyze the learning situations to gain more insight and new understanding for teaching their subject matter (Shulman, 1987).

However, this paradigm of thinking about teaching provides a partial picture about what teachers are doing especially in elementary classrooms.

While thinking about the content is a central issue in the agenda of every effective teacher, there are other issues that should be considered when teaching subject matter. Teachers have to attend to other things such as grouping students, enacting classroom rules, responding to unexpected events, monitoring students' behavior, applying opening and closure procedures and using a variety of techniques to involve students in the process of learning about a specific content (Doyle, 1990b; Kounin, 1970).

In addition, this model does not capture the full picture of classroom learning which takes place in different formats such as group work, peer teaching, individual teaching and small group teaching. In fact, experienced teachers think about the flow of the day in terms of classroom activities or tasks (Doyle, 1981), and pay attention to content and their instructional strategies at the same time (Peterson & Clark, 1978; Zahorik, 1975).

Personal Practical Knowledge

Building upon the theoretical work of Dewey, the basic premise of this paradigm is that knowledge of teaching can be identified as images, rhythms, metaphors, rules, and principles, which are constructed through the continuous interaction between the teacher and what is going on around her in the world. From this point of view, teaching is not a conceptual or propositional knowledge; rather it is a situated knowledge which has arisen from experience. This entails all emotional, social, personal and traditional learning experiences that are composed and expressed in a “narrative unit” that tells the personal story of teaching (see Clandinin, 1985; Connelly & Clandinin, 1986, 1990). Accordingly, knowledge of teaching, within the narrative perspective, is subjective and derives its meaning from personal and professional history (Clandinin, 1985). It is that knowledge which is expressed as images of the teacher herself and her work in the school which directs her actions and decisions about teaching and curricula issues in classroom (Elbaz, 1983).

Elbaz (1981), using a case study, attempted to identify the practical knowledge of a high school English teacher called Sarah. Elbaz conducted a series of five informal interviews with this teacher and observed her for two

periods. In her analysis, she found that knowledge of teaching cannot be defined in terms of theoretical structures of teaching, but instead it is embodied in the actions, feelings, and values that these teachers hold unconsciously about themselves and which guide their work in the classroom. Elbaz classified her findings about Sarah's practical knowledge into two categories: first, the professional, which includes a teacher's practical knowledge about herself, subject matter, curriculum, instruction, and the milieu of schooling. In the second category, Elbaz described three levels by which Sarah uses her knowledge in a classroom context. The first level is the "rule of practice," which is a formulated statement about what to do in a specific situation. The second level is the "practical principle," which describes a higher level of thinking about what to do, based on a rationale that results from personal reflection and deliberation. The third is the "imagery level," which is, as described before, the implicit personal system of beliefs, values, and feelings that guides Sarah's practices in her classroom. In addition, Elbaz classified Sarah's orientations in using her practical knowledge as situational, personal, social, experiential, and theoretical.

Using this paradigm of thinking, Clandinin (1985) observed a first grade teacher for seven months as a full participant. She worked with the teacher as an assistant while she was making her observations. During her observation period, Clandinin shared with this teacher letters expressing her interpretations of classroom events. Following that, she interviewed her twice using an open-ended approach. The final analysis of the data about the “personal practical knowledge” of this teacher came out as an image about the classroom as “home.” This image, according to Clandinin, is an expressive language unit, in which the personal knowledge of this teacher is embodied. This knowledge was visible in this teacher’s case in her relationship with her students, her organization of the classroom, the cycle of planning, her using of the rhythms of celebrations and holidays and daily routines of her classroom. Clandinin concluded that there are two images which teachers use to convey their knowledge about teaching: the verbal and the practical. These are the personal and the professional images of self which teachers need to be aware about and use them as a tool to build their knowledge of teaching.

Building upon the works of Elbaz (1983) and Clandinin (1986), Johnston (1990) used teachers’ images to explore the curriculum decision

process of six teachers who already had been involved in developing a new school subject matter to meet the new needs in their schools. The researcher used a collaborative approach in conducting her study in which there were interviews and feedback communications between the researcher and the participants in this study. The data analysis suggested that a teacher's images about teaching, subject matter, role of herself and school, drives the decision making process about the curricula. For example, one of the participants, Eva, had an image of teaching as "meeting the needs of students." When she experienced the mismatch between her image and reality of classroom curricula, she started developing a new one. In addition, Eva's image of subject matter as "needing an allure" helped her to identify her subject as a special field which has its own identity and think about doing exciting activities which motivate student to study this subject matter. Johnston concluded that the process of decision-making about curriculum development involved two types of images: one is related to design issues, and the other is related to the political and social dimensions of the curriculum process as in Eva's case. In other words, it is not enough for teachers to hold images about the need for change as "someone who can

change the system,” but also they need to have an image about how to deal with the second dimension of curriculum process “playing the system.”

Other studies in this type of research followed similar paths in describing knowledge of teaching in terms of images, rhythms, cycles, and routines of classroom and their understanding of the social demands of the learning environment (Clandinin, 1989; Clandinin & Connelly, 1986; Connelly, Clandinin & Fang He, 1997).

Summary and Conclusions

This line of inquiry has established itself as an alternative paradigm for looking at teaching and teachers’ work as a personal and subjective knowledge. Using the narratives, rich and valuable information about the personal dimension of teachers’ experiences that affected their lives has been documented and used as cases for educating future teachers. However, this line of inquiry provides us with a one-sided view about the realities of teachers’ work. and that is that knowledge about teaching is purely a personal issue which teachers themselves experience, incorporate, develop and use over time as images, rhythms, principles, beliefs, or rules. While in reality teachers use their personal, technical, and political skills in tackling the issues of curricula, teaching, and students at the school level (Lieberman

& Miller, 1984; McCutcheon, 1980). On the other hand, research has demonstrated that personal experiences or theoretical knowledge about teaching are not sufficient by themselves to provide teachers with the practical knowledge they need in classrooms (see Ball, 1990; Grossman, 1989).

Classroom Knowledge

The previous review of literature about teaching and teacher's work has helped us to view a teacher's world from different perspectives and to have a real feeling about the complexity of his/her job in classroom. Those studies show that teachers are juggling with different things at the same time in order to be successful in their work. First, they have to set a management system that helps to establish an orderly and productive learning environment for their students (Brophy, 1983; Doyle, 1985b; Emmer & Evertson, 1981; Evertson & Harris, 1992; Sanford et al., 1983). Second, teachers need to make decisions about what content to teach, plan their teaching, make on the spot judgments and evaluate their work continuously (see Clark & Peterson, 1986; Clark & Yinger, 1979, 1987; Shavelson and Stern, 1981; Zahorik, 1975). Finally, teachers need to think about the knowledge that they want to present in terms of content, developmental level

of their students and a deep understanding of the knowledge structures about subject matter. In addition, they have to deal with students' preconceptions and be reflective of their practices (Leinhardt et al., 1991; Shulman, 1987). Along with that, teachers need to incorporate their knowledge with strong beliefs about themselves and their students and apply effective routines and practices (see Porter & Brophy, 1988; Good, 1979; Rosenshine, 1986).

However, those studies were mostly descriptive of a teacher's work, while the curriculum, which is the meeting point of teaching and learning, was not a priority in their agenda. Consequently, as Doyle (1990b) indicated, there is a need to consider another possibility for building the knowledge of teaching in terms of what is happening in classrooms. This knowledge, in other words, should evolve under a different set of assumptions that describe the work of the teacher and her students in a classroom environment. According to Doyle (1981), classroom activities or tasks, which represent different segments of classroom time, can help to reveal the underlying assumptions of a teacher and students actions and can provide an avenue to see how the curriculum can be enacted in a classroom context.

Using the concept of task, Carter and Doyle (1987) looked at a teacher's work in a classroom as accomplishing two objectives at the same time. On the one hand, the teacher needs to establish and maintain social order in her classroom, while on the other she needs to present and enact the curriculum at the classroom level. In other words, the concept of "task" provides a lens to see the work of a teacher at the managerial and instructional levels and give us clues about how the curriculum is enacted in such a learning setting (Doyle, 1986a)

In a similar vein, Doyle (1986b) observed that "content" of the curriculum is presented in the forms of a variety of academic activities in which students are required to spend time working with assignments that range from merely memorizing things to highly abstract thinking (expressing opinions). Moreover, Doyle (1992b) pointed out that the formal curriculum itself represents a theory or set of theories, by which the school communicates the desirable cultural knowledge in the forms of skills, attitudes, and experiences.

To sum up, the previous discussion has presented a plausible argument about studying curriculum in a classroom as represented by the

teacher and explored the manifestation of a teacher's theory about enacting the curriculum in this context.

Curriculum Enactment Studies

Although this is an important area for studying, little attention has been paid to examining the curriculum presentation at the classroom level. Instead the focus was on the managerial aspects of processing the formal curriculum at school level (Doyle, 1992b).

The study of curriculum, in this part of research, takes two forms. First, researchers have used "classroom task" as the focus of their analysis of curriculum enactment at the classroom level (see Doyle, 1988; Doyle & Carter, 1984). Second, the focus was on studying "curriculum script" or "schemata" of teachers that allows them to process the information they have about content, instructional strategies, and classroom rules that have been enacted in similar situations. (see Carter & Doyle, 1987). Moreover, it helps them to predict the likelihood of applying it in the present context (see Anders, 1995; Putnam, 1987).

Classroom Tasks

Doyle and Carter (1984), using Doyle's classroom task framework, observed a junior high English teacher in her three writing classes for three

months to identify the types of classroom tasks that were enacted during these lessons. The analysis of the data indicated that the task of writing was structured at two levels. At the first level, students were asked to do a major (higher thinking skills) assignment, such as writing a number of paragraphs for a comparison, a summary, or description. At the other level, students were asked to do a minor assignment (memorization level) such as writing one paragraph for reasons such as choosing the correct word or writing a paragraph for comparing two things. The researchers noticed that Ms. Dee's enactment for the curriculum at the first level was fraught with disengagement, disruption by students' questions, slowness, and difficulties in completing the assignments on time. In contrast, students, during the time of the second activity, were more on task, had few questions and were able to finish their work in the allocated time. This study demonstrated that curriculum enactment in a classroom is shaped by two factors: teacher's abilities and students' responses during the learning discourse. Moreover, students' influence could in certain cases exert pressure on the teacher to redefine the task or minimize the requirements for completing it.

In another study of two high school mathematics classes, Doyle (1988) noticed similar findings about the work production in these classes. A

high rate of work production resulted from doing familiar tasks, in which students have been offered a lot of opportunities and become familiar with the procedural part of solving a math problem, such as finding out the ratio or the percentage. While in new work, such as assignments that required understanding, the flow of activity was slow and associated with difficulties in the management of the classroom. Moreover, teachers appeared to suspend or soften the accountability system (grades) during new work, and provided students repeated opportunities to perfect their work.

Curriculum Script

Based on the theoretical assumption that teachers develop over time a “schemata” or “script” that helps them to process the curriculum at the classroom level, researchers began to examine the impact of a curriculum script” on teacher’s actions and decisions during classroom time. Putnam (1987) attempted to examine the impact of what he defines as “curriculum script” on the work of teachers in their classrooms. Six experienced teachers were individually assigned to teach a math “concept” (adding numbers of two digits) to five simulated students and one actual student. According to Putnam, a curriculum script AY is an ordered set of goals and actions for teaching a particular topic--the skills and concepts students are expected to

learn and activities and strategies for teaching this material” (p. 39). Putnam found that teachers, in both the simulated and actual learning situations, were following their own “curriculum script” of teaching such topics, rather than using a diagnostic or a remedial model, when they dealt with students who were having problems in adding these numbers. In other words, teachers were more concerned about correcting the “errors” in these situations, rather than analyzing the problems and helping the students to ***** correct these errors themselves. Moreover, teachers follow the procedures of checking students’ understanding at each stage, correcting errors as they occur and the only adjustment they made to their “curriculum script” was based on the student’s performance and their teaching model for individual students (Putnam, p. 41). These finding, according to Putnam, imply the importance of using a “curriculum script” as an effective tool for improving instruction, by helping both inservice and preservice teachers to acquire better curriculum scripts through planned learning experiences.

Building upon the work of Putnam, Anders (1995) conducted her study to examine the curriculum script of an experienced elementary teacher in a classroom context and find out how that affects the function of teaching. Anders identified four major components of what she called “Mrs. G’s

classroom script”: the content, the students, the classroom context, and the community (parents and school district). These “slots” in Mrs. G’s script, according to Anders, appeared to guide the decision process in this teacher’s classroom about teaching and learning. Furthermore, Anders found that classroom script (long experience) provides the teacher with four cognitive functions. First, it helps her to plan very effectively for classroom instruction and student learning. Second, it gives her more ability to predict the consequences of classroom events. Third, it provides her with the necessary information to interpret students’ behavior and responses in order to make her decisions about moving to other classroom activities. Finally, it causes her to reflect upon the situation, using prior information from students, other teachers, parents, principal, or relevant events.

These studies suggested two major issues for the researcher. First, the classroom tasks are a key component in studying the curriculum at classroom level because they represent the point where students and their teacher engage directly in a shared language discourse and construct jointly the curriculum through these classroom interactions. Another way is to examine the structures of the teachers’ curriculum script that allows them to order information, organize their classrooms, group their students, select the

content, use instructional strategies, enact classroom rules, and evaluate the progress of student's work in the learning setting.

To extend the discussion about “curriculum enactment” at the classroom level, assuming experienced teachers have a “curriculum script” that allows them to transform the abstract curriculum into a content that can be observed in terms of classroom tasks, then what is the theory behind this “curriculum script.” In other words, do teachers have a set of beliefs, assumptions, rules, or principles embodied in that script? In addition, if there is a theory for curriculum enactment, how do teachers use this theory to enact the curriculum? The present study is an attempt to explore these two possibilities in understanding the “curriculum enactment” at the classroom level.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The central purpose of this study was to examine what can be called “the theory of curriculum” of an experienced first grade teacher, and to explore the ways in which this theory manifests its content in a classroom setting. This chapter provides a description of the procedures that were utilized by the researcher for the design of the study, participant selection process, data collection methods, analysis procedures, establishing trustworthiness, and ethical consideration.

Research Design

Theoretical Orientation

The researcher used qualitative methodology to conduct this study. This methodology provides a variety of approaches to study participants in their natural settings, and enables the researcher to interact with them to gain insights into their experiences and the personal understanding they have from these experiences in formal and non-formal ways (see Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Merriam, 1998). Denzin and Lincoln (1998) added that “qualitative research involves the studied use and collections of empirical [data]--case study, personal experiences, life story, interview, observational,

historical, interactional, and visual texts--that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives" (p. 3). Along with that, the qualitative researcher is more concerned about presenting and building theoretical constructs of the local knowledge of the participants rather testing an existing theory (see Merriam, 1998). According to this paradigm of research, a qualitative researcher is also involved personally as the main instrument for planning and conducting all field activities, and making his or her final interpretations of the collected data, as it appears in the final report (Cresweell, 1996; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Because the aim of this study was to capture the "evolving curriculum" in classroom context, a case study design was utilized to examine in-depth a single classroom teacher's theory about "curriculum enactment," and to explore the ways in which this theory manifests its content in a classroom setting.

The Rationale for Case Study

This was a naturalistic study of a teacher's personal theorizing about curriculum and instruction. The emphasis was on understanding and learning about the "enacted curriculum" in a classroom context, rather than generalizing the finding to a broader population. Yin (1994) asserted that

“case study” is a preferred strategy “when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (p. 1). According to Stake (1995), the importance of case study is its uniqueness and the opportunity that it provides for looking closely at a particular situation, object, or person. So, the purpose of case study is to “gain in depth understanding of the meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation” (Merriam, 1998, p. 19). Additionally, a case study provides opportunities to experience the uniqueness of situations or individuals, in real contexts and to see the reality of the process through the researcher’s eyes (see Donmoyer, 1990). A single case study design, consequently, requires the researcher to spend enough time observing participants’ work and attending to their perceptions of the events that take place in their settings. This includes using direct observation, interviewing, documentation and other related resources that help the researcher to examine a particular situation, object, or individual in a specific context (see Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994).

Theoretical Framework

This investigation was based on the view that teachers are active learners who are engaged in a continuous process of constructing and reconstructing their world of meaning about teaching and learning (Miller, 1992), and that teachers are developing their own personal theories about curriculum and instruction (Ross, Cornett, & McCutcheon, 1992). The pragmatic view that has been utilized to direct this study was built upon the works of Doyle (1986b; 1990a; 1992a), Clandinin and Connelly (1986; 1992), and Connelly and Clandinin (1987; 1988; 1990). First, Doyle argues that effective teachers possess a contextual knowledge that helps them to organize the content, group students, and prepare the physical environment for processing the curriculum efficiently at the classroom level. One of the important issues that has to be examined, in this regard, is what theoretical constructs, guiding principles, or underlying assumptions affect a teacher's decision-making process about transforming the abstract curriculum into a concrete content for her students? And in what ways does she process this content at the classroom level? Second, the works of Clandinin and Connelly suggest that teachers develop over time, a classroom knowledge that is embodied in their experiential work with curriculum, teaching, and

students. This knowledge is represented as images or metaphors that they have about themselves as teachers, about their students, or about their classrooms and which is translated into reality in their teaching practices and their understanding of the rhythms and social demands in their learning environment. Consequently, paying attention to teachers' images or views about their roles, student learning, curriculum, and instruction, might provide a context for identifying the theoretical frames and personal systems that teachers use to respond to the demands of processing the curriculum at classroom level.

Based on these two theoretical frameworks, I formulated the questions of my investigation to examine what can be called the "theory of curriculum enactment" of an experienced first grade teacher and to explore the structures that this teacher uses to implement the core curriculum in her classroom context.

Participant Selection Process

Access to the Site

I had a talk with a colleague (a faculty member at the College of Education) about my project during the Fall, 1998, semester. She made contacts with different principals and was able to identify two schools for

me. I visited the first teacher in her classroom, and I introduced myself and gave her a general idea about what I was planning to do (initial stage). She said that she would be doing a thematic unit in March, and requested that if I were interested to let her know. Because the time frame of this teacher would not allow me to study in depth the context of her curriculum, I decided not to take the chance and to do my study with another teacher. Subsequently, the principal of the second school arranged for me to meet the second teacher, Sarah, who expressed her willingness to participate in this study. I met with her in her classroom, where I introduced myself and described my interest in studying her “thematic unit.” The introduction went as follows: “I am Abdulameer Mohammed. Formerly, I have been an elementary teacher working with children, in different learning settings (first through sixth grades), for more than 14 years in my country, Bahrain. I graduated with a bachelor’s degree in education from the University of Bahrain in 1986. On December 1993, I received my master’s degree in education at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Currently, I am in the doctoral program at the University of Arizona, doing my research project (dissertation) for the final graduation.” She introduced herself, in turn, and expressed her willingness to let me into her classroom to conduct my

investigation. I mentioned also to her, before I left, that I would be starting this study in the Spring Semester and in the meantime I would be making some visits to familiarize myself with what was going on in her classroom. I visited her classroom a few days during the Fall Semester to determine if Sarah's practices appeared to fit appropriately the design of the study, and to have some firsthand information about her classroom. Finally, I had a meeting with her to inform her that I would be doing my study about her "classroom curriculum." With her consent, I scheduled my time to make my observations during Spring Semester of 1999, when she was going to start her "thematic unit" about ancient Egypt.

Site of the Study

This study has been conducted in one of the elementary schools of a local school district in Tucson, Arizona. This school is in a diverse neighborhood, where different ethnic groups are present in each classroom. The school has special programs that are devoted to Hispanic language speakers and to other students with severe physical problems and learning difficulties. The researcher spent approximately three months during the study time observing a single experienced teacher in her first grade classroom and making fieldnotes about these observations. The fieldnotes

include a record about the setting, the students, the teacher, the curriculum, and work of the teacher and her students. The teacher's classroom was composed of 24 students; 10 were boys and 14 were girls. There were 15 Anglos, 5 Hispanics, 3 African-Americans, and 1 Asian American. This classroom included two handicapped girls, one of them with severe physical problems. In addition there were two handicapped boys: one with emotional problems and the other with some speech difficulties.

Participant

The participant in this study, Sarah, had been an early childhood educator for five years. She worked at another school for three years before becoming a first grade teacher in this school. Sarah spent two years at a community college and specialized later as an early childhood teacher at a state university. The principal recommended Sarah as one of the excellent teachers in this school. When I asked the principal about the reason for this decision, she said that she selected Sarah based on her knowledge that she is an articulate person and a committed teacher who does wonderful work in the classroom. She was known to use an integrative model in her teaching. My preliminary observations of this teacher during the fall semester and interactions with her provided another indicator (see Appendix A) that Sarah

displayed the characteristics of an effective and articulate teacher (see Elbaz, 1981).

Selection of the Sample

The participant of this study was selected purposely to gather the most appropriate data for the design of this study. This means I was looking for a teacher who was able to demonstrate both effectiveness in her classroom practices, and who had the ability to articulate about what she was doing. Patton (1990) has suggested that the logic of selecting fewer samples in qualitative research lies in selecting “rich information-cases” to study in depth a particular situation, event, or problem. He added that purposeful sampling allows the researcher to learn a great deal about the issues that are of central importance to the research purpose (see Patton, p. 169). Sarah was selected for this study after I approached the principal of her school. The personal characteristics of Sarah based on preliminary observations, her credentials as an excellent teacher based on principal recommendations, and her verbal ability to reflect and articulate about her teaching based on early interactions are the justifications for selecting Sarah as the main participant in this study. Consequently, Sarah’s personal characteristics have helped to

meet the requirements of “criteria-based” in selecting participants in a qualitative design (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993).

Data Collection Methods

The primary methods for collecting data in this study were classroom observations and teacher interviews. In addition, I used formal curriculum standards, lesson plans and reflective journals as additional resources to the primary data in this study.

Classroom Observations

The degree of a researcher’s involvement in the field as an observer ranges on the continuum according to the topic under investigation or the theoretical paradigm that guide the process for conducting the study. Spradley (1980) classifies those levels into five categories according to the degree of the researcher’s social interaction and participation with members in the settings. The five categories are: a non-participant observer, passive observer, moderate observer, active observer, and full participant. For the purpose of this study, I have chosen to be a passive participant or participant as observer (Merriam, 1998), recording what is happening in the classroom most of the time. There were times, however, when I found myself as a moderate participant (Spradley, 1980), one who interacted with students and

provided some type of assistance during classroom activities and computer lab times. The first goal of my classroom observations, in the early stage, was to familiarize myself with the new setting and to obtain acceptance as a member in this community so that I would not interrupt the ordinary life of the classroom. Second, as Bogdan and Biklen (1992) suggested, the design of a qualitative case study requires that the researcher begins with a broad picture in his/her mind in the early phases of fieldwork and then gradually focuses the purpose of the study according to these observations.

Furthermore, the researcher continues to refine the design until he or she becomes more specific about pertinent issues such as the setting, who to interview, how to gain access and what procedures to follow for collecting data in a systematic way (see Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Creswell, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Building upon these suggestions, I went through the following steps in conducting this study:

- I started with a broad perspective about what I was going to do, and my early visits suggested that I was going to focus on studying the “integrated curriculum” in this classroom (Fall Semester, 1998).

- In my early visits, during the Spring Semester, I was not sure where to go from that point because the teacher was teaching in a different way from what I used to teach back home (What is going on there?)
- Through a short conversation with my adviser, I was helped to look from a different perspective at what was going on in this classroom, and I began to formulate new hypotheses and questions to start over again (How did I begin to understand the new situation?)
- The design of this study emerged as I immersed myself in this new culture and took the role of learner as well as investigator (How did I get interested in doing this study?).

This approach is supported in doing qualitative studies because it helps to reduce a researcher's personal biases and the influences of a predetermined research plan. It also gives a researcher the opportunity to be more open and flexible and to adjust his or her initial design to any new developments in the field (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Creswell, 1998; Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

Purposes of Classroom Observation

Classroom observations were used in this study for three major purposes. First, in the early stages, the researcher wanted to become

acquainted with and to understand what was going on in this learning culture. Second, the researcher started to make descriptive accounts of the setting, participants and their actions, and curriculum events during each classroom day. Finally, the researcher, based on these observational fieldnotes, started to develop new questions about the enacted curriculum, and to explore the teacher's thoughts about related issues in further interviews.

Types of Classroom Observation

The researcher has used three strategies of observation during the process of collecting data in this study. The first strategy was the use of a wide-angle (see Spradley, 1980) observation to gather descriptive information about the physical structure of the learning setting, participants and their behavior and learning activities (see also Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The second strategy that the researcher used was a narrow-angle observation to pay close attention to the critical components of classroom curriculum such as songs, stories, group work and student work. Finally, the researcher used a field analysis strategy in which he made notes about unfamiliar issues for him such as student talk, student movement, and other related questions

about the teacher's role, learning process, and learning environment. These questions were later refined and used for further interviews.

Observation Process

I started to visit the classroom on January 11th to make my first observations on a daily basis, and I spent most of the day in the classroom to gain an understanding of what was going on. So most of my observational notes were descriptions of what was happening in this classroom. In addition, I raised a lot of questions in my notes about students' activities, the teacher's role and classroom management in this learning environment. Gradually, as I become an insider in this culture, I began to focus my observations on the components of classroom curriculum, the daily agenda of the classroom, classroom activities and the learning culture in this classroom. Furthermore, I kept journals about classroom events, movement patterns, the teacher's positions, interaction between students and the teacher and the work of students so that later I could access them easily for the final analysis (see Merriam, 1998). These observational notes, in addition, have provided me with a substance to examine, in subsequent interviews, the salient events such as student movement, student's conversations, group work and learning product. This period of observation

extended from January 28th to March 18th. However, these observations were not on a daily basis or at the same time of the day. I did that for two reasons. First, I wanted to reduce the influence of this new teacher and this new culture on my written observations. Second, I wanted to reduce the influence of my presence on any of teacher's actions or behavior. Therefore, I did not make my classroom visits as a regular routine. According to Fetterman (1989), this approach provides more validity for ethnographic observations in the field. In addition, I found that the teacher set up this learning environment in a way that helped her and the students to work together according to the daily agenda, irrespective of who was visiting their room (guest speakers, principal, staff, or myself). The other thing I found throughout my observations was that the classroom structure was stable so that it became easier for me, as a new insider in this culture, to predict the course of events at any time of the classroom day. Finally, my last visits to the classroom confirmed my early assumptions about the classroom structure and how curriculum events evolve in this classroom. I made three visits on the 25th, 26th, and 31st of March and came to the following conclusions:

- The teacher is sequencing the curriculum through the same structures (songs, stories, classroom work)

- The teacher is paying attention to the time so she is placing each activity according to students' aptitudes in different segments of the day (early morning, middle of the day, and the end of the day).
- The teacher is helping students to anticipate the running of the day of this classroom by following the same agenda most of the time, except when they have computer lab (more details in the next section)
- The teacher is using the same classroom rules, routines, and procedures in teaching every "thematic unit."
- The teacher is using "children's literature" as the core classroom curriculum while other activities such as mathematics, science, social studies or language arts are embodied in this core.

In summary, I conducted three types of observations to study the evolving curriculum in this classroom. The first was the descriptive observational phase, in which I was trying to make sense of the new learning environment, and formulating questions about learning process, student work, and the social structure of classroom activities for exploration. The second phase was the analytical, in which I was focusing my attention on the components of classroom curriculum and trying to understand the structure of these activities, such as songs, stories, and student work and to prepare

further questions about each of these elements for the next interviews.

Finally I did the wrap up phase, to make some conclusions about the general features of Sarah's classroom curriculum.

In-Depth Interviewing

Patton (1990) categorized qualitative interviewing into three types: (1) the informal conversation interview (questions on the spot); (2) the general guide interview approach (following a developed outline for some topics or issues); and (3) the standardized open-ended interview (asking more than one respondent the same questions). In the field, I used both the informal conversations and general guide approaches. I tried as much as possible to make this process, as Burgess (1984) suggested, a personal conversation, so the participant would feel comfortable and not restricted by any formalities in her responses to my questions. Following Spradley's (1979) and Burgers' (1984) recommendations about the importance of involving the informant in the process, and establishing a good relationship with her, I did the following:

- I explained clearly the purpose of this study, and made her aware of where each interview was going.

- _ During the process I frequently informed the participant about what I was going to do with this project, and encouraged her to provide her personal perspective.
- _ My approach, in the interview process, utilized a variety of descriptive, structural, and contrast questions, to elicit more information about the critical issues, main themes, and unfamiliar incidents.

Additionally, in designing my interview questions I followed Rubin and Rubin's model (1995). They suggested using three types of questions. First, the researcher has to start with the main question to get the facts and essential information about important topics or critical issues in the study. Second, the researcher uses probing questions to elicit more information or examples from the participant, about these topics or issues. Finally, the researcher uses follow-up questions to encourage the participant to give more in depth information about a specific part of the conversation or important issue in the study.

The value of using the interviewing technique is to explore what Bogdan and Biklen (1992) referred to as "insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world" (p. 96). Patton (1990) suggested that the purpose of interviewing is to answer questions or have access to information that cannot

be obtained by direct observations, such as thoughts, beliefs, or feelings. With this in my mind, I encouraged the teacher to speak out in her own words, and express her opinions freely about the topics of the conversation.

The Interviewing Process

The main purpose of the interviewing process was to gain access to this teacher's personal theory about curriculum enactment and how she processed the curriculum in her context as whole language teacher. In doing so, I conducted five interviews (see Appendix B) with Sarah to capture her thinking about curriculum, teaching, student learning, and the learning environment. Each interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The topics of these interviews, as I mentioned before, emerged as themes or questions that needed to be explored with the teacher. Consequently the questions were mostly directed to provide an avenue for getting access to the details of the classroom day (daily agenda), the classroom curriculum components (stories, songs, classroom work), and the learning culture in this classroom (physical and social structures, roles, activities, rules and procedures). In Table 1 the topics that were explored in the interviewing process.

Table 1**Interviewing Process**

Topic	Interview
Professional history	1
Teaching, Curriculum/Content	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
The learning process	2, 3
Classroom day	2, 3
Learning environment	2, 3, 4
Classroom activity	2, 3
Student work	3
Thematic work	5

Channels of Communication

After I had been in the field for a month, I started to develop the “interview protocol,” based on my observational fieldnotes, to guide the interviewing process (what type of questions to be asked and what topic we should talk about in an open-ended format). As the next step, I began to compose a letter to the teacher before each interview expressing my

initial thoughts and impressions about what was going on in this classroom, and giving her some ideas about the type of questions that she was going to answer (see Appendix C).

Interview Fieldnotes

Following each interview I listened to the recordings (initial analysis) and wrote up a journal expressing my personal feelings and thoughts about the content of the interview and what occurred during the interview. Next, I listened to each tape and made my initial analysis in my fieldnotes and kept them for further analysis. When I received the transcription of these interviews (by a professional transcriber), I repeated this process to gain greater understanding of the data, and made my final conclusions about the general themes and their categories and the relationships between them (more details in the next section).

Supplementary Resources

Other resources, such as lesson plans, reflective journals, formal curriculum standards and my letters to Sarah, were used in conjunction with the interview transcripts and observational fieldnotes. The value of using these resources was to have more information about the teacher's thinking through studying materials of her work. The following materials were

collected, in the field, from the teacher: (1) copies of her daily lesson planning; (2) copies of core curriculum standards; and (3) three personal journals that I asked the teacher to keep (See Appendix D). In addition, I made copies of the letters that I sent to Sarah during the study. Following that, I examined their content and wrote some initial notes about each, in my field notes, for future analysis.

Analysis Procedures

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) described the analysis of data as the process which “involves working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned and deciding what you will tell others” (p. 153). Similarly, Miles and Huberman (1994) defined the term “data reduction” as the process of selecting, focusing, and simplifying raw data in a way that helps to make sense of this information, as it appears in the final report. According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993) the data analysis can be viewed as taking the picture of the “whole phenomena” apart and reassembling it again in a different and new way.

The analysis process started early in the field (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). At this level, I made my first speculations, comments, thoughts and

questions (initial analysis) about what I had observed or learned from the fieldnotes and classroom observations which resulted in the emergence of early themes. Following the completion of my work in the field, I started an “inductive analysis” phase (Patton, 1990) to examine the entire data. This include organizing the data, generating categories, looking for themes and patterns, and simplifying the data in certain forms, for the final interpretations and conclusions (see Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Rossman & Rallis, 1997). Furthermore, I described the context of my study by giving full details about the setting, the participants, and their different activities (see Creswell, 1998; Yin, 1994).

Data Analysis

The analysis activity in this study was carried out to organize and summarize findings about the data collected in the observational fieldnotes, interview transcripts, and other documents. This includes conducting three types of analysis after leaving the field: (a) analysis of observational fieldnotes; (b) analysis of the transcripts of the teacher’s interviews; and (c) analysis summary about the documents of the teacher’s work.

Observational Fieldnotes Analyses

In the early stages, I started recording my observations in the forms of short notes, questions, summaries of events, hunches, and some initial speculations about what was going on in this classroom. Following that, I expanded these observations into a chronological account (see Patton, 1990; Spradley, 1979) for future analysis.

As I became an insider in this “new culture,” I started to focus on analyzing the components of the classroom curriculum and the learning culture in this classroom. I gave descriptions about the setting (classroom), the students, the teacher, and their activities in different segments of classroom curriculum, such as stories, songs, academic work, and outside activities (physical play and computer lab).

Later, I organized my observational record by dividing it into smaller units (112 observations) that each describes a specific event about curriculum, classroom management, teaching, social interactions, students’ talk, and students’ movement. At the end of each of these observations, I provided a short analysis about what takes place in each of these events. Following that, I started to code these units by giving names to what the data suggested. For example, in observation #1, I talked about the “snake

technique” which the teacher usually uses when she wants her students to leave the room and to go to the computer lab or an outside activity. I categorized this as “classroom management.” As another example, in observation #65, I talked about what I have observed in the computer lab. So, in this case there were different events that occurred at the same time, such as teaching the curriculum and enacting classroom rules by the teacher and the students. I categorized them as classroom rules, classroom procedures, teacher’s instructions, and lab activity.

Finally, I grouped all these observational categories under four headings: (1) classroom management; (2) curriculum; (3) teaching and learning; and (4) learning environment.

Analysis of Interview Transcripts

First, I started listening to each interview and jotting down my initial responses in the forms of journal entries, questions, short analyses of critical issues, such as the teacher’s personal views of teaching, student learning, curriculum and content, and learning environment.

After I left the field, I listened again to each interview and made a summary of the content and selected some statements to develop my early categories about the teacher’s interview. The early analysis of this data

helped me to identify some of the major themes, such as the teacher's views of herself and her students, the daily agenda, the classroom curriculum, planning the content, teaching, and curriculum development.

As I had the taped interviews and their transcripts back from the professional transcriber, I repeated the process to analyze the data in depth. I read the entire data in the transcripts first, in order to get an overview. The second time I read each transcript with the intention of determining the general themes in the data. Following that, I started coding the data and putting them in larger groups. For example, I put the teacher's educational background, her images of teaching, the influential experiences, and the best teacher into one group. I named this large group "professional history."

Finally, I read each interview and highlighted the teacher's statements of beliefs, assumptions, or views about teaching, student learning, students, classroom curriculum, and other related issues. I went through the five interviews and separated these pieces of data, under the name of "theoretical constructs." The last job of my analysis was going through the entire data in each interview and categorized them according to the content of the data such as songs, stories, daily agenda, planning, teaching, etc. Following that I cut the data into pieces (categories) to identify the new patterns or themes, and

determine the relationship between these themes and the early ones. In addition, I sorted them out and prepared them for (a) my final analysis and interpretations and (b) to provide answers for the main research questions in this study.

Analysis of Other Documents

I examined four other type of documents: copies of the teacher's planning, the core curriculum standards, the teacher's personal journals, and copies of my letters to Sarah. I started with the documents of the teacher's planning. I categorized teacher's planning into three groups; daily, weekly, and long term planning and provided a short analysis for each type in the field entry.

As for the journals, I grouped her personal opinions about her profession into three categories: professional history, images of teaching and learning, and her empathy for teaching. Then I conducted a brief discussion of each of these categories. I wrote also a short paragraph about the role of the core curriculum agenda (standards) in the planning process of enacting the curriculum at the classroom level.

The observational data, in the letters, were organized into small units of observation and analyzed as categories about the components of

curriculum, learning process, learning environment, and the teacher's personality.

Establishing Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, the researcher is the main instrument, so there is a large potential for the influences of his or her own preconceptions of how he or she receives or interprets the information. On the other hand, the presence of the researcher in the field might also influence the informant's behavior and actions (see Maxwell, 1996). The main concern for the novice researcher here was whether the findings represented what really happens in reality. Maxwell calls these internal threats to validity (internal validity) in qualitative design, and suggests applying stricter rules, such as searching for negative cases, triangulation, member check, and providing rich data.

Wolcott (1990) advises new researchers to use some procedures to enhance their work, such as listening more to informants, writing accurately what happens, starting early in their writing, and seeking feedback during the process. Other authors suggest similar strategies for increasing the credibility of research findings (see Creswell, 1996; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990).

As for reliability, Merriam (1998) argues that the uniqueness of qualitative studies and their specific contexts make it hard to replicate such

findings. Additionally, the intention, in qualitative research, is to generate full descriptions and interpretations of the cases rather than to generalize to other contexts, so the concept of external validity is not applicable here.

However, qualitative researchers, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed, can apply alternative standards to enhance the quality of their work. They offer four quality standards as follows: (1) credibility, (2) transferability, (3) dependability, and (4) confirmability. In other words, does this study represent what has happened? Does this study have full descriptions? Can another person examine/audit the quality of process of collecting data, data, interpretations, and findings in this study? Or does the researcher put his/her study on trial to be judged by an outside expert?

To increase the quality of my work, I followed the suggestions offered by Lincoln and Guba (1985), Wolcott (1990), Maxwell (1996), and Merriam (1998):

- I used more than one instrument in collecting my data in this study: direct observation and in-depth interviewing. In addition I gathered other related information about Sarah's work and her classroom, using lesson planning, reflective journals, and personal conversations.

- _ I spent a relatively long period (three months) in Sarah's classroom to familiarize myself with the culture, redesign my study, compile information about the participants and their work and write up journals and notes about what was going on in this classroom. In addition I used these observational notes as a basis for examination in subsequent interviews of salient issues such as student movement, students' talk, group work, and learning product.
- _ I started writing from the beginning about my thoughts and initial analyses of what I had observed. Later, I provided a full description of Sarah's classroom and the process of enacting the curriculum in this context.
- _ I involved the participant early in the process by informing her about the study's objectives, the nature of my work in her classroom and sharing with her the data as frequently as possible (see Appendix E).
- _ Later, I asked her to read the findings of this study and my final conclusions and provide me with her comments and critiques about this section of the study.

- _ I saw my advisor frequently during the time of this study and had intensive meetings with him to examine the quality of my work and to provide me with his feedback for further improvement.
- _ I explicitly clarified my own background as a teacher (see Methodology) and talked about the paradigm of my present thinking and the theoretical framework that I utilized for completing this study.

Ethical Considerations

In qualitative research, the researcher is more involved in the personal lives of his/her informants (see Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) point out that there are two issues involved in this situation: informed consent and the protection of participants. They suggest that the researcher should protect the identity of the participants, treat them with respect and seek their cooperation, negotiate with them the terms of the agreement, and tell them all the facts about what he/she is reporting.

Based on these recommendations and the “ethical principles” suggested by Spradley (1980), I used the following procedures during my work in the field:

- _ I approached Sarah in the Fall Semester of 1998 and provided her with all the information she asked about my project.

- _ I protected the teacher's identity by naming her Sarah and omitting the name of her school.
- _ I communicated with her through personal letters to inform her about my thoughts and impressions concerning her classroom and the topics that we were going to discuss in each interview.
- _ I developed, with Sarah, a collegial relationship based on respect, trust, and understanding of our roles in the process.
- _ I shared with Sarah the data and my early analysis in the field, and kept communicating with her through personal meetings, to inform her about the developments in my study.
- _ I asked for her feedback about the findings of this study and emphasized to her that her input was an essential part of validating the claims of this study.

Summary

This study was conducted to examine a single teacher's personal theorizing about the "curriculum enactment" at the classroom level. The primary methods for collecting data in this study were classroom observations and teacher interviews. In addition, formal curriculum standards, lesson plans and reflective journals were utilized to validate the

original data in this study. The analysis of the data was carried out at two levels. First, I made my “initial analysis” of what I have observed in the classroom during the time of the study. Finally, I started an “inductive analysis” phase, in which I organized the data for further analysis to draw my final interpretations and conclusions.

CHAPTER 4

THE CONTEXT OF SARAH'S CURRICULUM

The purpose of this chapter is to provide full descriptions of the context of Sarah's classroom curriculum and the teacher's beliefs that underlie the format of this context. The first section of this chapter describes five components of Sarah's classroom curriculum: (1) the physical layout; (2) the daily agenda; (3) the lesson structure; (4) the managerial system; and (5) the curriculum. In the second section, the focus will be on portraying Sarah's personality as a teacher and her work as curriculum maker.

Curricular Forms

The Physical Layout

The classroom has a rectangular shape with three solid walls. On the east side of the class a large window runs across the whole wall which is divided into four parts. Above the entrance door is the national flag, and beside it there is a small cabinet for students' bags. Round tables, chairs, books, learning materials, and other facilities are organized around the room. Sarah elaborated about this philosophy in part during the second interview:

It's fun to do that. It is fun to set up and think about the flow of children's movement, their ease of movement, having a quiet space... We've got round tables on purpose. I'd prefer to have all round tables. It helps make more, it doesn't allow you to aggregate at tables. That rectangular table they'll isolate into twos and threes, where that round table it's almost impossible to do that, you're forced to socializing more. The tables are specific heights for these children. The chairs are for their size.

The Classroom Entrance

On the door of Sarah's classroom, there is a symbol which represents the class name "bobcat." Beside it on the right there is a newsletter about classroom events and activities. On the left side of the door there are three posters which have statements about life skills, bobcat's classroom, and the philosophy of this classroom as follows:

Life Skills

Integrating, initiative, flexibility, organization, sense of humour, common sense, problem solving, responsibility, patience, friendship, curiosity, co-operation, caring, and courage.

The Bobcat Class

Welcome to our room
Join our family as we learn
Sing a song
Read a story
Solve a problem
You take a turn
Be an author
Paint a view
Share kind words

You try it too!
Join our journey
Good friends ever share
Our precious time

Our Beliefs

In this classroom we believe that learning is a life long adventure
We believe in facing each day with minds open to knowledge and open to love.
We believe in the freedom to wonder, to ask, to explore, to imagine, to create.
We believe that success means doing our best, and feeling proud of our effort.
We believe that everyone of (us) has special talents, and that talents of each of us help all of us.
We believe in ourselves, in each other in this classroom.

The Front Side of the Classroom

In the front of the room, there is a large green board. Above this board five small sheets of paper hang against the wall. They are the rules of the classroom. They are coloured in green, yellow, red, and blue to remind students about the content of each rule. In addition they are drawn and explained by words. These rules are as follows:

1. Be an active listener
 - Eyes on speaker
 - Body still
 - Ears “turn on”
 - Mouth quiet
2. Respect other’s personal space
3. Be good support buddy
4. Speak with a soft & kind voice

5. Give me five
 - Eyes on the speaker
 - Mouth quiet
 - Body still
 - Hands free
 - Listen
6. Three before me
 - Think back to yourself
 - Ask a support buddy
 - Then ask an adult

Below these rules are posted some pictures of boys and girls from different countries with their national greetings. On the other side of the wall there are pictures of students and a big yellow sheet of paper with a brainstorming activity. Below, there is a green board and four shelves. On one side there is one shelf that contains reading books (Basal) and learning materials, and next to it there is another cabinet for mathematical materials (numbers and coins). On the other side of the board there are two shelves, which hold most of classroom supplies such as papers, pencils, crayons, folders, sharpener tool, rulers, learning logs, and other materials. The space in between these four shelves is used for story telling, circle time, sharing clubs, singing songs, and reading books. The listening centre is in the classroom library. The classroom library has four shelves. Two of them are against the front wall, and the other two are against the east side of the classroom. In this space there are variety of books, geographic

encyclopaedia, tape recording machines, and a small bed with cushions to use when students are reading or listening to taped materials (stories, information, etc.)

The Backside of the Classroom

At the back of the classroom, there is storage for classroom materials, the teacher's office, a cabinet full of books (stories, learning books, resources, etc.), a wash basin, and a big plastic trash can. There is also a long bench that is used for doing artwork. On the wall there is a big sheet of coloured paper with a drawing about the zoo. Below there is a rectangular table with six small chairs. Usually the teacher uses this table for teaching some children (with learning problems) specific mathematical or reading skills during the early part of the day while the rest of students are working on their individual assignments.

The East Side of the Classroom

Next to the entrance door there are two rectangular boards. The teacher uses one of them to display each day's agenda. In addition, she is using it to brainstorm ideas about certain topics, writing down instructions about how to do a specific activity, or teaching some mathematical or reading skills. Below this board is a big basket that is used to contain

students' jackets, gloves, and small bags. Next, there are two Macintosh computers, which are used by students during their "selective-time activity." The teacher's office is mostly invisible with all the materials around it, such as boxes, bulletin boards, and the two computers. When I asked Sarah about the reason, in the second interview, she said:

Well the important part of the room to me is the part for the kids and it's supposed to be set up as their room. They utilize everything in the room. They get everything in the room. They need room to build blocks where they can leave that structure up... They need room where they can write. They need a quiet space. They need room to be messy.

In sum, the physical learning environment in this classroom (see Figure 1) emphasizes social interaction, free movement of students,

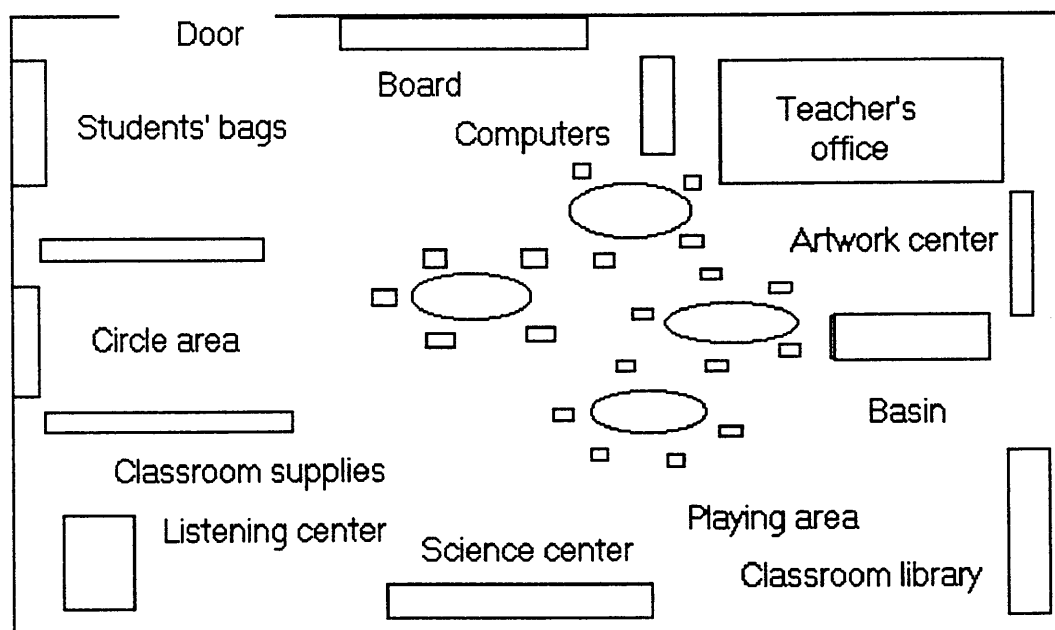


Figure 1. Sarah's Classroom

displaying students' work, availability of learning resources, and flexibility in arranging and rearranging the classroom.

The Daily Agenda

The teacher writes the daily agenda on the board everyday. It is an announcement about the flow of classroom events and the expected learning activities that will occur during the classroom day.

Curriculum Events

Curriculum events in this classroom include occasions during which students participate as individuals, a whole class, or as groups in learning about or responding to a specific content such as songs, stories, and academic tasks (see Doyle, 1992a). The daily agenda provides a variety of opportunities for students as individuals or groups to experience the content of different disciplines during the classroom day. For example, students might listen to a story in one segment and then do science or math in another one. The variety of activities and their format (whole class or groups) provides a context to enact the curriculum at different rates and levels during the classroom day (see Table 2).

Table 2**Sarah's Classroom Agenda**

Time	Event	Structure
8:00	Silent Reading (DEAR)	Group Work
8:20	Story	Whole Classroom
8:30	Lit Pick (literature)	Group Work
9:15	Circle (pledge, date, math)	Group Work
9:55	Story	Whole Classroom
10:00	Journals or Math/Art Invest	Group Work
11:55	Story (quiet zone)	Whole Classroom
12:30	Thematic Work (center time)	Group Work

Between these activities songs are used to facilitate the movement from one activity to another, and help students to be prepared mentally and socially for the next activity.

(DEAR) silent reading. “DEAR” means that students drop everything and read. In this event, each group of students is given a stack of books. The students flip pages and read silently. The goal for structuring this curriculum event is, as the teacher explained, to give each child the opportunity to be immersed in the culture of learning (reading and dealing with print) because not every child in this classroom has the chance to do

that at home. In addition, it works as a “warm up” activity that helps students be ready for the next activity.

Story. Sarah read stories for her students at different times and for different purposes during the day (see the lesson structure). The teacher uses a variety of books for reading and addressing different issues in the classroom. The teacher might read a story about a character that they celebrate (Martin Luther King), a story related to their daily experience (friendship), or a story that tells them information about the thematic unit of study (ancient Egypt). Stories are also used at the beginning of the day as preparatory stage before students go to the lit pick segment (as a preparatory stage), during snack time as an enrichment activity, as a relaxing activity during the quiet zone period, and as a finishing-up activity before students go home.

Lit Pick (independent practice). In this segment of time (or curriculum event), students are assigned to groups according to their personal needs. The activities include mastering some skills in writing, adding numbers, or drawing patterns. It is similar to seatwork in the traditional classroom. The teacher at the same time supervises students with special learning needs, and provides them some guided readings.

Sometimes during the week, the teacher uses this segment of time to make an individual assessment for the whole class in reading (miscue analysis), while classroom groups are working on their own.

Circle. Circle time is allocated for activities that are not used on a daily basis in the agenda, such as teaching some math concepts, giving the pledge, or reading the dates. The teacher stopped some of these activities during the observation period because she felt that most students have acquired these basic skills (reading the date, counting, etc.) The pledge was done frequently at the beginning of this study. It is a part of giving respect to a symbol of unity or community, in which the teacher and students do it together and they sing the national anthem.

Journals/math or art investigation. In the journal segment, the teacher provides students with opportunities to experience mathematics or arts as groups in games, painting, or doing artwork to develop later into books. It is also a time allocated for students' writings about science, social studies, and language arts projects.

Thematic work. In the thematic work segment, the students are doing a variety of activities related to the theme of the study. Group work,

for example, includes studying mathematical shapes, writing letters to characters of story, or painting and decorating pictures of the queen.

Sharing Club. Sharing club is an occasion when the curriculum is enacted as a “conversation” and students are working as a “community of learners” who have to apply the “work rules” in such “event.” For example, in each group one student is allowed to share with others something personal such a toy, a story, or a game and talk about it for 3-5 minutes while other students listen to him or her and never interrupt until the speaker finishes the presentation. After that, the other students could ask a few questions related to what was said, and then another student will take a turn.

How Does the Day Go in Sarah’s Classroom?

Sarah starts preparing everything she needs before the arrival of the students. At 7:55 a.m. When most students enter and take their seats in their groups, the first event takes place. “DEAR” is the first segment of the curriculum, when students need to drop everything they have and do a silent reading for about 20 minutes. In this segment of classroom day, students are flipping pages, looking at pictures, or reading by themselves.

Following that the students form a circle and become close to the teacher. The teacher sits on the reading chair. At this point of time, she takes attendance, checks who has money for lunch or who brought lunch with them, and gives directions for the next activity. Two students, male and female, usually take the attendance record to the school office. After that, students themselves disperse and form their groups to do lit pick activities. Usually the teacher assigns them based on their academic needs. These are listening group, reading group, and teacher group (guided reading/ assessment). This activity lasts for 30 minutes.

Following that, the teacher sends a signal by singing a song. The students automatically dismantle their groups, clean up their stuff, put everything back in place, and head to the circle area and sing with the teacher. The teacher usually uses the “snake” technique to help her students leave the classroom safely. One of the students is the head of the snake (the leader at the front) and the other is the tail of the snake (the leader at the back). The first student holds the door open for his/her classmates until they all leave the classroom. Similarly, the other student holds the door for the playground area.

Students, during playground time, have the options to do their favorite games such as running around, climbing, or forming chasing groups. They also can play with other friends from other classes at this time. When it is time to leave the playing area, Sarah sends them a signal by calling “bobcat students,” and the students immediately come running towards her to line up against the fence. Now it is time for students to use the restroom; the teacher leads them out of the playground and asks them to keep quiet and instructs them about good attitudes for using the restroom. The restroom is close to the bobcat classroom, so she stands outside waiting for them.

When students are done with the restroom, they have to line up against the wall of their classroom, sing a song with their teacher, and wait for others.

When the students again enter their classroom they have snack time (cookies, biscuits, or muffins). Usually the teacher assigns one girl and a boy to distribute the snack, and other students have to wait until everybody is settled down and then start to have their snack. During this time, the teacher reads a story, and gives her instructions after that for the next major activity, which might be writing a letter, reading a book, doing math, exploring science, or having social studies. This activity lasts about one hour and fifteen minutes. Around 11:00 a.m., students form their circle and

do the same routine for leaving the room. On their way to the cafeteria, the teacher reminds them about her expectations for bobcat students, monitors their movements, and asks any student to go back of the line if he or she starts to disrupt the order.

When she finishes with them, she comes back with her lunch to the classroom and has a little chat with her neighbor teacher. After they are done with their lunch, student usually go to the playground to chat with their classmates, play with their friends, and wait until their teacher calls them again. At 11:55 a.m., Sarah leaves the classroom and ask the “bobcat classroom” to come together for going back again to the classroom.

When students enter the classroom, they are allowed to lay down on the rug, have a little rest and relax while they listen to the teacher reading them a chapter from a book (a story) in a very quiet atmosphere. This is the quiet zone activity, and it lasts about 15 minutes. Following that, Sarah gives them some tips for the next activity and asks them to form their groups quietly. Students are usually assigned to different work groups such as listening group, writing group, game group, or math group. The emphasis in these activities is to relate what students are learning to the thematic unit they are studying at this time (ancient Egypt). When the time is about to

end, the teacher reminds students about their responsibility for cleaning up their tables, putting back their chairs, and placing their activities in the appropriate box (finished and unfinished work). They gather together again in circle area to listen to a story before they leave for home. Now it is time for students to prepare themselves for leaving the classroom, and when they hear the bell they proceed gently towards the outside gate to their parents or to ride the bus for home.

The Lesson Structure

Sarah's role during the classroom day ranges from a totally direct-teaching person, such as in the computer lab segment, to a participant or co-learner working with her students during the game activity time. According to my observational record, there are three typical lesson structures in Sarah's classroom: (a) direct-teaching lesson; (b) interactive-teaching lesson; and (c) student-directed lesson.

Direct-Teaching Lesson Event

In this event, the teacher plays a more direct role in teaching new concepts or basic skills in mathematics and reading. Sarah also uses direct teaching when there is a need for instructing the whole class about their

work in art or computer lessons. She described her role in the fourth interview:

There are times when it's more effective for me to be a direct instructor. Like in the computer lab. Or when I'm introducing a totally new concept, I'm the demonstrator, I'm modeling whatever it might be.

Within this structure, the teacher plays the role of monitor, guide, supporter, and counselor to facilitate the work of the whole class and help her students accomplish the goal of the learning activity. Students are, on the other hand, limited in their movement and their talk. They have to stay active listeners until the teacher finishes her teaching time. Here are my notes concerning an art lesson:

The teacher was sitting on the chair showing some colored pictures done by some students about their thematic unit "ancient Egypt." Some students were paying attention and some were not. The teacher then instructed them about what they have to do. This includes how to make the shape, color it, and cut in the right way. While the teacher was explaining, many of the students raised their hands to ask questions, but she ignored them and continued her job. When she was done, she gave her students the time for asking their questions. These questions were mostly about the steps of their work and what they would have to use. The teacher then asked each pair to take a poster paper (which had a shape similar to ancient Egypt) and to go to their tables to do their work (this was part of the peer project about ancient Egypt). The teacher was helping at the back to laminate the pictures of some students who finished their work (they used it later for writing up their imaginative journey to Egypt). There were also the teacher aides and another girl helping the teacher in this event. Students started to move around the classroom to pick up their

supplies. After a while some students were still chatting and some were working. The teacher was monitoring their work and their behaviors, and providing others with feedback about their progress. The level of noise was so high, so the teacher asked the whole class to work quietly. Students' talk became less loud, and the teacher started to praise those who were working quietly. Soon everybody was busy working with his/her partner on his/her project (fieldnotes, March 25th).

Interactive-Teaching Lesson Event

During different segments of this classroom day, the teacher frequently uses songs and stories as an avenue to provide students with a context to experience the literature and learning about different cultures and people. In addition they hear their teacher's reading and learn about some concepts that are related to their theme of study.

The story event. This a whole group activity in which students and the teacher gathered in one spot (reading area) three times during the classroom day, as shown in Sarah's classroom agenda. The teacher uses stories to begin the classroom day; refocus classroom attention about related topics to the theme of the study; address ongoing issues in the classroom (misbehavior); and stay closer to her students before they go home.

From Sarah's perspective, a story is a powerful learning tool that helps children to learn about reading and how to read. In our first interview, she presented her view by saying:

One of the things that, a lot of children will come to me haven't been read to . . . I couldn't read them too much. They need to hear it. They need to hear the language. They need to hear all kinds of stories, simple patterns stories . . . literature that's above their heads. They need to hear it and see me modeling it. They need to hear me thinking out aloud and how do I read. I miscue there. What I do? I go back, I reread. What strategies do I use as a reader? They need to see me as a reader.

Another purpose of using stories in this classroom is to involve students in the process of doing library research, and to teach them how to get information from books. Sarah mentioned that when they first started collecting informational resources about "ancient Egypt," she went with the students to the school library to engage them in the process of looking for and selecting the books that they would use in the classroom. She added that her students have started to do this type of research on their own:

We're starting that kind of. Some of them are to the point where they're ready to go and do that with the words. Some of them are only doing that with the pictures, making observations from the pictures, and then we're writing what they say.

Finally, stories are used as a way to bring the class together and to immerse the students in the culture of learning about reading and literature:

The reading of stories is part of that coming back time. It's a community time too. . . . So (if) we can't have too many stories, we can't have too much literature or reading, modeling, poetry. It's immersion again.

The song event. Songs are used for variety of purposes and at different times during the classroom day. They are used as a signal for starting a new activity or taking a story position, as a proper way to prepare students for leaving the room or as technique for keeping students energetic while they are waiting for others outside the classroom. In addition Sarah uses songs as a tool for teaching reading by singing songs with the students, as she explained in our first interview:

Little kids when they're first starting to read, many of them, especially auditory learners that are not yet cueing visually one-to-one to words, they will learn the song and we'll make a book out of the song, so then they know the song. They don't have to read the song. But they're singing the song, they're singing the words, and then I can take it from here and we can start one-to-one matching based on that song we learned.

As mentioned before, Sarah also incorporates songs in the daily curriculum as a tool to make the smooth transition from one activity to another and as an enrichment activity for the kids. Besides, she believes that songs are an interesting approach that helps students to enjoy the repetitive patterns of sentences and words. These beliefs about the role of

the song in the daily agenda are reflected in the following paragraph from the first interview:

Sometimes the songs are they happen to tie with the topic we're doing. So that's just an enhancement to our study of whatever theme we're studying. . . . It's a management tool for me. It's a nice way to bring kids back together. It's better than standing over there yelling at everybody to sit down on the rug. And that's cue to them and it automatically shift them hopefully to a new grouping or refocusing. So I used it as a management tool.

Another role for the song is that it helps to encourage students with learning or physical difficulties in what is going in their learning environment. Sarah shared with me, in the same interview, her observation about Sonia, a student with multiple physical and cognitive disabilities, who enjoys hearing her class singing as a group as follows:

I don't know if you have noticed, but it really interested me like Sonia, she really cues into choral sound. Not just one person singing, I mean she enjoys that too, but it doesn't matter how tired she is, she automatically lights up when the whole group is singing or the whole group is reciting their songs.

Student-Directed Work Event

At some point during the classroom day, the teacher allocates a time for students with special learning needs by authorizing other students to work independently in their groups during the center or the enrichment time activities. Another way Sarah does this by grouping her students

according to their level of mastery to provide them with time for independent practice during the lit pick as explained before.

The group work event. The major part of classroom time is spent on academic activities, in which the teacher organizes her students in a variety of grouping forms such as lit pick grouping, centers grouping, or peer grouping. Students during this segment of time are working as groups, and each group has to accomplish a specific objective such as writing letter, making a book, or solving a math problem. Sarah uses this time for building the shared culture of the classroom, which is based on collaborative work and learning from each other. In the first interview Sarah talked about her philosophy of grouping her students most of the time:

That's not cooperative group work, although we do cooperative projects together. Sometimes I have kids working in pairs or in a small group to create one product. More often though the centers are more small groups of children working individually on their own work but assisting each other with language, helping each other figure out what to do or how to make it, how to share with the table. That's their group work.

Another purpose for grouping students is to provide a structure that helps to accommodate the diverse needs of students, and to give capable students the choice and independence in doing their work as well. Sarah

explained this purpose during her talk about students' work in the following manner:

The centers are structured so that there's one center that's always teacher-directed. It's not something I'm expecting them to accomplish on their own. . . . The other 4 centers are structured so that hopefully most of the kids can accomplish it on their own independently, because I can't be with those while I'm over here. So far as individual needs of each child, because there are a lot of different levels. I'm sure you've noticed that I have got kids to make sure that I target each one of those kids one-on-one when it's appropriate time.

Sarah added that another goal for setting up this activity is that:

The center work itself that's set up is taking that core curriculum and whatever the activity is, it's accomplishing one of the core curriculum, at least one...

Finally, Sarah uses grouping structure to help her in assessing the developmental levels of the whole class in specific areas such as reading, in which she divided students according to their mastery level. Sarah gave more descriptions about this segment of classroom day in our fourth interview:

The other kind of grouping I do though is, I do have static grouping for that only morning time for lit pick where they are grouped, they are plain flat ability grouping. Where I'm assessing their reading levels and I'm targeting specific strategies for reading or writing. One group might be independent. They don't choose on that time. I choose for them and the only way those groups change is when I do assessment and they've moved on. Some have stayed. Some of them have done three of four levels. So that's what I'm choosing.

Managerial System

The analysis of the classroom observational record and interview transcripts reveals that Sarah's classroom management system consists of four components: (a) classroom rules, (b) classroom procedures, (c) coping strategies, and (d) discipline measures.

Classroom Rules

The rules for Sarah's classroom are few (six rules) but comprehensive enough to help students by themselves to take ownership of monitoring, supporting, and regulating their behaviors according to the activity segment (story, song, group work), working together as a community of learners. These are the "work rules" by which students can work successfully during the classroom day. Embodied in these rules are the social and the cultural standards that students are required to live up to in order to be successful learners and achieve their best in this classroom. The "work rules" are of three types: (1) academic, (2) social, and (3) authority rules.

Academic rules. In this category, students practice the learning and thinking skills that are necessary for doing their assignments successfully. This includes using two rules: to be an active listener, and "3 before me." To be an active listener means that students should be quiet, have eye

contact with the speaker, stay where they are, and listen carefully to what is being told to them in that segment of time (story segment). Sarah articulated the second rule by stating:

Of course at this age they want to come to ask you right off. They want to show you everything and ask you. So return that power to them. Check with yourself first. Then check with your community at the table first. Then if you really don't know, then you can come and ask an adult we'll help you to figure it out.

Social rules. Social rules are established to help students working together as support buddies without hurting their personal feelings or violating their personal privacy. This involves applying three rules during their classroom work as groups, individuals, or the whole class. The first rule is to be a support buddy for your group or others when they need your help. Sarah elaborated about this issue by saying:

To be a support buddy, that's really important, for community to take care of each other. It's so easy for kids to be hurt. When they're this small, they hurt each other very easily with words, and not realize, either way.

The second rule is to speak with a soft and kind voice. It helps students practice the good manners for how to talk to each other without hurting their personal feelings, as Sarah mentioned before. The final rule that students have to apply in this situation is to give respect for other's personal space privacy. This includes the respect for the individuals

themselves, their things, their thinking, and their own work. This was summarised in Sarah's final thought about her classroom rules:

So it's real important to talk a lot about how do you support each other as learners? How do you not, we've discussed thoroughly, not everybody is at the same point in their learning. And that's ok. You each have your own time-clock and you've got to respect where that other person's learning is at. Help them where they are. Nobody's better than anybody else. We are all learners on our own continuum ourselves.

Authority rule. The teacher uses this rule as a technique to help her stop the deviant behaviors of students, protecting the curriculum flow, and enacting "work rules" in the learning environment of this classroom. It is used when the teacher feels that things are out of control. For example, it is employed in situations when the noise level is too intense, the students are not following the procedures in their work, the students are socialising more than they are working in their groups, or to draw their attention for an important announcement. The teacher usually interrupts to stop all students' activities by making this statement: "give me five." At this point of time students have to look at the teacher directly, stay still, stop working, and listen carefully to what the teacher is telling them.

Classroom Procedures

Procedures are guidelines for students to do their academic work, such as instructions that give direction, information, and resources for doing a specific task in any activity segment; lit pick, centre time, thematic work, or journals time. Those instructions are either embodied in the task itself, just as in student-directed activities, in a group work segment time or explained by the teacher directly. As an example of the first type, the teacher assigns the first group to write and colour pictures about the letter "L," while the second group is required to listen to a taped story and then write their responses in reading logs; in words, sentences, or drawings. The third and the fourth group are engaged in a higher thinking skill activity such as making mathematical patterns or building a house by using Lego and blocks.

In the second cluster, the teacher said: "we are going to do a book today, look carefully how I am going to fold the papers and what I need to do. We need scissors, papers, and staples. First, fold the paper like this and then staple it together form two sides. Then cut the pictures and paste them on the provided space. When you are done with that I want you to colour the pictures and write their names, and when you finish you know where you

should put it. Do your best and if you have any questions let me know by raising your hand."

In the first interview, Sarah talked about how she trained her students, at the beginning of the year, to meet the expectations and demands of academic work in this environment as follows:

Then the first six weeks of the year, you know, we're really stressing all of the things that make the room run for the kids. So that they know, what to do, where to go, where to get things. The room is set up so that the kids access things themselves. I don't, they get the supplies they need, they know where they are. They know how many kids can be at a particular group or how many kids could be in the block area. So there's a lot of, I don't want to call them rules; they're not really rules. The kids should have the strategies already for being able to motivate themselves around the classroom and do what they're supposed to do.

Coping Strategies

The teacher uses coping strategies to deal with minor problems such as talking to neighbour, not paying attention, playing with a pencil, or speaking while the teacher is reading a story, teaching a lesson, or singing with the class. It is used purposefully to initiate students for keeping their attention focused on their work and ignoring other's interruptions. These strategies include ignoring, making eye contact, stopping teaching, waiting, and calling a student to sit close to the teacher. The students are also encouraged to deal peacefully with their disagreements and use their

dialogue, discussion, and compromising instead of yelling or fighting with each other.

Discipline Measures

Discipline, in this classroom, is used only for extreme cases such as when a student is interrupting the teacher's talk continuously, using unacceptable language, bothering others while they are working, or having a sharp disagreement or a fight with others. The measures include using time out, group punishment, confrontation, and removing privileges (see next section).

Classroom Management: A Picture from the Classroom

The following are incidents that were observed in the classroom, in which Sarah has applied the previous strategies and rules for keeping order and the natural flow of the curriculum in her classroom during different segments of the classroom day:

When they returned to the classroom they made a circle, and snack helpers started to distribute some biscuits. Later the teacher gave her instructions about the next activity. It was time for them to share their personal stories about their pets, toys, or special event in their lives. The teacher was using a timing watch. In the meantime, two students had a disagreement about who should start first and the teacher told them to use dialogue to reach a solution for their problem. Another student (with behavioral problems) started to make trouble for his group by teasing them. The teacher asked him to stop that immediately and to sit alone on the chair (fieldnotes, 2-18-99).

On February 23rd, while I was observing the classroom in the afternoon, one of the students, with behavioural problems, suddenly pushed another student from his chair. The teacher responded to the situation by assigning the two to different groups. Another student, with learning and behavioral problems, was creating a mess in the whole class, she gripped his hand and took him outside the classroom (isolation from his classroom)

The story was about three little javelins and a coyote. She started to read when one of the students began to interrupt her, but she ignored him. Some students started to talk to each other. The teacher suddenly stopped reading and waited for some time until they kept quiet again. When they finished with the story, students were spreading in five groups. . . . As I observed some of the students were engaging in a social talking, but the teacher did not nag them this time. The teacher at the same time was with some students at the backside of the classroom, while she was keeping her eyes on trouble students. The level of noise and laughing was so high, and at that point I said to myself that she is soon going to take some action. Suddenly, she stopped working with her group and went over to them and gave two students a verbal warning and asked them to get back to work at once. In another group, the students were making shapes using rubber bands and a plastic board. Two of the students were teasing each other and not doing the work. The teacher came closer to their table and asked them gently to focus on their work (fieldnotes, 2-8-99).

The previous observational information reveals that Sarah used classroom management system in these incidents to achieve two major objectives. First, by enacting classroom rules Sarah has provided a supportive structure for the movement of curriculum throughout different segment of classroom time. Second, by her frequent monitoring of students' behaviors, Sarah has been able to keep students on task and push

students to enact the classroom rules in each one of these segments. Moreover, Sarah's responses to her students in these incidents were guided by her understanding of how to apply these rules appropriately and her experience of how to deal with unexpected things in such situations. So Sarah dealt with each situation as an individual case based on what she viewed as a minor or a major threaten to the classroom order and the flow of curriculum across each of these segments during the classroom day.

The Curriculum

The Formal Curriculum

The teacher follows the standards of a local district core curriculum and the State of Arizona in teaching the curriculum for her first grade classroom. As a whole language teacher, however, Sarah builds around students' needs and interests in thematic units, and the children are involved in planning and have the choices of selecting topics for their learning in order to know about things in an authentic way (see Goodman, 1989). The curriculum in this classroom uses a wide range of resources, including using textbooks like "Basal" for reading and "Turk" for mathematics, which are used by the teacher for guidance in teaching specific skills. In addition, there is a different collection of stories, factual

books about subject matter, and informational books about their thematic unit “ancient Egypt,” the theme during the time of the study.

Sarah’s Classroom Curriculum

Sarah uses children’s literature as the core for developing the curriculum at the classroom level. Usually Sarah plans for teaching the core curriculum through five thematic units during the year. She described this process in our first interview:

We are doing a unit so far as what you teach in the core curriculum through what topic you’re teaching through. The kids, at the beginning of the year we sat down, about six weeks into class, and we just brainstormed ideas together of what interested them, what topics they are interested in. I made a list. They voted on the most popular ones. I sent the list home and let parents add any on that they thought interesting, that they’d like to see their kids learn. And we took the top five and followed those up for the rest of the year.

During the time of this study, Sarah was teaching her class a thematic unit about “ancient Egypt.” In our final interview I explored with Sarah the processes of planning, implementing, and evaluating the thematic unit about “ancient Egypt” (see Table 2). In addition, I collected from her a sample of the planning that she used to develop this unit. A descriptive summary of these processes is provided to give the reader an idea about how Sarah went through these processes in the actual world of her classroom.

Table 3**Sarah's Planning Model****Planning Stage:**

Mapping & Webbing ideas
 Using videos and reading books about "ancient Egypt"
 Visiting Phoenix museum show about Egypt
 Determining what core curriculum skills to teach
 Knowing what skills to study in different content areas
 Designing activities to implement the thematic unit
 Collecting educational materials from the district

Implementation Stage:

Introducing the unit through a little video and a book before fall's break
 Using direct instruction, presentation, and teaching new concepts and ideas
 Using interactive teaching approach during song and story times
 Using student-directed work during classroom activities (lit pick, enrichment activities, & center time)
 Teaching special groups at different times during the classroom day

Evaluation Stage:

Evaluating the content (Is the topic rich enough?)
 Receiving feedback from the principal and her assistant about what is going on (informal)
 Keeping in touch with parents by sending some of class work with students to their homes
 Sharing and exchanging information with colleagues about what works and what does not work in her classroom
 Personal reflection (what changes I would made?)

Sarah taught this unit as shown in Figure 2, using children's literature as the core for developing activities, games, and academic tasks to meet some specific core curriculum objectives in the content areas such

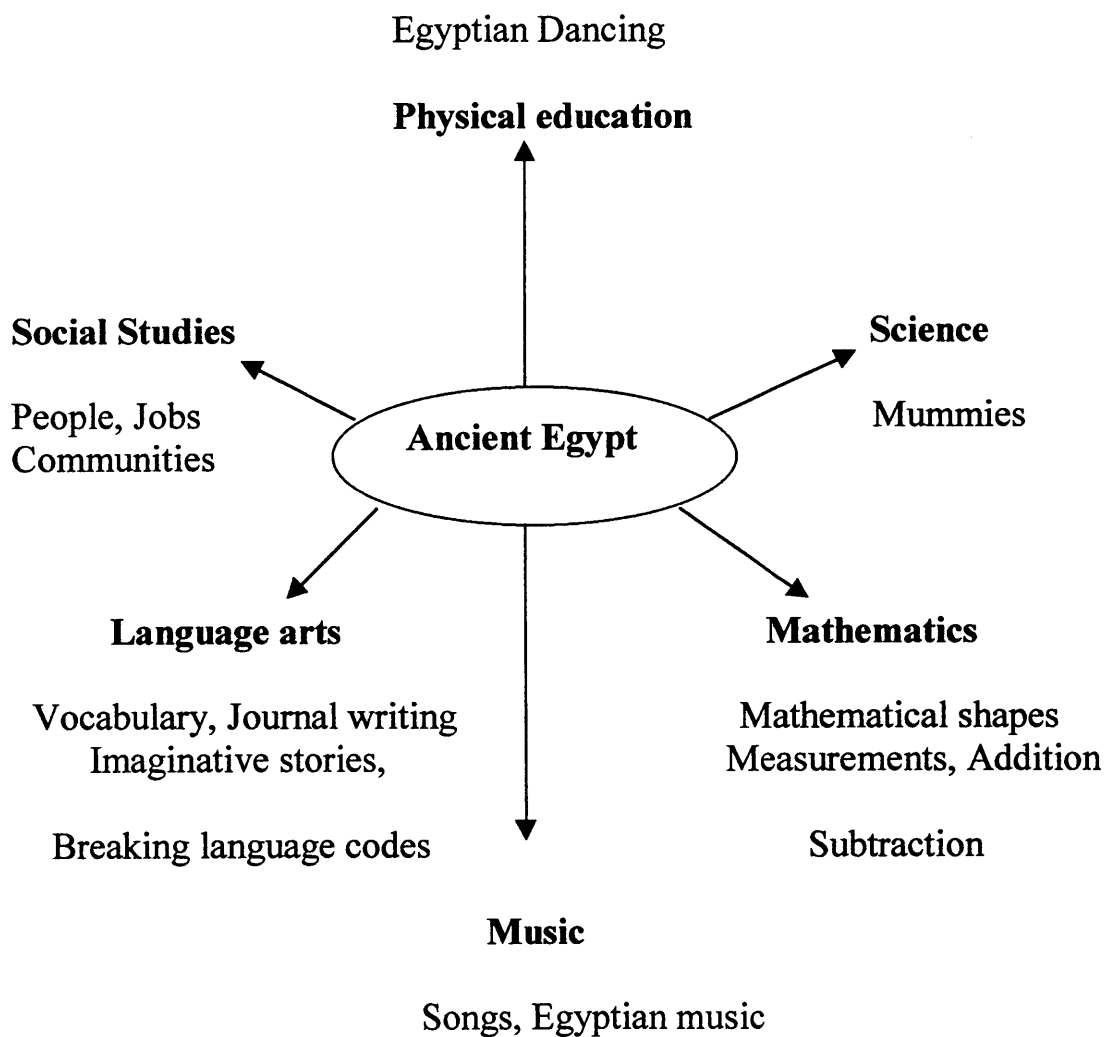


Figure 2. Thematic unit.

as mathematics, language arts, and social studies. The figure also provides an informational outline about the topics that were taught during the period of this study.

Sarah as a Teacher and Curriculum Maker

The collected materials from the field, observational data, and transcripts data suggest the emergence of three major themes in Sarah's work as a teacher: (1) professional history; (2) teaching; and (3) curriculum

Professional History

In this category, I am going to present the early informal and formal experiences that influenced and shaped Sarah's image about teaching, and helped her to construct her identity as a professional teacher later at the College of Education.

Informal Experiences

Sarah started to build an image of herself as a teacher in her early childhood when she took care of teaching her younger brother and sister. In elementary school, she met her two best teachers who inspired her to become a teacher when she grew up. In our first interview, Sarah brought back the pleasant times of her school when she had classes with those two teachers:

I had two that really stand out for me, my second grade teacher and my fourth grade teacher. They both focused on the student's experience and what we were learning in real time, not reading it from a paper or hearing about it, but hearing about it and then doing it. In fact the fourth grade teacher took us to the opera. We went to the concerts downtown as fourth graders. We played those instruments back in the classroom. She made a lot of things available to us to experience first hand.

As a parent, Sarah became a volunteer in the day-care of her first daughter, and later in her elementary school. At that time, she described a transitional point in her life, which moved her to change her career route and decide to become a teacher:

I ended up being a single parent. I was in my thirties and decided if you're going to do what you want to do, you've got to do it now. You're getting on in age. So that was a good impetus. I had always wanted to be a teacher since I was in second grade. I liked my second grade teacher a lot. I enjoyed it. I admired how she helped children. So that in the back of my mind. I had always been in retail marketing before that, business manager, always attaining the bottom line dollar for companies, those were the objectives. And it takes a lot of effort to do that. I decided I'd rather devote that much effort to human beings instead of dollars. I knew I'd enjoy that with children. So those two areas of my life came together and jelled up. Go back and be a teacher.

Formal Experiences

When Sarah decided to go back to teaching, she started studying at a community college and then finished her studies at a state university. At the beginning of her program, Sarah was not sure which way to go for her

teaching. After some time she decided to choose the whole language block and specialized as a whole language teacher. Sarah described how finally she was able to make that decision as follows:

At the College of Education there was a point where I decided which route I wanted to take in my preparation, which block I would go in and what student teaching section I would go in. And I remember being a student in fifth grade and sitting in a desk all year long and we'd just get out one book after another. We never actually did anything with anything. It was always writing in your desk with a book. I didn't want to teach that way. And the whole language block offered a different way to be a teacher and be a learner. And so that's why I choose that direction to follow.

She further talked about her personal experience in this block, and how that affected her as a future teacher and the way she perceived herself later as a teacher:

It was the, my classes in the whole language block treated me as a learner the way we were taught to treat children as learners. It wasn't the antithesis of that where here's how you teach children experientially give them things to learn with. But we don't teach that way. You sit there and listen to me talk for an hour and a half. The whole language was not that way. The whole language block was interactive. I had journals with my professors. We reflected back and forth all of the time. We would look at theory and immediately go into the classroom and see if that theory would work in the classroom with real children. So that is very pinned to memories, important to me as a learner myself. I prefer to learn that way.

Sarah added that her Language, Reading and Culture class, in particular, helped her to find her own way for developing a special style of teaching, and thinking about teaching as an interactive process:

I think the first time I started looking at this particular way of teaching was in my LRC class, Language, Reading and Culture class. I had Nancy George, who also taught that class in that manner with us as students. Very interactive, and with us being empowered as learners. So that was my first inkling that there was another way to teach besides the kids in the desks and teacher in the front of the room. This is exciting. This is good. So I pursued following up on that particular style with the College of Education.

Field Experiences

In the field, Sarah stated to build her professional identity as whole language teacher through her observations, interactions with teachers, mentors, and being there at the same school in a supportive environment for a full year:

My block was held in Bradley Elementary School. All of us students came together, the whole block, at the school. We had a room in the school that was the university students' room. We were part of the elementary school, part of that primary school. So I had that whole block there. The professors would meet us there. The only time we went back to the U of A was for math and science, and they even came to school too. So I spent that whole semester being able to, with the support of my professors, dialoguing, like I said reading theory, pursuing that, but going right into classroom and trying it out, coming back in little chunks. And of course the classroom teachers were very supportive of us also in the block. And then it followed through to the next semester. I did my student teaching there. So I had a whole year to be in the school with support, with

mentors, before I had to go out and teach on my own. So I get to be immersed right in the style of teaching that I wanted to do right away.

Discussion and Conclusions

The descriptive data analysis about Sarah's professional history reveals that the informal and formal experiences have played significant role in providing her with images about herself as a teacher, personal style of teaching, and theoretical and practical perspectives about how children should be treated as learners. In her early years of schooling, Sarah experienced two contradictory situations about teaching and learning. In one of them she met the best teachers in her life, while in the other she spent the worst time of her life. Both images have influenced her thinking as a teacher who became an advocate for a child-centered curriculum. So when Sarah was talking about teaching, curriculum, or learning she always had that picture in her mind, as she pointed out in our final interview:

I just have never been able, I guess I've never in my mind adapted that way curriculum, because it has the old meaning tied to it for me. You know, it has that old, when I hear that word I think of sitting at my one desk and being like this (passive person).

Yeah, I notice in my mind that I have, when people ask me what I do, it's almost, it feels funny to say I'm a teacher. Because that word, the original connotation that I grew up with was that it's back to that old picture, is that the person at the desk know everything and you don't know anything.

Similarly, her personal life as a single mom and her dissatisfactions with the world of business had led her to make the decision about going back to be a teacher:

So those two areas of my life came together and jelled up. Go back to teaching.

Finally, the image of teaching that she picked up during her formal preparation in LRC classes and at Bradley School helped her later to choose the personal style that fits her personal biography, and carry with her this philosophy to her classroom as a whole classroom teacher. At the same time another factor that impacted her identity as a prospective teacher was the supportive environment and the right place that she found herself in to learn about her personal style of teaching.

Teaching

In this cluster, I classified the data about Sarah's teaching world into five categories: (1) teacher's concept of herself; (2) teacher's role; (3) teacher's vision of her classroom; (4) teacher's philosophy; and (5) teacher's thinking;

Teacher's Concept of Self

Sarah talked, in her third journal, about the image of herself as an “adult learner.” As a person who is a long-life learner, and strives to achieve her best, Sarah uses the metaphor of an “adult learner” to convey to the reader how she views her complex and multiple roles in her working setting as in the following model:

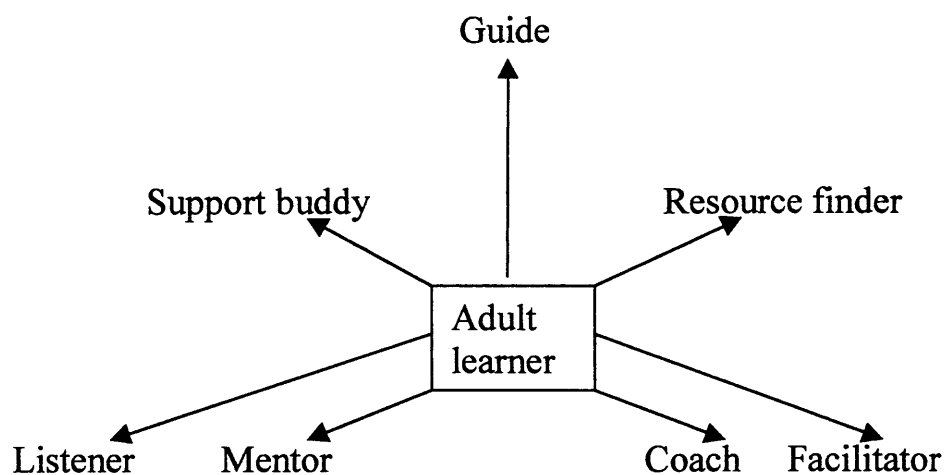


Figure 3. Sarah's model of teaching.

Sarah believes that this model helps her to accommodate the diversity in her classroom, and allows each child to take charge of his/her own learning and build the sense of capable learners who achieve their best

regardless of their academic differences. In our first interview Sarah disclosed similar assumptions about her students by saying:

Within the guidelines of the curriculum that I have to accomplish, I want them to accomplish, I want them to come away from the first grade feeling that they are empowered learners. That they and I are equal on being able to go and find information, being able to go and choose what to learn about, being competent in that.

Associated with this metaphor is a picture of herself as a lifelong learner who continuously enjoys reflecting about her practices and learning from her teaching:

As a lifelong learner myself, I continually reflect, assess, evaluate, and refine my "teaching". Fine tuning, adapting, and creating and recreating are one of the most satisfying and fun parts of my daily "job." I enjoy striving for my "best" and this particular process offers me limitless opportunities to do just that (Journal #1).

Similarly, Sarah described herself as an older learner who shares with her students some of her experiences and learning:

I am just an older learner than they are. I am an older learner, I have more experience behind me that I can bring to bear in my learning and share. I'm not better than they are. I've just been doing it more. And of course I have different goals in mind that they have in mind may be. I've got an overlay that they don't have. Yeah, I guess do, I'm adult learner to me (Interview V, 4-23-99).

Teacher's Role

For Sarah talking about her role as a teacher is talking about herself as a learner at the same time, and even she doesn't prefer the word the "teacher" to describe her job as she indicated our final interview:

. . . I grew up with was that it's back to that old picture, is that the person at the desk knows everything and you don't know anything. And that's not the view I have. I'm just an older learner than they are.

Teaching for Sarah is a way of helping her students to be learners, and sharing with them some of her knowledge as she said in our first interview:

I'm not the fount of wisdom. I'm here to facilitate them or help them, guide them, but I'm a learner just like they're a learner. . . . I'm a learner always.

I'm facilitator for it. I might be older than them so I might have some ideas I can give them that they're not going to have but I want them to see us as both learners.

To achieve this educational objective, Sarah described a variety of roles for her during the classroom day in our fourth interview:

There are points where it's more effective for me to be a direct instructor. Like in the computer lab. Or when I'm introducing a totally new concept, I'm the demonstrator, I'm modeling whatever it might be. There are times when it's better for them to explore on their own and find their way. Then just I'm just the facilitator and I'm mentoring them to help them efficiently get there on their own.

And like you said that sometimes I'm co-learner with them, It's alternating back and forth.

Furthermore, Sarah's view of her role is much broader. It includes providing a rich learning environment for her students, and making herself available for them whenever they need her during their classroom day, as she described in the same interview:

It's my job to make sure this place is as rich as it can be for them, as safe as it can be for them, to guide them. If I see Cindy's on the verge of whatever, her breakthrough maybe, it's my job to notice that and be there, shove her over the edge. Lead her there, guide her there, help her pursue it.

Teacher's Vision of Her Classroom

Sarah's vision about her classroom consists of three components: (1) Sarah's image of her classroom; (2) Sarah's beliefs about her students; and (3) Sarah's expectations for her students.

Sarah's image of the classroom. For Sarah, the classroom is where she wants to be. She said in our second interview:

There's no where else that I would rather be. This is the job I want. So I'm coming here glad to be here. That's a big thing, your attitude. People have their bliss, well this is my spot.

Moreover, the classroom for Sarah is more than a work place; it is another home:

It's like having another family. Being a teacher is as close to being a parent as you can be...

This image of classroom as a "family" makes her close to her students but only to a certain point, where she has to recognise her identity as a teacher and demand of them more things than their parents. As she described in the following:

You have that close of a relationship with the kids. And yet there's still that line. Otherwise you couldn't push them when they need pushing as much, I think.

Additionally, this image pushes Sarah to move from doing her ordinary job as a "teacher" to a "caring" person who feels the needs of her students and strives for offering the best conditions for them to learn:

It's my job to make sure this place is as rich as it can be for them, as safe as it can be for them, guide them. . . .Help them to see themselves as being able to go, no matter what it is.

Similarly, this image is embodied in her devotion and love for this job, which she indicated in our final interview:

I don't think there's anything more important than children, I don't think there's a more important job in the whole world than teaching children.

In addition, Sarah wants her students, regardless of their backgrounds to feel that they are part of this "family" by offering them a silent segment in the morning:

Kids are coming from all different environments. Some are happy, and some are not. Some are good. Some are not safe. So we all come together here and just spend time checking in, letting everybody shift gears to being part of our room (Interview III).

Moreover, this image of “family” influenced her thinking about the learning environment in her classroom. So Sarah talks about the set up of her classroom in terms of students’ learning needs, which also explains why there is emphasis by Sarah on selecting round tables in her classroom (see physical layout)

Finally, this image about classroom as “family” is reflected in her design for classroom activities, in which students are doing their academic work as a community of learners during story time, song time, center time, sharing club, or enrichment activities.

Sarah’s beliefs about her students. Over time Sarah has developed a set of theoretical assumptions about her students. Sarah expressed these beliefs frequently during our five interviews. Sarah views her students as “empowered learners” who have the ability to learn as she articulated in the following:

The kids should have the strategies already for being able to motivate themselves around the classroom and do what they’re supposed to do.

That they and I are equal on being able to go and find information, being able to go and choose what to learn about, being competent in that (Interview I).

Overlaying that my overriding concern that they see themselves as learners and how they approach going out to learn something. And they each have their own strength to apply to that because they all learn in different ways (Interview V).

Just they're capable learners. They ought to know that. I don't know how to explain it (Interview III).

It's just overriding it all that the main concern is that what they come away with from school is viewing themselves as able learners, whatever they're going to tackle. They have the ability. They're empowered (Interview II).

Sarah also believes that children are independent learners who should be given the opportunity to learn by doing:

The children are independent learners and I'm not the fount of wisdom. I am a facilitator. So they need to be immersed in language, literature, writing, doing language, doing reading, doing writing themselves (Interview II).

They're learning by doing and they're learning being for the most part intrinsically motivated to learn what they're learning (Interview V).

Within that, I don't want my directing overriding all the time or me being the one that's giving all the time. OK I'm trying to keep that smaller and have them actively doing things more (Interview II).

Ongoing with the unit it's all those learner qualities that I want them to achieve, being independent learners and collaborative workers (Interview IV).

Finally, Sarah views her students as responsible persons who have the ability to do their job and monitor their behaviors and their work:

They have to self-monitor, they have to make choices about what they're learning. It's all based on them being self-directing and self-monitoring and having ownership of those roles (Interview II).

I don't see really any limits as far as how far they could go with their learning. There's a lot of responsibility placed upon them in this style of learning (Interview III).

So I make that basic assumption that everybody can be his/her best and everybody can be a learner. Everybody can feel that power for themselves (Interview V).

Sarah's expectations for her students. Sarah's expectations for her students are part of her theoretical assumptions and beliefs that she holds about her students, as she emphasized in our first interview:

I guess I take it for granted. I do. You know; I take that part for granted because that's like basic assumption. We spend a lot of time together, especially at the beginning of the year, modeling and looking at and describing what we expect of each other in the classroom. All kids are doing that at their level. Even though academically one might be two years behind another one, socially they have the same expectations to produce their very best, to try their best, to support each other.

The expectations, in Sarah's classroom, are academic and social. So in every curriculum segment, students are expected to apply a set of social and academic rules, as I discussed earlier, in order to facilitate their work.

Presumably, such rules provide students with guidelines that they need while they are working in their groups. As Sarah explained:

Academically those rules help them to be responsible, to direct themselves as learners, so that “three before me” rule, we’re really working hard for them to start asking themselves. Of course at this age they want to come ask you right off. They want to show you everything and ask you. So return that power to them. Check with yourself first. Then check with your community at the table there first. Then if you really don’t know, then you can come and ask an adult we’ll help you figure it out. . . . To be a good support buddy, that’s really important, for community to take care of each other. It’s so easy for kids to be hurt. When they’re small, they hurt each other very easily with words, and not realize, or realize, either way. So it’s really important to talk a lot about how do you support each other as learners? (Interview II)

Finally, Sarah’s expectations are set to encourage students to achieve their best and raise the level of competence as empowered learners, as she described in our third interview:

So that was the biggest thing that came next to expectations for me that we didn’t talk about. It just follows along with them seeing themselves as competent. Them having that same power base that we have.

Teacher’s Philosophy

Sarah’s practices in her classroom are guided by a set of principles about teaching, content, student learning, and her role as a teacher. In her written philosophy, Sarah presented some of these principles:

In this classroom we believe that learning is a life long adventure. We believe in facing each day with minds open to knowledge and hearts open to love. We believe in the freedom to wonder, to ask, to explore, to imagine, to create. We believe that success means doing our best, and feeling proud of our effort. We believe that everyone has special talents, and that talents of each of us help all of us. We believe in ourselves, in each other in this classroom (Document #1).

Similarly, in her response to my survey questionnaire about the philosophy that is driving her practices in the classroom, Sarah expressed similar thoughts:

It is my job to provide a safe, exciting, rich environment, where children take responsibility to be lifelong, curious, exuberant learners and have the opportunity to gain the skills and can be at whatever they choose to be in the future. The children are empowered learners (Document #2).

In these two documents, Sarah has used the expression “lifelong learner” to convey to the world her philosophy as a whole language teacher. Within this paradigm of thinking, Sarah assumes that children are active learners who can learn, do their best, and be empowered, and that her role is prepare the necessary conditions for fostering such attitudes and values among them in the classroom.

Additionally, the interview data reveal that Sarah’s uses a set of principles to direct her teaching. The following are Sarah’s principles that guide her practices in the classroom setting:

Kids have as much power to be teachers and learners as I do (Interview I).

Starting where the learner is, and that's what I need as a learner. You have to start where I am. You can't expect me to leap on the train if I don't even have a way to get on (Interview III).

Within that, I don't want my directing to be overriding all the time or me being the one that's giving all the time. OK I'm trying to keep that smaller and have them actively doing things more (Interview II).

Overall broadly I'm working from the point of view that everyone learns more when they are internally motivated and engaged (Interview IV).

Well kids at this age are learning how to be engaged and be learners (Interview III).

Well I think I teach the way I'd like somebody to teach me, giving somebody time to think (Interview V).

Everybody can't do their very best everyday and everything. I'm not expecting that. But they have got to be at least making a really good effort. And if they're not, then there's a consequence (Interview III).

I think I'd bring my intuition to bear on each child and see where they are and try and, they give you clues as how they're learning (Interview V).

The reading and the writing and the speaking should be in context. They should be, that's your environment (Interview III).

Teacher's Thinking

Sarah's image of herself as an "adult learner" drives her thinking about the decisions that she makes about what the content should be and in

which way to present it to her students. As a whole language classroom teacher, she is highly influenced by Cambourne's model (1988) of learning about literacy. In our first interview Sarah introduced to me this author and started to explain his model:

I am thinking of Brain Cambourne. I don't know if you're familiar. He describes that same model. We come together as a group, I model whatever it is that we're going to share, you approximate it. You try it with me now. Tell me back what it is. Show me back what it is. Try it. Now go out and really use it somewhere. See how it goes. You come back together. How did it go? Did you understand it? Because this part didn't go so well or I didn't get this piece. Now go back out and do it again, now that we've talked about it. So it's that, there's always that coming back together thing, constantly monitoring and adjusting and then going back out and use it

Within her classroom context, Sarah's has demonstrated that she is following this model in teaching. On February 23rd, I observed her teaching students how to write a letter to one of the characters in the story. I wrote the following in my fieldnotes:

After they watched the movie last week, the teacher this day was discussing with them the story. Then she started to brainstorm with the students the major themes in the story such as Tinker Bell, Captain Hook, light, Never Land, lost boys, etc. The purpose of this activity is to help them writing a letter to Peter Pan. First, she provided them with sufficient information about the format of the letter, and the procedures for checking their work. Then she displayed for them a sample for this letter as follows:

Dear Peter Pan,

What is your favourite game? I would like to play hide and seek! Do you eat breakfast? My family love waffle with strawberries for breakfast. Yummy! You are funny?

From,

Sarah

P. S please write back!

When the teacher finished her demonstration, students dispersed into small groups everywhere to work on this assignment. Students at this time were working, talking, and sharing their information about the task. The teacher at the same time was monitoring them, providing them with suggestions, or reminding about the format.

Another characteristic about her thinking is that when Sarah talks about how she views the content of the curriculum, she presents a holistic view of looking at things in a meaningful context for her students. Sarah brought up this issue in our first interview, when she started to describe whole language classroom activities:

Whole language addresses that model because we're doing that that and some kids do learn by hearing it, some kids do learn by seeing it, better than other ways. You bring everything to bear that you can bring to bear. You use everything you can immerse the children in language, however it may be, whether it's songs or stories. With the math it's the same thing. With science it's the same thing.

Another example, when Sarah was talking about "individual practice," she offered an alternative way to do it in a meaningful context by saying:

The picture that comes to my mind is sitting at my desk and then I'm writing the letter L over and over and over until I learn it. Right? I

prefer that practice come in context though. Why don't you go write your L over and over in a letter that you're writing to somebody, because you need that L, so you're going to write in a letter.

Similarly, Sarah expressed these beliefs as whole language teacher in our third interview:

I just have a basic belief that reading and writing go hand in hand. I don't separate them into two parts they are locked together, reading and writing and talking, just the verbal expression of that. So those three items, I don't see how you can do them or why you would do them in isolation because they support each other.

Finally, Sarah talked about herself as a learner and how that might affect her work as a teacher and how she is working on it, so she can offer her students the best opportunities to learn according to their learning styles:

As a learner, I take a long time to digest the information. It might at first seem maybe I'm not thinking about it or I don't know, but I just take more time to think about what you told me verbally. So I'm more cognizant of that with my kids. Maybe my wait time is a little longer. You know your tendencies; it's hard to detach those. So I've to figure out what my strengths and weaknesses are as a learner, and know those because the kids aren't always going to match mine...I try and observe that and work through those to their benefit.

Discussion and Conclusions

The descriptive analysis of the data about Sarah's teaching world suggests that her metaphor of herself as an "adult learner" has played a key role in directing and shaping her thinking and teaching identity in her work. This was observed in Sarah's talk about her role as a teacher, her vision of

her classroom, philosophy about teaching, and ways of thinking about teaching in a classroom setting.

First, Sarah provided detailed information about her role as a teacher that fits this metaphoric picture about her personal ways of learning when she described herself as a “lifelong” learner, helper of the kids, or a teacher with a variety of roles. So Sarah’s metaphor about herself entails the conceptual system that she developed over time about teaching and learning, as she indicated in her journal:

This model (metaphor) facilitates each child in constructing their own unique knowledge base from their own unique point of view. It accommodates learners by allowing them to begin building from where they are rather than expecting them to come to a single point of view. This model also fosters the acquisition of a broad sense of self as capable learner with a repertoire of many learning qualities that enable each individual to pursue her or his personal best regardless of academic level (Journal #3).

Second, Sarah’s vision of her classroom as a family, her strong beliefs about her students as empowered and responsible learners, and her high expectations for the quality for the work of her students represent another part of the whole culture that she strives to establish in her classroom. It is a “community of learners” in which she and her students are learners together, and her role is to facilitate or help them to achieve this objective:

Help them to see themselves as being able to go and gather the knowledge, no matter what it is. Just because I'm the adult doesn't mean I know everything (interview II).

Third, her metaphor as an "adult learner," which describes Sarah's ways of learning has provided her with a model for teaching in her classroom, as she indicated in our final interview:

So as an adult, when I'm learning, the way I learn has a lot to do with the way I teach I think, if you really look at yourself or I look at myself. You know, I've taken in all that information from college and all that other, but it's all within context for me as a learner. And that's how it is for each child in my room.

Finally, her philosophy of teaching is another dimension of this metaphor, in which she describes the learning process of students as a "lifelong" endeavour, herself as lifelong learner, and her students as capable learners on one hand. On the other hand, this metaphor provides her with a context to develop principles for her practices as a teacher, which is heavily influenced by the way that she perceives herself as a learner.

Curriculum

I classified the data about Sarah as curriculum maker into four categories: (1) conceptual thinking; (2) curriculum development; (3) planning for content presentation; and (4) evaluation

Conceptual Thinking

Sarah's professional history and her personal experiences as a teacher have both shaped her thinking about curriculum and content. In our first interview, I was curious about what she thought about curriculum, as a whole language teacher, so when I asked about that her response was:

When you say the word curriculum I think of the core curriculum, the manual that I have, and when you're reading it, it states all these objectives we have, blah, blah, blah for first grade. Same in writing, same in math, all subject areas. That's the curriculum.

In our final interview, Sarah presented another view about curriculum when I asked for her personal definition by saying:

I guess I just I don't like that word. I guess that word gives me a problem. I don't know why. Because I do not really know, what we are doing with that term? I just have never been able, I guess I've never in my mind adapted that way curriculum, because it has the old meaning tied to it for me. You know, it has that old, when I hear that word I think of sitting at my one desk and being like this.

Sarah, in this paragraph, expressed her dissatisfaction with the conservative meaning of the word "curriculum" because it caused her to think back about the old memories of her bad days at school. Her memories of being at her desk reading one book after another and without participation as an active learner during classroom time. Instead, she perceives "curriculum" as:

So I don't know what other word I'd use to call it. It is curriculum of course, all that you study. My room isn't like that. You know we're not doing that at all. No it's not like that. It's responsive; it's tuned in to the right where the kids are. It's guided by where, what I've got to teach them through that word curriculum. That's always underlined. It's in there.

From this point of view, Sarah understands the curriculum in terms of the content of classroom activities that students directly experience on a daily basis, and which are adapted to their developmental levels at this age. However, for Sarah the core curriculum is the "backbone" for all the activities in her classroom. As she said in the first interview:

It is the backbone of everything that we do. Being in kindergarten and primary and first grade only, you need a strong flow between those two grades of course, a real strong building with the very beginning of everything. So we could take everything that we did in a day if you wanted to go over and find all the little numbers in that core curriculum that will match to what we're doing, and see how it lines up. Like talking about the kids being independent in the room. It's listed in a nice big terms with a number in core curriculum.

The curriculum therefore has two aspects in Sarah's conception. One is the standard or the formal curriculum, which she uses as an index for planning and presenting the content at classroom level. The second type of curriculum is the personal, which is structured as learning activities at classroom level:

Well it's those two layers cone in together, it's the layers of learning qualities, what is to be a learner, and I've got those other core

curriculum objectives that we're accomplishing through the learner qualities (Interview III).

Curriculum Development

In this section, I discuss Sarah's thinking about classroom curriculum, her role, and role of others in curriculum development at the classroom level.

Classroom Curriculum

As a whole language teacher, Sarah is engaged in the process of preparing the classroom curriculum on a daily basis through involving her students in a variety of learning activities as a community of learners. In other words, Sarah's job as a curriculum developer is to translate the formal curriculum standards into concrete experiences for her students at classroom level. As she described:

Well it's fun and creative for me to figure out how to move that abstract to concrete curriculum and find ways that, while they're doing that in the concrete it's going to push them up to the abstract. And that's fun, For me that's creative.

Unlike curriculum specialists, Sarah does not view curriculum as a set of organized and systematic activities defined by the objectives, the scope of the content, the presentation modes, and the means of evaluation.

Instead, Sarah looks at curriculum within the big picture; the social context of her classroom. As she described in our final interview:

It's all within in the context of that whole picture. So whenever I'm making specific plans for a specific activity, that's just as tiny part. That's just little chunk that's part of this big picture that we've got to set up. It's part of the community of the room. It's part of the expectations of the room. It's all done within that larger framework. It's always there and it allows us to move to different styles of activities all within that big frame. So you can plug in any content or any skills, anything that you wanted to learn, any objective you have will fit in that structure.

Following this line of thinking, Sarah started her first year thinking about classroom activities as the starting point for her to structure her classroom curriculum:

So the first year of my teaching I think of my activities, I thought of the activities first, and then went back to the core curriculum and fit them into my activity some way (Interview I).

More recently, Sarah has shifted her thinking and started to consider the core curriculum as the pivot point for developing her personal curriculum:

Now, I think more of the core curriculum first. OK we're working on subtraction right now. What I could design that I will implement subtraction in a fun way for the kids? So that's shifted a little bit in time, rather than thinking this will be fun, let's use these as this game first. Now I'll think more, we've got subtraction to work on. How can I accomplish that in a fun way with the kids? (Interview I)

In developing this classroom curriculum, Sarah considers three parameters, which she described in our fourth interview as follows:

. . . So there's these three levels always running simultaneously. The social aspect of being student and learning, the core curriculum objectives which are really objectives, and then the content itself, the joy of learning about that topic.

When I asked Sarah about what type of knowledge she is planning for, her response reflected a personal concern about her students rather than the content itself:

. . . Well you know we've got those levels running, we've got those strands like we talked about before, but overlaying any content that I put in, like the thematic units or any curriculum, like the skills and all the other things we're trying to accomplish. Overlay that my overriding concern is that they see themselves as learners and how they approach going out to learn something. And they each have their own strengths to apply that because they all learn in different ways. But overall no matter what their learning style is or what their strengths are; they see themselves as empowered learners (Interview V).

Role of the Teacher

As for her role, as a curriculum developer, Sarah views herself as a "manager" for a big project, in which she is involved at different levels preparing the classroom curriculum as she described in the following paragraph:

Well I'm doing lots of things. I'm being the manager; I'm being the co-ordinator. I don't know if I could give you one word title, to tell

you the truth. What's my role? Well, I can't do that in a nutshell. I'd have to start you know, it is like being the director of a major project and there's all kinds of areas that are being filled in. I have to take different; I'm working on those three levels we talked about when I'm doing that. I'm being the consular and the mentor socially for them. I'm being the direct teacher of skills. When we're doing that, I'm being the facilitator and mentor for their art. This job to me has so many different hats you wear, that is why it's a good for me.

Role of the Community

Part of curriculum enrichment in Sarah's classroom is inviting the community of the school and neighbourhood to come and work with the pupils as experts or helpers:

We try and have guest experts coming in from the community. It depends on what topic we're talking on. So they'll come in and share their information with us. We're lucky in that the principal and vice principal both that we have are able to come in and be another teacher in the classroom. They'll come in and read stories or sing songs or sit at a table and work for a few minutes, and talk with kids and help them work.

Sarah added that she had the chance, on different occasions, to bring the parents also to participate and share their information with the kids in her classroom. On one occasion, a father of one of the students came in to teach the kids about watercolour painting and reflection:

Jim's dad is a professional artist and he brought in a painting at the beginning of the week and taught the kids, gave them a great view of how he does watercolour painting, how he learned about light and reflection. All of these first graders sat here absorbed that. So now when I look, they're just starting to draw pictures now, I see them

using it. They're leaving reflections from light and thinking about where the light's coming from. Those are real experiences for me.

Planning for Content Presentation

The planning process, for Sarah, starts as early as the beginning of the first day when she involves her students in an intensive training course about the classroom rules, the expectations, and their roles as students. Along with that, Sarah plans for the content of the study for the whole year through negotiation and voting with students and their parents. In this section, I am going to discuss these processes that are related to content presentation. The processes consist of the following: (1) types of planning; (2) planning principles; and (3) decisions to teach.

Types of Planning

The progress of student's daily work suggests that there is a great deal of planning for what is happening in this classroom behind the scene. I was anxious to know what type of planning Sarah was doing in her classroom, so in our second interview I asked her about that and her answer was:

I do some daily planning, some short-term planning and then some long-term. So looking at, I don't know, there's layers so it's hard for me to. I'll just pick up some and tell you because there's a lot of things integrated at once. The core curriculum, that's one layer. I've got to know where these kids are, find out where they are, so far as

in relation to the core curriculum objectives in reading, writing, math, science. See where they are, start there and start working with them in the beginning of the year. See where the movement is and start tracking that. Then that gives me kind of an overview of where I'm headed for the next month or two.

Then Sarah talked about another type of planning in her classroom:

Planning for the theme units like we're talking about, that's another level. So that's when we come together as a class and we do a KWL or they choose topics. And each time we have a new thing, we plan by what we know, starting with what they already know on the subjects, and then have them web what do they want to learn, and then I can collect and gather the information to set up that theme study.

In addition, I examined the collected materials about her planning and wrote the following analysis:

Teacher's planning can be categorised into three categories. First the teacher is planning ahead (long-term) for the whole semester. This planning provides her with a picture about what students should study from the core curriculum during the semester, and information about school occasions and holidays. Second, the teacher uses weekly planning for sequencing classroom activities during the week. For example, for how many days the students are going to study "fractions"? Finally, the teacher uses daily planning to guide the sequence of the classroom and curriculum events in her classroom. In additions, the teacher uses outlines or webs for units of the study, classroom lessons, and the content. In her webbing, she brainstorms ideas about the content that should be covered, and a script plan for her teaching actions that she is going to use later in her classroom (Summary note #1).

Planning Principles

One of the philosophical underpinnings in Sarah's planning agenda, as she pointed out in our second interview, is to consider the developmental nature of the child at this age:

There are (besides core curriculum objectives) because kids primary age developmentally to grow, they're still very concrete. They're not operating most times at an abstract level. So we need lots of doing concrete things.

A related concern for Sarah is that these kids can not stay for a long time on their chairs, so she has to structure the learning environment in a specific manner:

This particular age child, primary age children, physically can only stay for so long reading stories. I mean if they're really engaged they can sit for an hour and half. It just depends on what it is. But that's not the norm. So I try and have that flow of quiet stillness and then activity and then back to quiet stillness and activity.

Another important issue in planning the daily agenda for Sarah, is to meet the diversity in her classroom:

Just that I find that we have a very diverse population of children. We have children who've been read to since before they were born, you know, in the womb, and then I have children who maybe never even got to hold a book until they came to school. Children who have high social skills already by first grade. Some who aren't socialized at all. So they're learning at a lot of levels.

Along with that, Sarah incorporates in her planning the core curriculum objectives as source for directing the content of classroom activities:

I guess when we were building the cardboard pyramids, you know, I had in my mind, I know the kids need, we're working on geometry, that's part of our core curriculum. We're talking about triangles. How many sides do triangles have? What relationships do they have to a square? What shape is a pyramid? (Interview II)

A second principle in planning, for Sarah, is to prepare the learning environment for the kids so they can have the opportunity to work as community of learners:

First I like to have the environment set up where we're going to be immersed. . . . Well the physical, within that structure that we've already talked about, how the classroom looks and it's set up for the use of the children by the children, managed by children. I try and just like I said immerse them visually and auditory. . . . Sight, sound, smell, taste, anything we can get in there will relate to topic, we try and do environmentally (Interview IV).

A final principle in planning that Sarah considers is the flow of the daily agenda when she plans for the content of any classroom activity:

I don't know. Structurally there's a good flow for them activity-wise, movement-wise. There's a good balance and flow between actively engaged in academics or actively engaged in movement or if there's a good basic flow of the day (Interview IV).

Decisions to Teach

The process of selecting the content in Sarah' classroom is a collaborative effort between the teacher, her students, and their parents as described earlier in this chapter. Once Sarah received all the information she needed, she has to set up a framework that helps her to decide what to teach:

Once I've got that figured out, the students will go home, I'll look at the most popular ones and see if there's any flow, so that over the course of the year, Egypt is going to flow right into the study of what? So once I get that framework set up, then I can get the core curriculum out and see well Egypt is going to be great for measuring. We'll do measuring with that. So I can sequence more curriculum into the content (Interview IV).

A second type of decisions that Sarah made is selecting and preparing the resources that she will use in teaching the thematic unit:

Generally, this is just me personally, I generally, it depends on my knowledge of the topic to begin with. Generally I'll go out and get as much literature and other information as I can for me first and I start reading it. . . . I'll get videos. I'll start thinking or, are there any resources within the community, community experts on that particular topic (Interview IV).

I like to have all the literature in the classroom that I can. Tons and tons of books, as many as I get hold of. As many videos on the topics as we can get, any guest speakers that we can get. So any kind of trips like that you can take. And then just starting off and just being immersed in it (Interview IV).

However, Sarah mentioned that there are times where she has to make decisions on the spot and change her lesson plans:

Well of course some of it is thought up ahead of time. It's planned. A lot of it is thinking on your feet. If you see that you're going to have to, you need to adapt. Here's prime time. It's one of those moments coming up that you see they're on the verge of something. You change direction and it doesn't matter what your plan was. So some things are planned. I've always got in my mind what core curriculum objectives I'm trying to teach. That's early childhood, you try and have that whole picture in your mind all the time in those areas, and the wholeness of the child. So that's always overlaying everything you're doing. You know I'd have to talk about it specifically. If I see they're getting antsy, and I know I went too long, more often it was me that did not notice the structure wasn't what they needed for right now. They needed to be up and moving. So we'll stop whatever quiet thing they are doing and go to a moving activity (Interview II)

Evaluation

For Sarah, evaluation is an ongoing issue in her daily business as she said, and it is carried out in different forms. In our third interview, Sarah talked about three ways she is using to assess her students: (1) informal evaluation; (2) formative evaluation; and (3) formal evaluation. In addition, Sarah talked about the ways that she incorporated to evaluate the thematic unit (ancient Egypt) in our final interview.

Informal Evaluation

First, Sarah is using "kid watching" to gather some information about her students on a daily basis for the following purpose:

I'm doing ongoing assessment, kid watching over them all day every day, so that's something I am monitoring to instruct me in what I need to teach them. So that's helping me direct my teaching. And that's all day, every day. That's just constant. Whenever you're interacting with them, no matter what activity they're at. . . . It happens a kazillion times every day, something assessment-wise. So those kinds of observations are more for me and students' parents.

Formative Evaluation

Second, Sarah uses some activities or games to assess her students' abilities in a specific subject matter skill:

I'll have specific activities set up. Like if I want to know how many kids know their math facts to nine, we'll go back and play the cup game. They'll think it's part of math choices. I'm doing math test. I'm not going to tell them this is your math test...Or in their journal writing I'll have it set up, this particular day we're doing this genre of writing and see who, without my direction, I won't give them that input. . . . I see what they produce in their own.

Formal Evaluation

Finally, Sarah is setting up the class to test a group of students or the whole class in specific skills as follows:

I am tracking every single word they're reading, and I am recording what they're right on and whether they're self-correcting themselves, whether they're going back and rereading, whether they're reading all the way through a word, whether they're using graph-phonics, whether they're reading for meaning. . . . But while they're reading to me, I'm doing that whole miscue analysis on the spot and I'm going back and choosing teaching point to teach them.

Thematic Unit Evaluation

In our final interview, Sarah talked about the ways that she uses to evaluate the thematic unit. Sarah talked about content evaluation, work evaluation, and personal evaluation. In the first instance, Sarah uses her professional experiences to make her decisions about the content in the following manner:

I haven't had a unit that, so far as the content part of a unit goes, it's either rich enough or it's not. That is about the only evaluation I have for it. You know if the content was appropriate of course.

A second type of evaluation is that she is evaluating the work of the whole classroom informally by involving students, parents, and the school administration:

The child is showing to me, they are showing to me what they did. If a book they're reading it to me. Whatever they made, they're describing how they did it and they learned from it. It goes home that day and parents know they're supposed to be watching for the newsletter. I tell them what the centres are, every week. They're with them. So there should be a constant line of communication and in that way an evaluation back and forth. The principal or vice principal, they're always floating in and out, dropping in and out, seeing what's going on.

Finally, Sarah talked about her personal ways for evaluating her work by saying:

Now I saved samples, like a box is up here for things. So I've got a sample of everything we did. Some stuff I won't do again. It will be

bad for me to look at. Some things I changed in process. When the first batch of kids came in and I figured out, well this wasn't as effective as it could be. It needs to be changed that way. I'll have it changed for the next day and it will be changed for the next four groups. The first group didn't get the benefit of that. So there's a lot of right on the point, right ten changing. Yea, I'd like more music and if I had an Egyptologist running around I could drag him here. Yeah this unit (ancient Egypt) was weak on those two areas."

Discussion and Conclusions

The descriptive analysis of the components of Sarah's curriculum reveals that Sarah's metaphor as an "adult learner" has also impacted her conceptual thinking about curriculum, curriculum development, planning for the content, and ways of evaluating this content at the classroom level.

The personal definition for curriculum that Sarah offered is based on theoretical assumptions about learning and teaching. That is, curriculum, for Sarah, should convey the picture of a rich content that accommodates different learning styles in a supportive learning environment:

It's responsive, it's tuned to right where the kids are...It is part of the community of the room. It's part of the expectations of the room. It is all done within that larger framework. It's always there and it allows us to move to different styles of activities all within that big frame. So you can plug in any content or any skill, anything you wanted to learn, any objective you have will fit in that structure. But it's the structure that's more important than that desk and that chair.

In addition, the descriptive data show that Sarah's decisions about curriculum development are governed by three considerations. First, Sarah

has to pay close attention to the core curriculum objectives when she designs the content of her classroom activities. Second, Sarah has to take into account the developmental age of primary students, so that the content can be adaptable to the diversity in her classroom. Finally, the content should be rich and interesting enough for the kids, so they get excited and motivated for learning about it. In other words, Sarah has to think about the learner, the activity's content, and formal curriculum standards when she is enacting the curriculum at classroom level as she described in our fourth interview:

Ongoing within the unit it's all learning qualities that I want them to achieve, being independent learners and collaborative workers. So that's one strand of my objectives. Another one is any of the core curriculum objectives that are plugged in. That's over math, science, social studies, blah, blah, blah, blah. So that's another strand. And the last strand that I'm thinking of is the actual content itself. I want them to get a good feel of ancient Egypt, learn particular facts about it or history about it."

Similarly, the descriptive data about the planning process show that there are personal, social, ecological, and political factors that influence Sarah's thinking about enacting the curriculum at classroom level. That means first, whenever she plans to enact a specific content she has to pay attention to the personal learning needs in her classroom. Second, Sarah has to pay attention to provide a social context for curriculum enactment

through grouping her students in different formats such as during lit pick, computer lab, and centre time. In addition, Sarah has to prepare the necessary resources and set up the physical environment so students can do their work, move to pick up their needs, talk to each other, or gather in a specific position during the process of curriculum enactment. Finally, Sarah has to consider the political aspect of curriculum enactment by her frequent revision of the state and district curriculum standards.

The descriptive data about the planning process show also that Sarah is using three types of planning. First, Sarah prepares long-term plans to get a broad picture about what students are going to study during a semester. Second, the teacher uses weekly plans to sequence classroom activities and organizes students' grouping throughout the week. Finally, Sarah prepares a daily plan (classroom agenda) to direct students' work, sequence curriculum events, and teach her students about specific skills in the core curriculum. However, as Sarah indicated in our second interview, there are times when:

Kids just they'll be stagnant in their learning for a long while, they'll be just staying in the same level in most areas and sometimes all of a sudden they'll leap ahead much further than we expect. So I can't plan too far ahead because it might not be responsive to where they are.

Although the data about the decision process show Sarah has the ability to set up her framework for the content and preparing the necessary resources, she has to think “on her feet” in order to cope with the new demand of the classroom if certain things happen unexpectedly.

As for the evaluation process, the data about Sarah’s personal procedures suggest that Sarah uses classroom observation through kid watching, involving the community in the school and students’ parents, and using her personal reflective thinking in evaluating the outcomes of the thematic unit. The evaluation process in Sarah’s classroom is used, as Sarah indicated in the third interview, to direct the teaching process, to measure the level of students’ competency in a specific skill, or test the whole class formally about their abilities in reading or mathematics. In addition, evaluation is used, as Sarah indicated in our final interview, as an avenue for thinking about future improvements in teaching a certain topic to her students.

What Is Sarah’s Theory of Content?

The previous analysis of the data about Sarah as a teacher and curriculum maker reveals that Sarah has developed theoretical constructs about teaching, curriculum, herself, students and classroom. In addition,

these principles, beliefs, and tactics that she came to know at different times in her professional life guide Sarah's practices. To construct Sarah's theory, I used the previous analysis to compare, contrast, establish linkages, and provide my speculations and educational hunches (see LeCompte & Preissle, 1993).

The Components of Sarah's Theory

In aggregating the data about Sarah's teaching and curriculum making, I found that there are four common places (Schwab, 1973) in Sarah's theory about the content of her classroom curriculum: (1) the content; (2) the teacher; (3) the students; and (4) the classroom (milieu).

In other words, Sarah's theory about content of the curriculum consists of theoretical assumptions about her students, images of herself and her role, principles for her teaching, beliefs about the content, and personal views about her classroom. In addition, Sarah's content theory reflects her philosophy as a whole language teacher which integrates the theoretical assumptions of the whole language theory about student learning and teaching (see; Cambourne, 1988; Goodman, 1986, 1989; McCaslin, 1989). Building upon these theoretical constructs, Sarah has developed her own personal theory (see Table 4) as principles to help her

Table 4**Sarah's Theory of Content**

I. The content

- Should be adapted to the different learning needs of students
 - Should meet some of the core curriculum objectives
 - Should help students to work as independent and collaborative learners
 - Should be enjoyable and interesting for students
-

II. The teacher

- views herself as a facilitator or helper for the kids
 - is an older learner but she is equal to the kids
 - believes that her work is the most important job in the world
 - believes that starting point in teaching is the learner
 - believes that her direct teaching should be for a short time
 - believes that learning occurs when the learner is internally motivated and engaged
 - likes to teach her children the way she likes somebody else to teach her
-

III. The students

- are independent and capable of directing their own learning
 - are learning by doing and being immersed in a culture of learning
 - are responsible for their behaviours and the quality of their work
 - are expected to apply classroom rules in the right place
 - should work collaboratively as a community of learners
-

IV. The classroom

- is the preferable place for Sarah to be in
 - is like another family for Sarah
 - should be a rich and a safe environment learning
 - should provide a sense of belonging for students
 - is for the kids and should be used and managed by the kids
-

constructing the curriculum at the classroom level. The following typology provides a descriptive summary of the major components of this theory

Summary

The objective of this chapter was to provide a rich description about the context of Sarah's curriculum, and portray the daily events as they happened in this setting. To do this, I gave full descriptions about the physical features, the curriculum, the lesson structure, and classroom management system (curriculum forms). In addition, I presented in the second section Sarah's personality and her beliefs that underline the format of this context.

The descriptive data in the fieldnotes and transcripts suggest that the teacher used the "curricular forms" to enact the curriculum according to her conceptualizations of curriculum and teaching in her classroom context. These "conceptualizations" represent Sarah's theory about the content that she uses to set up the stage for "enacting" the curriculum in her classroom context. In the next chapter, a full discussion of the "curriculum enactment" processes and her "enactment theory" will be provided.

CHAPTER 5

CURRICULUM ENACTMENT

This study was designed to explore a first grade teacher's theory about content and curriculum enactment in her classroom context. The previous analysis of the descriptive data about Sarah's curriculum context, professional history, and her teaching and curricular activities suggests that Sarah has a well-developed theory about "curriculum content." Sarah uses this "theory" to set up the physical environment, select the content, design the classroom activities, group the students, and provide a variety of lesson structures to enact the curriculum at the classroom level. The body of this "theory" represents Sarah's perceptions and beliefs about her role, her students, the content, and the classroom. In other words, the previous analysis addressed specifically the first question of this study.

In this chapter, I am going to discuss the emergent patterns about "curriculum enactment" that appeared in the observational record, classroom materials, and the interview transcripts which were collected during the course of this study. In addition there will a discussion about Sarah's enactment theory and its applications at the classroom level. So the

whole analysis in this chapter will be devoted to the second question of this study.

The final analysis of the observational data indicated three major findings about curriculum enactment in Sarah's classroom. First, the curriculum enactment was carried out as structured events in the forms of stories, songs, group work, and direct teaching activities. The second finding was that the curriculum enactment was carried out through repetitive patterns that helped students make sense of the time and associate this with what was expected from them in each segment of the classroom day. Finally, the curriculum enactment was carried out through a culture of learning which had its own structures, roles, and expectations.

Curriculum as Structured Events

The first finding indicated that curriculum in this classroom was transformed into units such as stories, songs, and group work activity times. Each unit is enacted as an event, and each event has its own properties, work demands, and role in the processing of the curriculum at the classroom level. In the following discussion, I am going to describe and give examples of four forms of curriculum enactment in Sarah's classroom:

(a) the story event; (b) the song event; (c) the direct teaching event; and (d) group work events.

Curriculum Enactment as a Story Event

In the curriculum event called “story position” students have to sit close to each other and to the teacher and pay attention to her while she is reading the story. The teacher uses story segment time to deliver the content through stories about people, cultures, animals, things, and celebrities. To enact this curriculum event, the teacher starts by singing a short song and students follow this signal to form a circle and to take their story position. The teacher starts reading the story when the whole class is ready and quiet for listening. The teacher usually gives informational background about the author, the title, and the general idea of the story. Following that, she starts reading in a talkative form, stops to ask questions or clarifies some concepts, makes some pauses, raises and lowers the level of her voice, and focuses her attention on the reading process. However, the teacher stops and takes the necessary action if a student asks a question, comments on specific information, or tries to divert the whole class by his or her behaviors. Students, on the other hand, are required to enact classroom rules in this segment of time. Students have to be active listeners

and respect the personal spaces of others. In addition, the teacher encourages students to be attentive, participate with some information, ask questions, or express their personal opinions about the story.

Here is a “story segment” in which the teacher enacted the curriculum on Valentine’s Day. Students had already made their cards for their families, and today they were celebrating this occasion:

It was 12:45 PM when I entered the class. They were having a party about Valentine’s Day. The teacher and a mother of one the students were busy preparing the stuff for the celebration such as food, decorations & gifts. After a while the teacher sang a song about “lollipop” as a signal for them to come together again in the library area and take the story position. The teacher then started to read the story. It was about a little boy who tried to scare his parents by hiding himself away from them, and finally the little boy apologized for his parents and promised not to do that again. Following that, the teacher opens the discussion about the story. One of the students comments by saying: everybody makes mistakes. Another student added that even teachers made mistakes. The teacher praised these two students and told the whole class: it is true, even adults make mistakes. The teacher then asked them what did you do if you made a mistake? Then after a short discussion, the teacher told them that the important lesson to learn from this story is that when you did make a mistake admit it, learn from it, and never do it again (fieldnotes, 2-12, 99).

Curriculum Enactment as a Song Event

In this segment of classroom time, the teacher usually starts singing to bring the students together, and the students follow that signal and move toward the circle area to join the teacher and sing with her. By singing, the

teacher is sending an indirect message to her students that they have to stop everything, clean up their tables, put back their chairs, and leave their spot to reunite as a whole class again. Students have to apply the similar rules and routines of being active listeners, respectful to others, and participants in the singing process during this segment of time. However, this activity has less cognitive work demands and it requires students only to do a memory job of repeating sounds of the song as a whole group. Here are some notes I wrote about the event of curriculum enactment as a song:

The teacher started to explain to students how plants are growing from seeds as small and then gradually they grow bigger and bigger. You've to look close or you can't see them all. It's hard to believe plants grow so tall from seeds that start so small. Soon the teacher started to sing the song with her students:

Well, the sun comes up
 Well, the sun comes up
 And the rain comes down
 And the rain comes down
 And the seed gets planted in the fertile ground
 If you listen real close
 You can hear sounds of plants starting to grow. (fieldnotes, 3-15)

Curriculum Enactment as a Direct Teaching Event

(Computer Event)

The teacher usually uses late morning, just before lunch, as a time for the computer class. In the class, the teacher reminds her students about

the rules and the expectations for their work during this segment of classroom time. Students, during this time, are required to put their hands on their laps, look at the screen to receive the instructions, stay quietly in their chairs, and raise their hand if they need help. Students are also reminded about the importance of being quiet on their way to the lab so that they do not disturb other classes. Thus, when they leave the room they know what they are supposed to do. Usually one of the students (male or female) will be assigned to be in the front as a leader, and another student holds the door open so students can leave the room without hurting themselves. On their way to the lab, the teacher uses non-verbal language such as facial expressions, eye contact, and her hand to the mouth to keep students in the right order. When they enter the room every student has to sit quietly on his/her chair and waits for further instructions. Here are short notes of my classroom observation record on March 11th about the computer lab event:

Students are in the computer lab sitting on their chairs, and the teacher has already informed them to wait for more instructions. The procedures are:

- 1- Click on red file cabinet
- 2- Highlight name box and type in your student user ID
- 3- Click OK
- 4- Close window and open program of your choice.

Following these instructions, students start to work on their own. The teacher's role during this time is checking for understanding, giving technical tips, providing suggestions, and sending some cues and signals to stop the growing level of noise. Time is another component in this activity, so the teacher keeps reminding the students about when they have to finish up and save their work. The teacher also circles the room again to make sure that students have saved their work and then gives them a signal for leaving by saying: "Bobcats, give me five." So at that time every student should stop working and get prepared for leaving. Another routine that students should follow is to put back their chairs very gently and line up again for leaving the room quietly. The work demands in this event are both social and academic. However, students are required to use the lowest of their social skills but the highest of their cognitive skills by following the procedures and rules which are embodied in this event of curriculum enactment.

Curriculum Enactment as Group Work Event (Center Time)

In this segment of time, the teacher and students both are participants with specific roles, authority, and responsibility. Sarah divides her class into five groups. Four groups are student-directed, and one of them is

teacher-directed. The independent groups are doing different activities such as listening, reading, writing, and mathematics, while the other group is working with the teacher on some basic skills in reading or mathematics.

On February 8th, I wrote the following notes about my observation of group work activities:

When I entered the classroom, it was about 10:15. The students have already been working in their group. I stayed close to one of the groups (boys and girls). They were reading a big book. They were trying to use some strategies for reading. One of the girls said to the boys: you remember the teacher telling us that we have to skip a difficult sentence. Are you going to read with us or not? One of the boys replied: I don't want to read. I don't like to read. So the girl went to the teacher complaining about the boys, but the teacher asked them to work it out together. One of the students started to make troubles for his group, so the teacher immediately came to him and had a private talk with him. In another group, one of the students started to quit working because his friends were making fun of him. As the teacher noticed that, she stood closer to his group and encouraged him to keep working. Soon she returned to her group to sit with one of the girls encouraging her to read and praising her hard work. In the meantime, one of the students came to ask the teacher the permission for leaving the class. The teacher allowed her to do that and asked her to take the pass with her. In another incident, the teacher was watching a group of girls - who finished their work - who were singing together. Later, when two boys joined them, they started to flip pages of the song quickly and make a mess. When the teacher noticed that she, asked them to stop that at once.

The multidimensionality of classroom events (Doyle, 1986a) in this particular segment of curriculum enactment shows that the teacher has performed multiple roles, and taken care of three things at the same time.

First, the teacher has enacted classroom rules to keep things running as usual. Second, the teacher has been monitoring students' progress by keeping her eyes on the others while they were working, and responding to students' misbehaviours immediately. Finally, the teacher has been providing continuous support for her students academically, personally, or socially to keep them motivated for doing their jobs.

Students, on the other hand, are required to apply rules and routines in order to work as successful partners in this curriculum segment. They have to practice the social rules such as being a support buddy, speaking with a soft language, respecting others' personal spaces, and using coping strategies. Similarly, they have to apply the academic standards, in this segment of time, such as being active listeners, and doing the three steps rule before asking their teacher. Moreover they have to be responsible and co-operative with others in order to learn from and share with others their expertise in the groups. In other words, to enact the curriculum in this event, students have to use their higher thinking skills as well as many social strategies to deal with the demands of the academic work.

Discussion and Conclusions

The analysis of data provides a strong confirmation for Doyle's contention about curriculum enactment at the classroom level (1986b). That is, in each curriculum enactment event, there are three components to consider: the teaching method to be used, the curriculum content to be presented, and the managerial strategies to be applied in this event. The previous examples about curriculum events provide a plausible argument that Sarah has considered these components when she enacted the curriculum in different versions (stories, song, classroom activities) and during different segments of the classroom day.

Additionally, the descriptive analysis about the structure of classroom activities suggests that academic tasks, in Sarah's classroom, have two dimensions: the academic and the social. In other words, embodied in these structures is a range of cognitive and social levels that students are required to exhibit in each curriculum event. This range begins with the lowest level of skills and ends with the highest ones along the continuum of work demands. The following typology describes this range in Sarah's classroom context in Table 5.

Table 5**Academic Tasks****Level #1**

The curriculum enactment event requires students to apply high levels of their social and academic skills such as using their thinking skills to do their work, helping others to learn from them, treating others nicely, and respecting their private space such as in centre time, sharing clubs, and enrichment activities.

Level #2

The curriculum enactment event requires students to apply high levels of their cognitive skills such as using their thinking skills, being active listener, and asking questions to perform their job in the right way. But it requires them to apply limited of their social skills (respecting other's space) such as in the computer lab and story segment.

Level #3

The curriculum enactment event requires students to apply the minimum of their cognitive and social skills to do their work as in the lit pick segment, song segment, and silent reading segment. Students during these times are required only to respect the personal space, flip pages or read silently by themselves, or practice specific skills in reading or writing

The descriptive analysis also reveals that Sarah has used these structures to provide her students with a variety of opportunities to learn about content, meet the diversity in her classroom, and establish a social

context in which students can learn through doing, sharing, and co-operating as a community of learners.

Rhythms of the Classroom Day

A second major finding in this study was that the curriculum enactment process was carried out in repetitive patterns which enabled students to predict what is coming next or where to go and what to do in each of the segments of classroom time. The flow of the daily agenda makes these rhythms, as Sarah elaborated in the first interview:

So that is in my mind the day flows back and forth between coming together as whole group on the rug and then dispersing out into individual small groups and doing whatever activity I have set up, coming and going back out.

In the second interview, she started to describe the rationale for the daily rhythms of the classroom agenda when I asked her to talk about her classroom day:

The daily agenda itself has hopefully a very rhythmic structure for the children. We start at the beginning of the year keeping it very consistent. It's always up on the board daily because I want them to be the ones that are monitoring how the day is progressing

Sarah talked more precisely in the third interview about what type of rhythms she wanted:

Well, I don't know though, I have to say, even if I had a classroom full of adults I was teaching, I would still want that same rhythm.

That same coming together, exploring something or being presented something or looking at something new, considering it, talking about it, and then going out and doing something with it.

The analysis of the observational data about classroom activities suggested that there were three types of “rhythms” that Sarah used daily in her classroom in the process of enacting the curriculum: (a) the classroom structures; (b) the daily agenda; and (c) the cycle of classroom activities.

Classroom Structures as a Daily Rhythm

The movement back and forth, as Sarah said, between becoming whole group activity time and dispersing as small groups in other activities, is a rhythm that occurs three to four times per day. So students within these repetitive patterns know when to stay in their chairs working in their groups or where to gather in the circle area to listen to the teacher telling them a story or sing with her. They also know, as a whole class, where to gather if the teacher wants to explain or demonstrate for them new information during different times of the classroom day.

Daily Agenda as a Daily Rhythm

Other types of rhythms in this classroom include the opening and closing procedures for the daily agenda as well as for other classroom activities. Students over time have developed a sense of how time is

running in their classroom; they know how they start their day and how they finish it. For example, in the morning they start with a warm up activity, which is the silent reading, and they finish up with a closing activity such as a story or a song. For other activities, there are different signals that help them to feel this rhythm of the day such as a song, a sound of the bell, a teacher's announcement, a short story, or clock time. These signals help them to know when it is the time for coming together as one community, going out to form groups, leaving the room for the computer lab, and lining up for going to outside activity or the cafeteria at certain times

The Cycle of Classroom Activities

The cycle of classroom activities provides another context for students to have the feelings of the repetitive patterns of their work, and predict the progress of their day in this classroom. The curriculum events during the day unfold gradually as the time goes, making a cycle that begins with a story and ends with a story. This cycle consists of three phases in which students are engaged in different activities according to the time of the day and the degree of students' aptitudes during each segment (see Table 5). These phases break up the day into three large segments: the beginning, the

middle, and the end of the day, in which students, as Sarah indicated, have different modes for learning and working with certain types of these activities. When I asked Sarah to talk about classroom activities, she started to touch on this issue:

Kids are coming from all different environments. Some are happy; some are not. Some are good; some are not safe. So we all come together here and just spend time checking in, letting everybody shift gears to being part of our room. So it's a real community get-together time first thing.

Well first of all taking into account that these primary age children and how long they're engaged with that physical activity. How long I can be engaged with that physical activity too. That's really the driving force of what's making the rhythm of my day.

In the second interview Sarah gave an example about how she sometimes alternate the times of the daily agenda to keep that rhythm of the classroom day active and alive:

We used to have, in planning for when things were happening during the day, we used to have centres in the morning. I had to adjust that. The group centres work better in the afternoon.

Discussion and Conclusions

The descriptive data about the classroom agenda, classroom activities, and Sarah's comments suggest that Sarah has used her knowledge about the rhythms and cycles (see Clandinin, et. al, 1997) in constructing her curriculum agenda, classroom activities, and student

constructing her curriculum agenda, classroom activities, and student grouping to push the curriculum through the duration of the classroom day. In other words, Sarah has enacted the curriculum as repetitive patterns to help her students make sense of the time and prepare them mentally and emotionally for their work during different segments of their classroom day (see Table 6). Similarly, Sarah's has employed Cambourne's (1988) model for learning to provide a context in which she thrusts the curriculum into the flow of the daily agenda between coming together as whole community and dispersing into small groups as communities of learners for three to four times a day.

On the other hand, the repetitions of doing songs, stories, and other activities have helped the teacher to achieve two objectives at the same time. First, the teacher is enacting the curriculum at different rates and levels, which means that students are experiencing the curriculum with different concentrations in content and at different lengths of times during the classroom day. This in turn helps the teacher to keep the curriculum moving during the classroom day by accelerating this movement during song or story time and slowing it down during group activity time.

Table 6**Cycle of Curriculum Events**

Phase I

1. Opening activity (8:00 AM)
Students starts their day by silent reading for 20 minutes
2. Story time activity (8:20 AM)
Students are listening to a story for 10 minutes
3. Independent practice activity (8:30 AM)
Students are doing their independent practice in their groups for 45/m

Phase II

4. Circle activity (9:15 AM)
Students are doing the pledge, math revision, or reading the date
5. Story time activity (9:55 AM)
Students are listening to a story for 5 minutes
6. Enrichment activity (10:00 AM)
Students are doing journals, math, artwork, or computer lab for 45-60m

Phase III

7. Story time activity (11:55 AM)
Students are listening to a chapter of a book for 45 minutes
 8. Thematic work activity (12:30 PM)
Students are doing their thematic work for 60 minutes
 9. Closing activity (1:30 PM)
Students are listening to a story for 10 minutes before they leave for home
-

Second, by using this type of pacing to the curriculum, students are experiencing the curriculum in different forms of content which keep them motivated, active, and busy with the academic and the social demands in each new version (story, song, other activities) of curriculum enactment during the classroom day.

A Culture of Learning

Finally, the data analysis of the observational records about “curriculum enactment” suggested that the processing curriculum in this classroom was carried out through organizing students into different forms of communities to establish a social culture for learning about language, mathematics, social studies, science, and other disciplines. The observational data and interview transcripts reveal that Sarah has used social structures, children’s literature, and learning qualities to establish a context for the curriculum enactment in her classroom.

The Social Context for Learning

The descriptive data about Sarah’s classroom context show that Sarah has designed the physical environment and the groupings of her students in order to enact the curriculum in a social context in which

students are sharing things and learning from each other. In our first interview, Sarah emphasized this issue in her classroom by saying:

So at that level, if you see kids in a group, like for instance some teachers would have crayons on the table and each child would have his/her own box of pencils with their names on it at that table. I purposely don't do that. I want the kids to have that social interaction opportunity, you have to share the crayons, let's go get the box together, we're sharing out of this box. The same with pencils. So a lot of the structure of the room is set up to kind of push them to be independent and socialize.

The physical environment also, in this classroom, allows students to face each other and pushes them to socialize and talk about academic and personal issues, as Sarah mentioned when she was describing her classroom for me in the second interview:

I'd prefer to have all round tables. It helps to make more; it doesn't allow you to segregate at tables. That rectangle tables they'll isolate into twos and threes, where that round table it's almost impossible to do that, you're forced into socializing more.

Within this context, students are allowed to move from one spot to another to use classroom resources or pick up their personal things as a part of the learning process. The following are descriptions of the patterns of student movements during their different curriculum segments from my observational record:

In the morning, students are forming circle by sitting on the rug in the library area to receive the teacher's instructions about the next activity, listen to a story, or sing a song with the teacher. Students go the library area by themselves during their "selective activity time" to read books, play games, or sing a song. Students, during their learning activity time, move from their chairs as twos or threes to pick up their supplies such as papers, pencils, crayon, or sharpen their pencils. During their learning activity time, students are also moving within their groups to chat about their work, tell their personal stories, or tease each other. At some point of time, students go to their teacher to show their work, to get feedback, or ask what to do...

Sarah has utilized students' talking as another tool to socialize them, and provide them with a context to talk about the content of their task, share their expertise, and help each other in doing their academic work. Sarah gave a nice example, in the third interview, about how students can help each other through their personal conversations:

Well there's two tracks or two railroads for that for me. The kids are teaching each other. They're using the language, they're discussing the topics that are on task hopefully. There's that level. And that's enriching their learning. Mike is over here talking to Philip, explaining to him no, that's not where you put that S, that S goes over here because it needs to be on this side or it doesn't say. So they're teaching each other, they're being teachers together.

The social structures, which are embodied in their daily activities, are also another context for students to socialize at different levels while they are learning or working with a specific content. As Sarah described, in the fourth interview, there are three types of groupings in her classroom. In

the first type of grouping, students are listening to stories, singing songs, and having a direct-teaching lesson, playing games, or dancing together. It is a community building stage.

In the second type of grouping, students have more choices to select the activity, work with the individual they want to, and have more time to spend with their groups to socialize and work as a community of learners. Finally, with the lit pick grouping, students are allowed to work independently as homogeneous groups according to their level of mastery in reading or writing skills. This also provides students with another context for socializing while they are practicing their independent work on a daily basis.

Children's Literature-Based Curriculum

The process of curriculum enactment is carried out through stories, songs, and classroom activities that are related to children's literacy and the whole language philosophy of learning about language. As a whole language teacher, Sarah uses a variety of devices to immerse children in the culture of learning about language and other disciplines on one hand, and to bring the curriculum to her classroom on the other. Sarah described this philosophy in our first interview:

That whole language model really facilitates that. You're immersed. You're immersed in whatever topic that may be and that means immersing all your senses, and takes care of this new terminology of, some people are visual learners or auditory learners, tactile learners, and so forth. Whole language addresses that model because we're doing that and some kind do learn by hearing it, some kind do learn by seeing it, better than other ways. You bring everything to bear that you can bring to bear. You use everything you can to immerse the children in the language, however it may be, whether it's songs or stories. With the math it's the same thing. With the science it's the same thing.

Similarly, in the fifth interview, Sarah talked about the social role of literature in engaging students in authentic situations, where she pushed her students to learn about ancient Egypt by immersing them in culture of that time:

The social part of it comes in a lot through the literature. I try and have them keep themselves, when they were making bodies, if you were an ancient Egypt, who would you be? What would you have done? To me that took higher level of thinking for me to place themselves in that position and think that big, thing that broad."

In the second interview, Sarah gave examples about how stories and songs can be used to filter the content of the curriculum, add to the personal meaning and richness of the learning environment, or reinforce desirable attitudes among students:

Some songs and some stories are just strictly for the pure joy of the story itself or the song itself. Some of them are just adding to that rich environment. You never know what story or song is going to strike a chord that really means something to somebody. And we

want a wide variety of exposures. . . . Other times it's much orchestrated by me, and I'm trying to get across to them. Or I'm reading books to them that have particular reader's style that I want to expose them to... If the class is having a relapse on how we treat each other kindly, I'll choose a piece of literature that's going to reinforce that and give us a way to talk about it again. Or we might go sing our song that talks about being friends, our unit songs.

With more specifications, Sarah gave an example, during our third interview, about how authentic stories can be used to teach children about specific skills in the core curriculum:

So they call this Basal. I use this if there's a story here I want but I'm picking it. I'm not following in a row. I'm looking at what's in the story, and seeing oh this has a really fine example. If I notice for instance some of them are really into, they're noticing, what are quotation marks? What are those for? What are they doing up here? They look like they're upside-down commas. Why are they there? So for that group I'm going to find a story that has a good example of that and we're going to use that story in their reading group.

During my early visits to Sarah classroom, I noticed that she uses songs frequently during the day. On February 1, I wrote about two curriculum events in which Sarah used songs as a vehicle to present the content of her classroom curriculum in a pleasant way:

Songs as I observed is used to engage students in learning about how to read and build their vocabulary. Through repetitions of some words and the rhythms of the sounds, the students can read and recognize some of these words. Early in the morning students sang with their teacher this song:

Rise and shine
 The world's been turning and everyone is working
 Rise and shine
 On this new day the morning light is breaking
 So rise
 With the rest of us
 Shine
 Like a pearl!
 Rise and show your love all around the world
 Shine like the sun
 Now it's time to rise and shine."

Later in the afternoon before they have the math activity, the teacher started to sing a song about a cowboy and how he uses the rope. In this song, the teacher integrated math, language, and geography as follows:

1, 2, 3 Look at me
 I am a cowhand
 4, 5, 6
 Roping trick
 Are easy for a cowhand
 7, 8, 9
 Sure is fine living in the west
 10, 10
 Hit the tail again
 Because I'm happy cowhand."

Learning Qualities

Curriculum enactment is carried out in a learning environment which is governed by standards and expectations for the roles of the students and their work. Within the context of this culture, students are expected to practice specific roles, apply a set of standards in their work, participate in the process of selecting the curriculum content, and are held responsible for

the quality of their learning. Sarah, in the second interview, talked about these qualities in her classroom context by saying:

The structure (learning environment) helps the kids to be independent, self-directing, learners and they have to be good citizens with each other and to each other. They have to make choices about what they're learning. It allows them to gravitate to where they are.

High Expectations for Them as Learners

In the middle of our conversation during the third interview, Sarah remembered something and suddenly she stopped talking and said to me that she wants to share something with me:

I just walk up in the middle of the night and really wanted to tell you that. We didn't talk about, when you said expectations last week, we were not looking at this point. We have high expectations last week; we don't dummy down the content. When we were studying Egypt, we were reading real information that you would read about Egypt or that I would read about Egypt. Of course I have to help to present it to them so that they can understand it. But, we don't filter it down. Because they're primary age doesn't mean that I speak to them with smaller words or more language. We want the language up her, just where is it for you and me. So that was the biggest thing that came next to expectations for me that we didn't talk about. It just follows along with them seeing themselves as competent. Them having that power, just like you have the power to be a learner. They have to have that same power base that we have.

Helping Them to Be Responsible Learners

In our first interview, Sarah talked about beginning the year of her classroom and how she started at that time with her students to set up the classroom system by engaging them in the process of doing it:

In the beginning of the year we worked really hard to choose rules together as to how our classroom is going to operate and this year it boiled down to those four rules up there. When it says be a good support buddy. We talked a lot about, we read a lot of stories and we modeled a lot, how you support somebody else in being a learner. What kind of voice you use with them, what kind of response you give them if they're having a hard time. All those little nuances of being helpful student with your friend. . . . The three before me, I try and encourage them. That's a rule we have where you ask your people in your group, if you don't remember or you don't know how, before you come to me as a teacher and ask me, ask amongst themselves because they have that knowledge as often as I do.

Sarah touched on the same point in our third interview, when she was talking about her students learning by saying:

So at the beginning of the year it takes a lot of support from me to facilitate them just learning to be at center, learning how to be a student and pay attention to your work, how to work with your group. The lit pick that we do now for the most part run pretty smoothly. It took a full 6 weeks before they were able to do 5 different things at once and not be over bothering me every 3 minutes. Not want to bother as interrupting what I'm trying to teach to these 5 kids, because they want to show you everything, they want to, can I, you know being that age. So now they've learned to be self-monitoring. They don't come to me, knowing to self-direct themselves.

Following that period of training, Sarah started to provide her students with practical opportunities to practice these skills in the context of her classroom (grouping formats). The following paragraph, from the second interview, reflects the purpose of the set up of the learning environment in Sarah's classroom:

This structure helps the kids to be independent, self-directing learners and they have to be good citizens with each other and to each other. They have to self-monitor, they have to make choices about what they're learning, so this structure expects them to follow their own internal need on that level. It puts kids in the position of being responsible.

In another part of the same interview, Sarah gave some examples about how her students started to apply and inspect these rules in their daily time at classroom later:

I don't know if you heard any of the kids, but I expect the kids to be helping each other, use those rules to make our class safe and nice place to be. So you'll hear them remind each other. We don't talk that way, or you have to use your soft kind voice. What about the blue rule? Or who's the speaker? You hear them verbalizing that and that's what I expect for them to have an issue for that. Monitor themselves as a community.

According to my record of classroom observation, students are capable of explaining and implementing the rules while Sarah was not in the classroom. I visited her classroom three times while she was absent. In all these visits, I found the students were very helpful to the substitute

teachers in explaining the rules and what they should do in each time segment. Regarding one of these incidents I wrote the following:

The classroom teacher, this day, was absent. When I entered the classroom the teaching substitute was there instead. The lady started to ask them about the rules of their classroom. They helped her in taking the attendance, and told her that they have to take “story position.” While she was reading, most of the students were following the rules. Then another class came to join them to watch a film about “cowboy.” The film was a little bit long, but most students were attentive except some students. My conclusions about this incident and the others are that the students have been helpful because they have that knowledge and skills to do that, so it was easy for them to function as responsible learners while their teacher was not with them in the classroom (fieldnotes, 2-15-99).

Holding Them Responsible as Learners

In most of our five interviews Sarah’s statements about high expectations and work standards were voiced as basic assumptions and beliefs about her students, that they have been trained to be capable, independent, and responsible learners who have to make choices and work to their best. Here are some examples about Sarah’s beliefs about her students:

It’s all based on them being self-directing and self-monitoring and having ownership of those rules. And so we spent a whole lot of time at the beginning of the year getting that established and reinforcing that and exploring that, modeling that, and modeling it with the kids, the kids modeling it. And holding that up to them repeatedly for inspection and discussion (Interview II, 3-5-99).

Just they're capable learners. They ought to know that. I don't know how to explain it. Hopefully the structure that we set up at the beginning of the year applies to all the activities. So they know what they're supposed to be doing during an activity, that they're responsible for doing their best job. They know that they're to talk and communicate at the table and get input back and forth. They're in charge for that. They're responsible for it. That is about it. They should be set up now and have well in their mind and hopefully that will carry them onward (Interview III, 3-22-99).

Well they have the same roles I do. Ross can be the facilitator of a group or she can be the direct instructor of a group or she's going to be the co-learner with somebody else. So they see me model those same roles, they're doing the same thing with each other (Interview IV, 4-9-99).

Two days before our third interview, I observed the following event:

The time was during the thematic work segment. Students were working in their groups, and the level of noise was high as usual. I saw the teacher was having a special conversation with Kathy. A little bit later, I found that Kathy's face was red and she was crying, and the teacher also seemed to be angry about something. At that time I said to myself that maybe the teacher was giving this girl a hard time because there was something serious. So I kept this thing in my mind and I asked about it later in the interview (3-19-99).

When I asked Sarah about this situation, her response was at once that there are instructions, rules, and procedures that children are required to follow so they can work to their best but if not, she added:

If they are not producing at least...Everybody can't do their very best everyday and everything. I'm not expecting that. But they have got to be at least making a really good effort. And if they're not, there's consequence. That's just, they know that. That's the way it is. We talk about, you know, if you don't give your best effort when it's

time to do, if you want to call it work. I don't know what you want to call it, the activity, you're going to trade off playtime...

Giving Them Choices for Their Learning

Sarah described, in the fourth interview, how she involves students and their families in selecting the content for their learning for their whole classroom year:

The process we go through to choose which content we're going to use. I've put some ideas out of things that students have studied in the past. We brainstorm it together as a class the list and then we talk about any other ideas they come up with which we add into the list. I'll take those ideas, put them into format that I can send home to parents, and let the parents put in ideas according, what they like, and then I have the parents and the children rank those ideas, which ones they'd like most, 1 through 10. Then we come back as a class and collate that information to see which ones are the most popular.

Later, Sarah described another type of choice that she offers her students while they are doing their group work:

They have choice for our thematic studies centres. So when we were making pyramids and were doing a math game about Egypt, those kinds of centres. Those are, the kids are choosing, and they'll with that same group that chose that activity until they get through all five, and it takes five days. Once those five are done, those groups are disbanded and again we'll again re-choose where they're going.

Similarly, in the third interview Sarah talked about the choices that students could have if they have finished their work:

It's non-purpose. They are, that's a structure of our classroom. After you have finished whatever activity you're at, you don't come to me

and say what do I do now teacher. They all know that once they finish their work and they've to clean up there are and they put their things away, that's what's the idea, they have self-selection within the classroom. And they know what is included in self-selection. In that first six week of the year that we're learning those social rules we're learning how to use everything in the classroom on their own. They learn how to come and use the computers, learn how to get out whatever tools you need to make a book, learn how to get out any of the legos or puzzles or the blocks, and even manipulative in the classroom. So everything in the room is open, at this point anyway, to self-selection.

Finally, Sarah talked about the same issue, in the second interview, by explaining the objectives of giving a variety of classroom activities:

To give them repeated opportunities to learn in different ways. Lots of different ways to learn the same thing. Meet these core curriculum objectives. They're meeting them in lots and lots of different ways, a large variety. It provides a lot of, you know how your memory is better if have your sight, your sound, your taste involved, you have a stronger memory of it. To me that's how learning is, too. So the more the richness I can bring and variety I can bring, hopefully the easier or the better they're going to learn it with any luck.

Discussion and Conclusions

The descriptive analysis about the context of learning in Sarah's classroom suggests that the teacher has used social structures, children's literature, and learning qualities as devices: to bring curriculum to the classroom, move curriculum across time, and provide standards for the quality of student learning in her classroom. In other words, Sarah has enacted the curriculum by employing these components to achieve three

purposes. First, she has used children's literature to provide a content for the core curriculum at classroom level, and to engage students in a variety of situations (songs, stories, and other activities) to learn about language and other disciplines, which Sarah described in our final interview:

The literature provides all kinds of vehicles to go all kind of different places. I don't know, it would be more dry without it. A real literature is what they're learning, they're using reading, writing, and listening throughout the whole curriculum.

Second, the social structures; student groupings function as conductive mediums for keeping the curriculum flow across time, and helping the students to predict the curriculum events during their day as Sarah indicated in the first interview:

The flow of the day. It's like layers for me. The structure of the room is set up to begin with for the kids, hopefully to be self-directing and that they're going to know the flow of the routine of the day.

In addition, "social structures" or "student groupings" provide each student with a variety of forms to socialize with others, learn from them, and share with them his or her expertise.

As for the "learning qualities" or "work standards," the teacher has used them to direct students in their daily activities – using the social and academic rules and procedural routines – and to provide them with criteria

to judge the quality of their work. Sarah discussed this point when she was talking about the quality of work in her classroom in our third interview:

Well the product is important too. I'm concerned that they're gaining that optimal sense of themselves as learners and that they are acting that out. They're taking pride in their work, in their effort, and in that sense the quality of the product is important. So that, yeah I don't know if you've seen me, kids go back. If they haven't given their best effort, in that sense, the product is important. They haven't really done what they need to do.

Moreover, the emphasis on the issues of "choice" and "ownership" provides another context for engaging the students in the process of selection of the content and motivating them to work as partners in the process of enacting the curriculum at classroom level, as Sarah indicated in our fourth interview:

So one of the prime reasons I choose to let the children choose along with their families the topic or the content that we're going to teach the curriculum through is because they're already motivated, they're already interested. They'll be all ready and 90% on task because it's they want to learn. And it doesn't really matter what I teach, what content we teach through.

Description of Sarah's Enactment Theory

The previous analysis has shown that curriculum enactment processes are carried out in this classroom through structured events in the form of stories, songs, direct teaching units, and group work activities. In addition, the teacher uses her knowledge about the "rhythms" of classroom

time as a tool to pace the curriculum during the day, and children's literature as a cultural vehicle to bring the curriculum to the classroom and enact it in a social context. Along with that Sarah enacts a set of "work rules" to provide a supportive structure for the process of enactment, and to maintain a collaborative learning environment.

On the other hand, the analysis, in chapter 4, about Sarah's professional history, her classroom teaching, and her curricular activities revealed that she has built a rich personal knowledge in these areas. This knowledge was portrayed in Sarah's talk images, views, metaphors, principles, expectations, and beliefs about her role, her students, curriculum, teaching, and the classroom.

At this level the purpose of analysis was to find a "theory" that explained what was going on in this educational setting (Merriam, 1998). It involved discovering the relationship between the major categories in the data, and offering some educated hunches about the whole phenomenon that was observed during the time of the study (LeCompete & Preissle, 1993).

In the descriptive data about curriculum enactment in Sarah's classroom there was a clear indication that Sarah enacted the curriculum using a theoretical framework as shown in Figure 4.

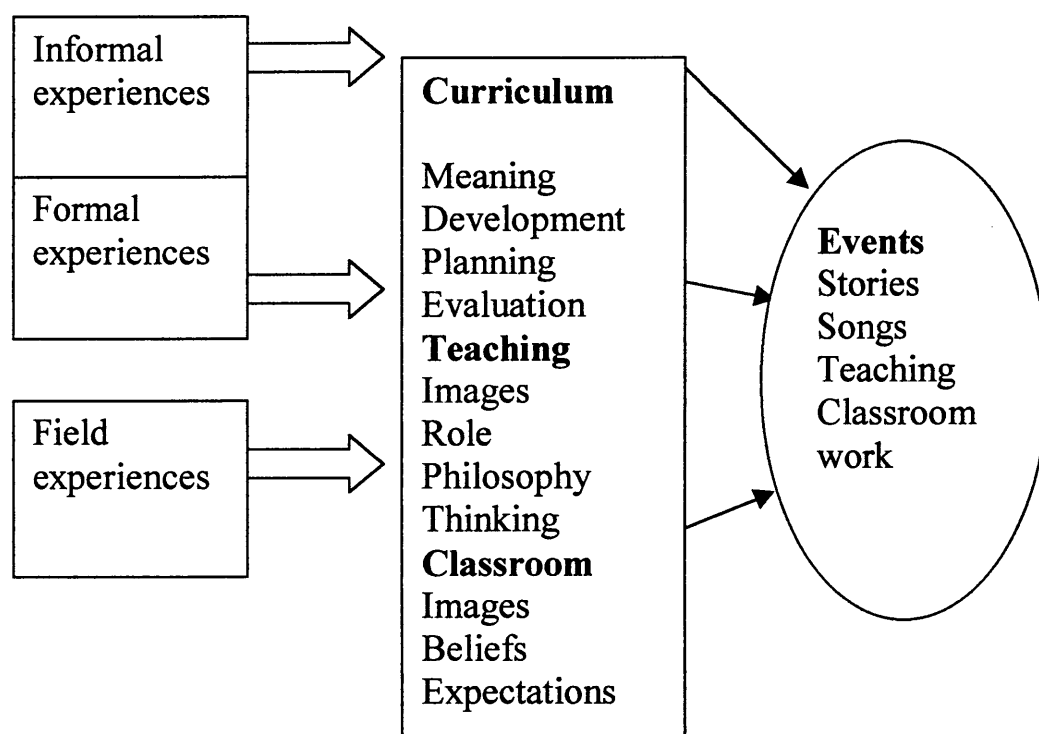


Figure 4. Sarah's curriculum enactment.

Building upon her formal and informal experiences, Sarah developed a practical knowledge, as illustrated above, which helped her to enact curriculum in her context in the forms of stories, songs, or group work activities. In other words, Sarah's theory about curriculum enactment, based on the previous analysis, consists of a set of beliefs or theoretical

assumptions (theory of content) about the content of curriculum that should be enacted at classroom level. However, this is an implicit theory that the researcher developed to describe Sarah's thinking about curriculum and instruction during the process of curriculum enactment at the classroom level. In other words, it is not an articulated theory that the teacher herself described during the course of this study.

As Argyris & Schon (1974) have indicated, professionals develop, as a result of their practical experiences, a set of theories of actions to enhance the quality of the work in their environment. These theories are used under specific conditions to yield some desirable outcomes. In a similar vein, effective teachers form, for themselves, a set of principles or propositions that provide a rationale for their decisions or action at classroom level (see Sanders and McCutcheon, 1986). Sarah's theory of enactment is a "theory of action" (see Marland and Osborne, 1990) which includes her beliefs, principles, and tactics and which guide Sarah's practices in the realities of classroom.

Theory in Use

Sarah's theoretical constructs about her role, the students, the content, and the classroom provide her with the resources to build upon and

plan for enacting the curriculum events during classroom day. By that I mean that Sarah integrated these theoretical frameworks to plan for enacting the curriculum in three phases: pre-enactment, enactment, and post-enactment.

Pre-Enactment Phase (Planning Level)

At this stage, Sarah uses her personal knowledge and her students' and their parents' feedback information to set up a framework to plug in the content and sequence the topics to be studied (thematic unit). In addition, she prepares weekly plans for group work activities and the core curriculum objectives that should be covered during this period of time. Similarly, the teacher makes her decision about what to teach using the three principles as described before. Moreover, there is a daily agenda that guides the direction for the curriculum events, and provides a variety of social structures to enact the curriculum during different segments of classroom time such as in the story segment, group work segment, or computer lab segment. At this level also, Sarah sets up the physical preparations that are needed for the process of curriculum enactment such as tables arrangements, classroom library, listening centre, and so forth.

Enactment Phase (Content Presentation Level)

At this stage, Sarah enforces the social and academic rules that govern the standards of student work, provide protection for the curriculum movement, and regulate the social aspects of the learning process in the classroom. To enact a curriculum segment, Sarah uses a variety of signals for students, such as songs, stories, or the sound of the bell, or verbal announcements to prepare them for the next activity. The teacher also positions herself in different spots such as sitting on the library rug during song time or standing close to the board during direct instruction time. At the same time, students should be aware of the feature of each curriculum segment, so that they exhibit the appropriate behaviours, apply the required rules, and participate according to the task demands. For example, students should form a circle and aggregate themselves as a whole group (story position) close to the teacher while she is reading the story. In addition, they have to listen to their teacher, be quiet, respect other's personal space, and participate in the discussion when it is appropriate.

Post-Enactment Phase (Evaluation Level)

Sarah, at this level, evaluates herself as well as the work of her students based on her daily observations, classroom assessment, formal

assessment (miscue analysis), and community feedback from students, their parents, and school administration. The teacher uses these informational sources to direct her teaching, adapt different strategies, or fine-tune her instructional strategies in specific subject matter. In addition, the teacher uses her personal reflections and colleagues' conversations as ways to improve her professional knowledge about teaching a thematic unit in the future, classroom activities, instructional strategies, or other classroom issues.

The Negative Case

Her theory of enactment provides Sarah with conceptual structures (Sanders and McCutcheon, 1986) for choosing classroom activities, making decisions about what to include in the daily agenda, arranging the physical environment, grouping students for their work, and allocating a specific time for each curriculum segment during the classroom day. However, as Sarah indicated, there are certain situations in which Sarah found herself unsure about how to deal with it or resolve it according to this theory. In our second interview, Sarah described her uneasiness with the lit pick segment during the day:

The lit pick time is the driest time of the day for me. I'm working on that as a teacher to try and get that to suit me better. I don't like it,

it's not where I want it, and I haven't quite figured out how I can adapt it to learning better. But I'm working on it. It's the least diverse time of the day for me. It's where they're, it's the closest to seat work that I'm going to get, and it's even too close for me. I would prefer it wasn't that way. It's that way so that I can have a more quiet time to focus with that small group to really work on reading strategies. And then you target each child, wherever they are, very specifically. It's not a homogenous group in here. I don't like that. The kids are, they're grouped, they're ability-grouped, it's an ability-group time and I don't like that. I'm working on that to find a way to accomplish that objective of having that group for reading time without that. It's not there yet.

The lit pick segment is a dilemma for Sarah because it runs against what she believes about her students as empowered learners (having choices) and her appreciation of diversity in her classroom on one hand. On the other, it creates a tension for Sarah to choose between the teaching and the learning aspects at this point of time. While this arrangement provides her with an instructional tool to deal with students who have some learning problems, it works against her fundamental belief of about working as a diverse community and not as ability groups. Sarah confirmed these speculations when she said:

The centre time is more my favourite time because it's very diverse. The activities are more diverse. It's not a time where you're, I'm not holding them down to a quiet level. I prefer that they're, there's a lot of discussion at the table amongst the kids, they're helping each other learn...

A second conflict in Sarah's agenda is when she has to sacrifice her students' personal interest about a topic in order to implement a district proposal:

I can't really put a time limit on theme studies. Like I told you last week, they would still rather be studying in detail Egypt. I'm not because I've got this science unit coming in. It's district science unit, so I know I've got to cut it off.

Similarly, Sarah indicated her tension at some point when she has to choose between keeping that flow of students' talk, during their group work activity, and stopping the level of noise in this social interaction. In other words, Sarah has a dilemma here. While she allows them to socialize as a community of learners, she demands that they pay attention to the rules and focus their efforts on the academic objective of the task as well:

Now quite often the social overtakes the other (academic) and that's where you start hearing the, give me five. So it's constant, there's constant work to try and maintain that, to leave that open (the social part). There's times when you want to shut that down."

In sum, these are some of the situations that can be considered "negative" or "discrepant" cases (see LeCompte & Preissle, 1993), and do not fit into Sarah's theory. However, there are other dilemmas in Sarah's work which are part of the complexity of this profession, as she described

in our second interview her uncertainty about how things might go in classroom despite her planning:

And that's about as far ahead as I can plan because some of these, sometimes kids just they'll be stagnant in their learning for a long while, they'll be just staying in the same level in most areas and sometimes all of a sudden they'll leap ahead much farther than we expect.

If you see you're going to have to, you need to adapt. Here's a prime time. It's one of those moments coming up that you see they're the verge of something. You change direction and it doesn't matter what your plan was.

Sarah talked, in these two paragraphs, about the “uncertainty” of student learning or teaching (see Floden & Clark, 1988), and her personal strategies: coping with unresolved issues or adapting her teaching to unexpected situations (Lampert, 1985). Another example is what I have described in chapter 4 about Sarah's classroom management strategies. In other words, Sarah's perception of classroom dilemmas is part of her understanding her limited abilities in certain situations, and her acceptance of the fact that are certain times when a teacher has to cope with, rather than solve, such issues in her classroom (see Lampert 1985, Osborne, 1997).

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the findings about curriculum enactment in Sarah's classroom context. The descriptive data analysis suggests that Sarah enacted the curriculum as structured events in the forms of stories, songs, direct teaching, and group work activities. In addition, Sarah used the rhythms as a tool to help her students make sense of the classroom time and predict what they should do in each segment of the classroom day. Similarly, the data indicated that Sarah established a culture of literacy to help students learn about things, work as community, and strive for quality in their work.

The previous descriptive data about curriculum enactment also indicated that Sarah used her theoretical constructs about curriculum, teaching, and classroom as a "theory of action" to enact the curriculum at the classroom level in three phases: pre-enactment, enactment, and post-enactment.

However, as Sarah described there are some "negative" or "discrepant" cases, which do not fit into Sarah's theory such as the lit pick segment. In addition, there are other situations that Sarah viewed as dilemmas such as her "uncertainty" about her planning, and her conflicts

about her choices between students' interests and curriculum implementation.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purposes of this study were to examine a first grade teacher's "curriculum theory" and to explore the ways in which this theory manifests itself at classroom level. Classroom observations and in-depth interviews were used as the primary means for collecting the data in this study. Other resources such as reflective journals, curriculum district standards, lesson plans, and personal conversations were used as supplementary resources.

General Findings

Overall, the data analysis revealed that this teacher enacted the curriculum in her classroom as structured events such as stories, songs, direct teaching, and group work activities. To enact the curriculum, the teacher used her rhythmic knowledge to provide students with a sense of the flow of the day, and build a common knowledge for students about the sequence of curriculum events during the day. So they behaved socially and academically according to the standards of work rules in this classroom. In addition, this teacher established a culture of learning in which students were expected to work as community and responsible

learners. In other words, the students worked with their teacher as partners in the process of enacting the curriculum at the classroom level.

The data analysis of the teacher's professional history and her professional activities as a teacher and curriculum maker indicated that this teacher created her own images, metaphors, or beliefs about herself and her work. By adopting her positive personal experiences about teaching and learning at primary school and professional classes, this teacher built for herself a picture of the teacher she wanted to be and engaged herself with multiple roles as a teacher, curriculum developer, and facilitator for the learning of her kids.

From those images and metaphors, this teacher constructed also her personal role, her theoretical assumptions about students, principles of teaching, beliefs about the content, and her vision of her classroom. These together formed the theory of this teacher about curriculum content.

The role of this theory was to provide guidelines and standards for the teacher for her actions and behavior during her teaching in the classroom, planning for the lessons, developing the curriculum, organizing the physical environment, grouping her students, and enacting classroom rules. In other words, these theoretical constructs helped the teacher to

build an implicit theory about curriculum enactment. The “theory of enactment” is a theory of action that helped Sarah to enact the curriculum at the classroom level in the form of songs, stories, and other classroom activities.

In addition, the combination of these two theories form what can be called “Sarah’s general theory” about classroom curriculum, wherein the “theory of content” describes the “curricular forms” and the “theory of enactment” portrays the “enacted curriculum” at different levels during the classroom day.

Personal Findings

To my surprise, what I viewed at beginning of my study as a “messy situation” or “unstructured pedagogy” turned out to be a “restricted pedagogy.” That is, the learning environment in Sarah’s classroom is highly structured in the forms of rules, procedures, and routines. These structures represent Sarah’s hidden agenda, which she uses to manage and control curriculum movement in her classroom.

Similarly, I found that Sarah has a well-developed theory of these structures, which she expressed in terms of her theoretical constructs about

herself, students, content, and classroom, and reflected in her practices at the classroom level (see chapters 4 and 5).

Contributions of the Study

This study has contributed to the professional literature in three ways. First, this study has confirmed the findings of other studies about teachers' thinking about the content, and the role of personal theories in their professional lives (Cornett, 1990; Elbaz, 1981; Lieberman & Miller, 1984; McCutcheon, 1980; Peterson et. al, 1978; Shulman, 1987; Wilson et al., 1987; Yinger, 1980; Zahorik, 1975). In addition, it has shown similar results about the impact of images, metaphors, rhythms, and cycles on teaching and curriculum work at classroom level (Clandinin, 1985, 1989; Clandinin & Connelly, 1986; Connelly et al., 1997; Johnston, 1990). Similarly, this study had provided strong confirmation for Doyle's concept of classroom task as a unit for curriculum representation, and that curriculum enactment is a process of operating three systems at the same time: the teaching, the curriculum, and the classroom management systems.

Second, this study has added another dimension to Doyle's framework about classroom tasks, namely, the social aspect of the classroom task. From this point of view the work demands that are

embodied in classroom tasks are both cognitive (Doyle; 1983, 1986b; , 1988) and social. In addition this study has brought into the light the importance of studying the personal theories of the teacher in the process of curriculum enactment, and the social context in which this curriculum is enacted at the classroom level (whole language, multi-age, or traditional setting).

Finally, this study has revealed an important finding about the work of students as partners in the process of enacting the curriculum, and documented strong evidence about the role of classroom management in this process at the classroom level. In other words, this teacher used classroom management to establish a supportive system not only for her work in the classroom (Emmer et al., 1980; Evertson & Emmer, 1982) but also to enact the curriculum collaboratively during different segments of the classroom day (stories, songs, group work, or direct teaching).

Pedagogical Implications

The purpose of this study was to provide the reader with a full analytical descriptive account about Sarah's curriculum theory, and to picture the curriculum events as enacted in her classroom. So the findings are related only to the specific context of this teacher and can not be

applied to other educational settings. However there are lessons to be shared about curriculum, teaching, and classroom management that are worth being considered as blueprints, especially for prospective teachers, for enacting the curriculum in their classroom contexts.

First, prospective teachers need to think about “curriculum” as structured events that can be enacted in the forms of classroom activities such as stories and games, or academic tasks such as math problems and writing letters. In addition, in each event attention has to be paid to three elements: time, space, and social structure. Each event has its own time cycle in the course of the day. Some cycles of these events are short, such as songs or stories, and some of them are long, such as working on math problems. So there is a need for providing a variety of classroom activities to keep the flow of curriculum in a predictable manner to help students have knowledge about the rhythms of the day. Similarly, teachers need to think about the physical arrangements and the social structure for enacting the curriculum in each of these events, such as seatwork for doing math skills, classroom gathering for listening to a story, or group work for writing journals about science.

Second, as mentioned before the rhythms of the day should be part of the daily agenda for student work, so that students make sense of their classroom time and help them to predict easily what to do next in each activity. For example, students will build a rhythmic knowledge if they are accustomed to have a silent reading at the beginning of their day, and study mathematics in late mornings, and listen to a story before they leave to their homes. In addition, this will help students to adapt their behaviours for the change of requirements of classroom work in each event, and move from one activity to another with less difficulties or behavioural problems.

Finally, teachers need to establish a culture of learning in their classroom, in which students are expected to share the responsibility for their learning and take an active role in teaching each other, enacting classroom rules, monitoring their behaviours, and working as independent learners. This could be achieved through training, teaching, modeling, and helping students to acquire such skills at the beginning of the year (see Emmer et al., 1980; Evertson & Emmer, 1982).

Furthermore, the “learning qualities” or “work rules” should be communicated as expectations by the teacher to her students on a regular

basis, so gradually students get used to them, live with them, and work by them as part of the routines and procedures in their classroom.

Future Implications

Finally, the findings of this study suggest that there is a need for further research in the following areas:

- Studying the impact of the cognitive and social demands of classroom tasks on curriculum enactment process at the classroom level
- Studying the role of theory in enacting curriculum at classroom levels
- Conducting case studies about curriculum enactment in different learning settings (whole language, multi-age, or traditional)
- Studying the daily agenda of some teachers and its impact on curriculum enactment (same grade level or same subject matter).

Furthermore, teacher educators can use curriculum events as structures for their student to think about curriculum enactment at the classroom level. By utilising “curriculum events” as structure in the field observation of classes, students can be asked to focus their observations on one curriculum event and analyse its components in terms of role of the teacher, role of the students, classroom rules, and student work. This information can provide a context for classroom discussion about the

relationship between theory and practice in teaching. Another possibility is to videotape some classroom teaching episodes in different subject matters, and engage education students in a conversation about the curriculum enactment process as groups, peers, or in a whole classroom format.

APPENDIX A
PROFESSIONAL HISTORY PROFILE

Professional History Profile

Dear Participant,

The purpose of this survey is to have some biographical information about your teaching profession to help the researcher to have a better understanding of who you as a teacher.

1) How long have you been working as a classroom teacher?

(a) 3 years (b) 5 years (c) 7 years (d) 9 years (e) More than 10 years

2) What did make you think about becoming a teacher?

3) What type of informal experiences did you have about teaching?

4) What type of formal experiences did you have about teaching?

5) What experiences did you have in developing curriculum?

At school level:

At district level:

7) Reflecting on these experiences, talk about the most critical incident/s that shaped your present understanding of teaching, curriculum, and students?

Teaching:

Curriculum:

Students:

9) Drawing upon these experiences, what philosophy is now driving your teaching and curriculum in classroom?

APPENDIX B
TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Interview # 1 (Exploring the Teacher's world)

- 1) Talk about yourself as a teacher?
 - What image do you have?
 - Anything comes to your mind?
 - Do you have a specific incident that was critical in your profession?
 - Who was the best teacher during your schooling? (Elementary stage)
 - Talking about the whole language, what makes you believe about this approach as a way of teaching?
 - Back to the starting point of your career, how did you come to understand the curriculum in such manner?
 - Did you start practicing your teaching in the same way as you do it now?

- 2) In the present, how do you describe your day of teaching?
 - What is the role of the "formal curriculum" in your daily agenda?
 - What is the starting point for your curriculum agenda?
 - What makes you understand that the curriculum can be constructed in such way?
 - What is the role of the songs?
 - What is your criterion for selecting the songs?
 - Talk about the role of the stories in your curriculum?
 - What purposes do you have for stories?
 - What are the purposes for group work?

Other Questions:

- How do you reconcile between the social and the individual needs of your students?
- What is the curriculum in your mind? Define the curriculum?
- What are the roles of others in developing the curriculum?
- What are the roles of the kids in this process?
- What roles for the children do you see in the learning process?
- What expectations do you have for your students as learners?
- How is this curriculum presented?

Interview # 2 (Curriculum, Teaching, and Classroom)

- 1) Talk about your daily agenda (the planning part)
 - What things help you to plan for such agenda?
 - What things you think about as you plan for such agenda?
 - What type of planning do you do? (daily, weekly, monthly, or per unit) If there is more than one plan, can you give some examples, definitions, or explanations?
 - What things do you consider when you plan for your agenda?
- 2) Talk about your classroom curriculum?
 - What is your rationale for choosing these things?
 - What things do you consider when you select: a story, a song, or a classroom activity?
 - What objectives do you plan to achieve through teaching the curriculum in such manner?
- 3) Talk about your teaching this curriculum?
 - What picture do you have in your mind about your role?
 - What picture do you have in your mind about your students?
 - What things do you consider when you want to teach this curriculum?
 - What things do you use to teach this curriculum?
 - What things do you want your students to achieve through teaching this curriculum?
- 4) Talk about your classroom? (The physical structure)
 - What things do you consider in organizing your classroom?
 - Tell me about the physical structure of your classroom?
 - What are the objectives for your classroom layout?
 - How do you use this “structure” in the learning process?
 - Talk about other uses of this “structure” that you might think of?
- 5) Talk about your classroom rules?
 - What are the rules for this classroom?
 - What are your expectations for the students?
 - What things do you want your students to learn through applying these rules?
 - How can these rules help you to achieve the curriculum objectives?

Interview # 3 (Daily agenda activities)

- 1) When I look at the daily agenda, I observed that you have broken up classroom time into different blocks of activities (beginning, middle, and close up activities). I would like to hear your personal perspective about this issue:
 - Can you explain for me what is your rationale here?
 - How can these activities help you in achieving the goals of the core curriculum?
 - What plans do you have for the students during these activities?
 - Do you have other reasons for doing it that way?
- 2) For me this is a unique situation, can you help me to understand what the students are doing during this time?
 - What type of learning do you like to happen during this time?
 - What expectations do you have for them? Are they aware about that?
 - What are the options/constraints for them during this time?
 - What is the role of time in classroom activities?
 - How is the final product defined?
- 3) Everything is going very fast during classroom activities. It seems messy, can you help to understand your implicit agenda here?
 - What is your role in such situation?
 - What is the student role in such situation?
 - What “curriculum” students are learning?
 - What evaluation system is used?
 - What type of learning is happening here?
- 4) In this classroom, every student is working at different rate in a social constructivist environment. What rules that govern students’ behaviors during this segment of time in terms of:
 - Student talk during classroom activity
 - Finished and unfinished work
 - Student movement during classroom activity
 - Free time learning?

Interview # 4 (Decision Process)

- 1) As you mentioned before, there is a difference between the “content” and the “curriculum”. I would like you to talk about the content of your classroom curriculum?
 - What view/s do you hold about this content?
 - What type of decisions you made in selecting this content?
 - What things do you consider most for presenting this content?
 - What type of goals you are trying to achieve?
- 2) I want you to talk about the process of presenting this content in a classroom context?
 - What approaches do you use to present this content?
 - What resources do you use to present this content?
 - What physical/social arrangements do you use to present this content?
 - What role/s do you play during this episode of classroom time?
 - What roles do students play during this episode of classroom time?
- 3) I want you now to talk about the process of grouping your students during different classroom activities?
 - What types of grouping do use in your classroom?
 - What goals do you think of while you are grouping students?
 - What outcomes do you intend to achieve while you are grouping students?
 - What kinds of leaning do you like to happen while you are grouping students?
 - How can these arrangements of grouping provide opportunities/constraints for students to reach their potential?
- 4) I would like to talk about the active phase of the learning process in your classroom?
 - What is your purpose of designing such activities?
 - What things, values, or skills do you like your students to learn during this part of classroom time?
 - What types of rules that govern participants’ relationships during this episode of classroom time?
 -

- What type of decisions you made during this part of classroom time?
- What measures do you use to judge the on-going activities?

5) I would like to hear about your self-evaluation for your daily classroom agenda?

- What things that you are most concerned about to achieve in your daily agenda?
- What things that you want everyday your students to carry with them when they leave the classroom?
- What type of success you want your students to achieve in the classroom everyday?
- What type of success you want yourself to achieve in the classroom everyday?
- How does this help you to make decisions about your planning for the next day?

Interview # 5 (putting the pieces together) 4-23-99

We have already talked about different pieces of your classroom curriculum and your educational background in the first three interviews. In addition, we explored the decision process that you go through in selecting and presenting the content, and grouping your students for classroom activities in our last interview. Now, we want to put all these pieces together to get the whole picture of your personal curriculum.

I remember when I came first to your classroom we had a short talk. In this talk, you pointed out that I am not going to observe in your classroom any emphasis on teaching or learning subject matter skills.

- 1) If you have been asked to describe the way in which your students are learning, what you would like to say?
 - What is your rationale for doing such curriculum?
 - What knowledge do you believe that these students need?
 - What assumptions do you have about student learning?
 - Why the emphasis is on using children's literature?
 - How can this curriculum, in your opinion, help children to achieve their potential?

- 2) Talking about your classroom curriculum as a holistic way for learning, what you would like to say about the role of teacher and others in developing such curriculum?
 - What role do you believe that the teacher plays in developing this curriculum?
 - What roles do others play in developing this curriculum?
 - What do you mean by "curriculum"?
 - What do you mean by "curriculum development"?

- 3) How you would like to define, describe, or present your personal ways for teaching this curriculum?
 - What are your personal principles, propositions, or beliefs that guide your teaching?
 - What are your personal ways for reaching your students in this classroom?
 - What "content" you are trying to get across to your students?

- What do you mean by “teaching” in this context? And what you mean by “learning”?
- 4) I have observed during the last three months that your students were involved in a variety of activities to learn about “ancient Egypt.” I would like you now to step back and think about the three phases: planning, teaching, and evaluating of this project?
- 4.1) How did you plan for this “thematic unit”?
- What initial thoughts did you have about this “unit”?
 - What goals did you have in mind for your students?
 - What type of learning outcomes did you have for students?
 - What problems did you anticipate in studying this unit?
- 4.2) How did you teach this “thematic unit”?
- What resources did you use to teach this unit?
 - How did you introduce this unit?
 - What strategies did you use to teach this unit?
 - What problems did you have, if any, in teaching this unit?
- 4.3) How did you think about yourself after teaching this unit?
- What are the most important things that stand out after teaching this unit?
 - What feelings do you have now?
 - What resources of information did you use to evaluate this project? What other things you want to include in future?
 - What things that you would like to change if you are going to teach the same unit in future?

APPENDIX C
LETTERS TO THE TEACHER

February 12, 1999

Dear Participant,

Looking at what I have observed in this classroom, It becomes obvious for me that there is a special case for “enacting the curriculum”. Throughout my observations, I found that your curriculum is segmented into units: songs, stories, and group activities which are interrelated to create an atmosphere for the children to construct their understanding of the world around them and at their own pace.

The fast changes of curriculum events, such as reading, writing, listening, working, and the management of these events indicate that you conceptualize the “formal curriculum” in a “personal” way that helps you to localize, adapt, and process it for these kids at this age.

Another aspect of your curriculum is the theme of “community of learners”, that is the emphasis, when you assign students for classroom work, on “group work” rather than “individualized learning”. Similarly, I noticed that you give them a lot of opportunities to practice their “choices” in a social learning environment, where each individual achieves his or her “goals” personally. Part of this activity, is the ongoing “social learning” between the children and how that can fit in your whole theory about the content?

The assessment of each child is conducted regularly which indicates that you are aware at what level your students are, and what type of learning assistance they need. This is one of the questions that I am exploring.

These are my first impressions about what was going in your classroom. We have already scheduled for the first interview (next Friday). In this interview, I would like to know about yourself as a teacher, teaching philosophy, and how did you come to understand the “curriculum” in such manner? This interview as well as my daily observations would enable me to plan for future interviews about your classroom curriculum.

Best wishes,
A. Mohammed

February 23, 1999

Dear Participant,

In our first interview, we have explored some parts of the curriculum story in your classroom and I would like now to have more details as how these parts fit together to form your daily curriculum agenda.

My observations suggest that you have planned the curriculum to create a busy “work place” for the students so that each components of your classroom agenda (song, story, classroom activities) keeps the flow of the curriculum. In addition, it ensures the active participation of your students as partners in authoring the text of this curriculum, and gives them the opportunity to share their knowledge and personal experiences in an open-ended environment (no specific instructions).

In our first interview, you also mentioned that your understanding of the classroom curriculum was shaped by the whole language philosophy. The “experiential” curriculum of the whole language then is the driving force that makes you think the curriculum in a classroom context.

This made you think as you described in our conversation about the structure of your classroom from a child-centered curriculum point of view, in which students move, talk, and share responsibilities about doing their work. In addition they learn together as a “family” and “community of learners”. I would like to explore this aspect of your classroom.

As I mentioned before, I would like to know how the pieces of your classroom curriculum fit together and what devices that you use to hold this curriculum “in action.” In other words, I would like to explore the “agenda” that you have installed in your classroom environment.

To sum up, I would like to explore further, in our next interview, the three pieces of your curriculum (songs, stories, and classroom activities), the physical structure of your classroom, and the rules that govern the work of the students in this setting.

Best wishes,
A. Mohammed

March 10, 1999

Dear Participant,

Our last conversation about the daily agenda of your classroom curriculum has helped me to have the big picture about what is going on in this classroom, and provided me with explanations (rationale) for the actions and behaviors of the teacher and the students in this setting.

As it is clear from my observations and your conversation with me classroom activities is a central piece in your daily agenda. In addition, it take a large portion of the classroom time in which students are assigned to a variety of academic work such as writing a letter, writing a book, doing a math project, or listening to stories. In addition, they are required to accomplish certain learning objectives.

In this setting, both yourself and students are viewed as partners in exploring and learning about things as you described, so I need in our next interview to talk about this issue in order to understand your personal framework for doing such stuff!

One of the interesting questions for me how is the time, which is allocated for doing these activities, is defined in this setting? Another related issue is what type of learning is happening here? And what is the criterion for evaluating such learning?

In sum, in our next interview, I would like you to talk about your classroom activities (all of them) to help me have more insightful information about this particular piece of your curriculum agenda.

Best Wishes,

Abdulameer Mohammed

March 24, 1999

Dear participant,

We have so far spent a great time on exploring curriculum issues during our last three interviews. My observations as well as your input have helped me to understand the structure of your classroom activities and the rhythms that guide your daily agenda. I am still expanding my field notes and writing my journal entries about what I have observed and heard from you during the last three interviews.

The topic for my next interview is about the decision process phase in which you are engaging to plan for your daily agenda, and explore what type of decisions that you make in thinking about curriculum as a content to be delivered to first grade students. The interesting thing for me is how do you come to understand your daily agenda in such way and what type of issues do you think about before you start your day of teaching?

My observations suggest that you have three types of decision-making: about the content, about the classroom activities, and about the grouping of students for their work. However, these are my assumptions. What I would like to hear is more information about your personal framework and how did you figure out such plans for your daily classroom work?

Best Wishes,

A. Mohammed

APPENDIX D
TEACHER'S PERSONAL JOURNALS

April 10, 1999

Dear participant,

I have enjoyed our last conversation, and I appreciate your kindness for providing that time to explore curriculum content, students grouping, and teaching and post teaching activities in your classroom. I am also indebted to your generosity for letting me in your classroom to make my observations during the last three months to collect a major portion of the data for my dissertation.

Our next and last interview would be on April 23rd. In this interview, I am going to explore the holistic aspect of your classroom curriculum, your role as developer for this curriculum, and your personal ways of teaching.

Our conversations as well as the observational data suggest that your personal image of teaching and your empathy for the children have influenced and shaped your view about first grade curriculum. I would be very obliged if your time allows you to share with me your reflections about these issues. This information would assist me to gain a better understanding of the data that I gathered about your work in this classroom.

Here are some guidelines if you prefer to respond:

1) Reflection on Improvement

The change I made in my teaching

What initiated me to do that?

What is the personal impact of that change?

How do I assess this change?

2) A Metaphor for Myself

What best symbolizes me as a teacher?

Why do I select this metaphor? How it can help in my work?

3) Empathy for Children

Write about an incident, in your life, that enabled you to develop empathy for the children you teach

Wishing you every best,

A. Mohammed

Reflection on Improvement

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

A Metaphor for Myself as a Teacher

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Empathy for Children

[illegible]

APPENDIX E
CONSENT OF TEACHER TO PARTICIPATE

A Theory of Curriculum Enactment:

The Case of a First Grade Teacher

The purpose of this study is to examine your personal theory about enactment of the content of first grade curriculum, and explore the ways that this “theory” manifests its content in a classroom setting.

Data will be collected over a period of three months. This will include collecting copies of lesson planning, classroom activities, formal curriculum standards, and statistical information about students, interviews, and classroom observation field notes.

Do not hesitate to ask any question at any point during your participation about the study. You will be informed in advance about the progress of this study. Your comments, verifications, and suggestions would be a valuable resource for validating the final conclusions of this study.

Your participation is voluntary, and you have the right to decide not to continue at any time without any consequences that affect your professional life. There are no risks and/or discomforts associated with your participation in this study, and the expected benefits are the opportunities for you to reflect during the interview process and journal writings about your professional experiences.

If you have decided to participate, please indicate your consent with full knowledge of the purpose and the procedures of this study by signing in the space provided.

Signature of Participant

Date

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