A comparison between big books and traditional-sized books in the kindergarten reading program
by Myra Gwen Taylor

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Montana State University

Abstract:
The problem of this study was to determine if there were differences in understanding of print concepts, sight vocabulary knowledge and attitudes about reading between kindergarten children who had been taught for one semester with predictable books of traditional-size and children who had been taught for one semester with the same predictable books in a big book format. Aspects examined in conjunction with print size were gender, frequency of school attendance and age range of kindergarten students (younger and older kindergarten students).

Marie Clay's "Ready to Read Word Test" and "Concepts About Print Test" were used to gather information for the cognitive areas of this study. An adaptation of Betty Heathington's "Primary Attitude Scale" was used to gather information for the affective area of the study.

Two-way analysis of variance was used to test for interaction and differences between mean gain scores identified by the testing instruments. Chi square was used to evaluate the results of the attitude survey. A structured interview conducted with teachers involved in the study was used to determine perceptions about using big books. This information was reported in a narrative format.

The conclusions of this study, based on statistical findings, support the hypothesis that kindergarten students who were in classrooms where big books were used obtained significantly more growth in concepts about print knowledge and sight word vocabulary knowledge than children who did not have exposure to big books. Information gathered through teacher interviews supported the findings of other researchers (Holdaway, 1982; Lynch, 1986; Peetoom, 1986), that children enjoyed having big books read; but there was no statistically significant evidence gathered from this study which indicated that student attitudes about reading differed between the two groups.

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
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APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Myra Gwen Taylor

This thesis has been read by each member of the thesis committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

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Date June 10, 1988

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ABSTRACT

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CHAPTER 1

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

"Reading is a complex act that must be learned" (Burns et al., 1988, p. 11). But how can teachers of young children lead them toward meaningful acquisition of reading ability? Reading must be more than the ability to decode print; reading must make sense and have meaning for the reader (Smith, 1986). When dealing with beginners who are just learning to read, the teacher needs to assist those readers, as they interact with print, to obtain both meaning and pleasure from the print and the act of reading (Alexander, 1988; Burns et al., 1988; Cullinan, 1987). What reading method might a teacher use with young children to help them become confident, enthusiastic, eager readers who have positive attitudes toward reading?

Three primary reading programs currently in use are: (1) a basal reader approach, (2) an individualized approach, and (3) a language experience approach (Alexander, 1988; Burns et al., 1988).

A basal reader approach is both a systematic and sequential program for reading instruction. A basal

reading program includes, but is not limited to: (1) a series of student readers which have controlled vocabulary; (2) instruction in sight word vocabulary and information about the principles of phonics; (3) supplementary materials such as workbooks, duplicating masters, placement tests, and mastery tests; and (4) explicit directions for teachers to use (Alexander, 1987).

An individualized approach to teaching reading is based on the belief that each child has within him/herself a timetable for his/her own individual development (Alexander, 1987). Instruction is based on individual assessment of achievement, interests, and abilities of each child in the classroom. The students have choices and they are allowed to make decisions about learning objectives for themselves. When using individualized instruction, students, with the help of the teacher, select materials and pace themselves as they develop reading ability (Alexander, 1987; Blackburn & Powell, 1976).

A language experience approach to teaching reading is based on the language of the learner as a foundation for reading instruction. The personal experiences of the learner are used to develop reading materials, to help the child see the relationship between written language and oral language, which is already familiar. In a language experience approach for beginning reading, the importance of communication is stressed through all of the language

arts: speaking, listening, writing and reading. The child's speech patterns are the basis for developing personal materials to aid the reading learning process. The underlying belief with this approach to beginning reading is that reading will have greater significance for the learner if the materials used for learning have personal meaning (Hall, 1981). One of the initial advocates and guides for the language experience approach to reading instruction, Sylvia Ashton-Warner (1963), stressed the importance of using the child's own language "whether it is good or bad stuff, violent or placid stuff, coloured or dun" (p. 34).

Evolving from language experience approaches is an approach which has gained in popularity among teachers in the 1980s. This approach is known as the whole language approach to reading. The whole language approach has been built upon the premise that language learning is natural and easily handled by young children until they begin formal instruction in school. If speaking and listening skills develop easily and naturally, then reading and writing skills should be aspects of language that can be learned easily and naturally. By keeping language whole, rather than breaking it into parts, language can be learned more readily (Brountas, 1987). Learners need to see language learning as meaningful and purposeful in their own lives. Learners need to use language in real activities

which have meaning for them, rather than learning isolated skills through repeated exercises which may lack interest for them. Learners should learn through a need to communicate rather than through sequenced instructional materials which have little to do with a pupil's real life experiences (Goodman, 1986).

Each approach has had ample supporters of good repute advocating its use. These three approaches to teaching reading (a basal reader approach, an individualized approach, and a language experience approach) are currently found in many schools in the United States. However, Aukerman (1984) identified 165 different methods which have been used for beginning reading instruction. Each method claimed to be a "sure-fire" method for teaching beginning reading. Yet no one method had been found to teach beginning reading effectively to all children.

Spache and Spache (1977) reported that a basal reader approach to teaching beginning reading is used in 95 percent of the classrooms in the United States. Approximately 50 percent of all elementary classrooms use a basal reader approach as their sole reading program. Yet there has been no research to support the use of a basal reader approach as being superior to any other beginning reading approach when used by itself (Spache & Spache, 1977). First grade studies, conducted by the United States Office of Education during 1964, resulted in no conclusive

findings as to whether one single method of teaching beginning reading was superior to any other when examined by the researchers (Aukerman, 1984; Spache & Spache, 1977).

Since no one approach to teaching beginning reading has been found to be superior for instruction, researchers began to explore the environments of children who seemingly learned to read spontaneously before formal instruction commenced (Clay, 1972; Durkin, 1974). The results of these studies indicated that children who had early reading abilities came from literate environments, where reading and writing activities were used often by others in the child's family or immediate environment. Reading aloud was a common activity often done with the child (Bennett, 1986). Children from literate environments were encouraged to participate in reading and writing activities, which they selected for themselves. These children were also found in secure and supportive environments, where participation in literate endeavors was met with positive encouragement. Environmental factors, such as socio-economic level of the parents, educational level of the parents, and the verbal interaction among family members, affected a child's reading development (Burns et al., 1988).

Researchers have found that students in classrooms which have psychologically secure, safe, supportive environments had a tendency to have less trouble learning

than did children in non-supportive environments (Holdaway, 1979; Goodman, 1986; Leeper, Witherspoon & Day, 1984; Peetoom, 1986). Risk-taking has been identified as an important aspect of learning because by attempting something new, learning can take place (Spiegel, 1978). Students did not feel free to take risks and attempt learning in an environment that was not supportive. Environments which encouraged risk-taking, with acknowledgement for attempts at learning as well as correct answers, helped beginning readers develop into competent, successful readers (Martin, 1987).

Clark (1982) and Dixon (1984) reported that knowledge about the conventions and mechanisms of print and the knowledge we often take for granted about books, such as front, back, beginning, end, punctuation, spacing, words and letters, were important aspects of developing literacy. Conventions and mechanisms about print were learned best from repeated exposure and involvement with printed text. Understanding basic concepts about print was an aspect of beginning reading overlooked by many teachers. Teachers assumed that students knew these concepts about print; yet research has shown that many beginning readers were unaware of these basic concepts, even at the second grade level (Alexander, 1988).

Bridge (1979) found that teachers who used predictable reading materials for beginning instruction in reading and

writing produced readers that possessed greater sight word vocabularies. These children also used context clues better and held more positive feelings about reading than did children who were taught with a traditional basal reading program.

Based on personal classroom experiences and observations in numerous educational settings, Don Holdaway (1979), aided by colleagues, developed a beginning reading program which was built upon many of the techniques other researchers had found to be beneficial for beginning reading instruction. His technique is known as the shared-reading approach. It is also known as the big book approach to reading. The big book approach to beginning reading incorporated the use of an enlarged format of traditional-sized books, so that all children in a group could readily view the print and pictures. The big book approach to beginning reading also depended on the use of predictable materials which children enjoy.

During the 1950s, some publishing companies used big books as a part of their basal reading programs (Peterson, 1987; Robinson et al., 1962). These big books consisted of large cards which accompanied the students' first pre-primer. Each big book had the cover, title page, text, and pictures of the first stories enlarged so an entire group could see the material. The basal readers used during this time had stilted language and stories which had little

interest for the children. Many of the stories were actually non-stories (Carbo, 1987). An example from a student text which had enlarged text to accompany it is (Robinson et al., 1962, pp. 4-10):

Go, go, go,
Go, Dick, go.
Help, help!
Look, Dick.
Dick! Dick!
Help Jane.
Go help Jane.

The texts in the 1950s were enlarged so that a group of students could read together. Likewise, the big book approach used in the 1970s and 1980s had enlarged print and pictures so that groups of children could see the print and read together. However, the language of the text was not stilted as it was in the past. Using predictable books, where children can easily anticipate upcoming text, was an important aspect of the big book approach in the 1970s and 1980s. This approach also used big books throughout the beginning reading program, not limiting the enlarged print to a few introductory lessons as was done in the 1950s.

Teachers who used the big book approach in the 1970s and 1980s encouraged children to join in with the reading of the text. This instructional technique was based on traditional bedtime story experiences which occurred in many homes. By enlarging the book, children could view the print and the pictures in the selected book, and have experiences similar to that of the child who was read to at

home in a one-to-one situation. Children in homes where bedtime story experiences were common learned about conventions and mechanisms of print, an important prerequisite for reading, in a natural, meaningful manner (Butler and Clay, 1983; Horton, 1978). It has been Holdaway's (1979) contention that by replicating the bedtime story setting in the classroom, by using big books, those children who did not come from homes where a bedtime story had been a tradition would receive the benefits that the children from such homes had received.

Holdaway (1979) did not claim to have the answers for all of the problems teachers of beginning reading encounter. He did claim to have an approach which would put children in a more literate environment than traditional beginning reading approaches. By using an enlarged format and the shared reading approach, the teacher established a safe, secure environment where children enjoyed learning. Learning was conducted through immersion in a literate environment, where text which was of interest to children was used, and where children had some choice in the text selection, rather than learning isolated skills which appeared meaningless in themselves. Using the enlarged format allowed children to view the materials from which they were expected to learn.

The use of predictable text helped the children feel confident since they were able to participate in the

reading because of their knowledge of the familiar, repetitious materials (Barrett, 1982; Bridge, 1979; Hall, 1981; Lynch, 1986). The use of the enlarged format enabled children to view the print and learn about the conventions of print such as spacing, left-to-right progression, punctuation, and front-to-back progression. Learning that the print contained the message, not the pictures, was another concept readily acquired from exposure to enlarged texts. Learning sight words in a meaningful context was another benefit when using an enlarged format where children can actually see the words. The big book approach for beginning reading instruction was one aspect of a whole language curriculum at the primary level (Dixon, 1984).

The big book approach to beginning reading has used predictable materials which have been found to be beneficial to beginning readers (Bridge, 1979). Holdaway (1979) and his colleagues believed that enlarging the print of predictable materials for beginning readers helped the students learn to read. Since this belief was based on observational data, a need for empirical study was evident. The use of the big book approach in a beginning reading program may help more children develop into readers than other traditional approaches to teaching beginning reading (Slaughter, 1983). A big book approach to beginning reading may help children learn the basic concepts about print which were often taken for granted by teachers

(Alexander, 1988). A big book approach to beginning reading may help children acquire sight vocabulary knowledge using meaningful text (Slaughter, 1983).

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to determine if there were differences in understanding of print concepts, sight vocabulary knowledge, and attitudes about reading between kindergarten children who had been taught for one semester with predictable books of traditional size and children who had been taught for one semester with the same predictable books in a big book format.

Need for the Study

The use of big books is becoming popular with teachers in the United States (Holdaway, 1979; Slaughter, 1983; Tierney et al., 1985; Zdaniak, 1984). While incorporating the use of big books into the curriculum appears to be beneficial to students, there is little research to indicate whether or not the use of this approach is actually advantageous for beginning readers (Holdaway, 1979; Tierney et al., 1985).

The construction, coloring, and preparation of a big book requires a considerable amount of teacher time (Slaughter, 1983). At present there are very few big books available for teachers to purchase. The big books that are

available for purchase are expensive. Therefore, if there is no clear advantage to using big books in a school district's beginning reading program, then the cost and the time commitment for teachers should be questioned.

Using predictable reading materials with students in beginning reading programs has been shown to be beneficial for students (Bridge, 1979). If the predictability of the materials used in a big book is the only factor that facilitates learning, then predictable materials of traditional size can be used in the classroom for much less cost and with less of a storage inconvenience. Also, time commitment on the part of the teacher would be greatly reduced if they did not have to develop big books to use for their reading programs.

To this point there are only observational data to support the use of the big book approach to beginning reading. An experimental study could add validity to the use of the big book approach to beginning reading instruction. Holdaway (1979), the primary advocate of the big book approach to beginning reading, suggested that research needs to be done to examine the use of this approach.

Though there are many methods for teaching beginning reading, no single technique has proven effective for all students (Aukerman, 1984). By using identical predictable materials, which have been found to be beneficial in beginning reading instruction (Bridge et al., 1983; Lynch,

1986), in both the experimental and the control groups, this researcher hoped to determine if the enlarged print is advantageous in beginning reading instruction. If using big books could significantly increase the number of young children who meet with reading success, this information would be of value to the field of education.

Questions to Be Answered

(1) Will there be a significant difference in concepts about print knowledge and sight word recognition between kindergarten students when taught with traditional-sized books or when taught with big books?

(2) Will there be a significant difference in attitude about reading between kindergarten students when taught with traditional-sized books or when taught with big books?

(3) Will there be a significant difference in concepts about print knowledge and sight word recognition between kindergarten children taught with traditional-sized books who frequently miss school and kindergarten children taught with big books who frequently miss school?

(4) Will there be a significant difference in concepts about print knowledge scores and sight word recognition scores between children taught by different teachers?

(5) Will there be a significant difference in concepts about print knowledge and sight word recognition between children who turn age six before December first of the school year and children who turn age six after December first of the school year, who are taught using different sized texts?

(6) What perceptions do teachers who use big books have about using big books in their classrooms?

General Procedures

During May of 1987, the director of curriculum and instruction for School District 5, Kalispell, Montana, was contacted regarding conducting this research project in that district. After her approval to proceed, principals, kindergarten teachers, and the district superintendent were contacted regarding the project. All those contacted approved of and agreed to participate in the research project.

In the fall of the 1987-1988 school year, prior to the beginning of school, the kindergarten teachers were individually instructed in classroom procedures to be used during the course of the research project.

During the first week of school, a random sample of kindergarten students were individually tested to determine their knowledge about print concepts and their level of sight word acquisition.

For five months (one semester) of the 1987-1988 school year, predictable big books were placed in half of the kindergarten sections and predictable traditional-sized books with the same content were placed in the other half of the kindergarten sections. The researcher visited each classroom each week during the research project to exchange books used for the project.

Letters were sent to parents of the kindergarten children informing them of the research project and the use of big books in the kindergarten program (see Appendix A).

At the conclusion of the research project, the students from the original random sample who had remained in the school system were individually posttested. Means from the gain scores between the pretests and the posttests were computed and analyzed to determine if there were significant differences in knowledge acquisition about print concepts and sight vocabulary between the experimental group and the control group. Information regarding student attitudes about reading was also gathered at the conclusion of the research project. Narrative information regarding teacher perceptions about using big books in the kindergarten program was also collected.

Limitations of the Study

(1) Intact kindergarten classrooms were used.

(2) The area of the country where the research took place was not randomly selected.

(3) The study was limited to only one school district; therefore, only one reading series was used in conjunction with the research questions.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this research project, the following definitions will be employed:

(1) Concepts about print knowledge: Knowledge regarding the understanding of basic concepts about print necessary for beginning reading was determined by administering Marie M. Clay's "Concepts About Print Test." The print concepts tested by this instrument included: beginning and ending of a book, that print contains messages, directionality, return sweep, word-by-word matching, punctuation meanings, capital and lowercase letter associations, and letter and word differences.

(2) Sight word recognition: Sight word recognition knowledge was determined by administering Marie M. Clay's (1979) "Ready to Read Word Test." A sight word

is a word which is recognized instantly without the use of word analysis skills (Alexander, 1988).

(3) Attitude--children: Attitudes of children regarding reading were determined by an instrument devised by the researcher based on the "Heathington Primary Attitude Scale" (Heathington, 1976). Attitudes were defined as the feelings children had about reading at the library, outside, after school, in a quiet place, at bedtime, on a trip, when it is warm, instead of watching television or coloring, and when a teacher read aloud.

(4) Perception--adult: Perceptions of the teachers regarding the big books' effectiveness were determined by a structured interview instrument devised by the researcher. Teacher perceptions were defined as attitudes teachers held about using big books in relation to enjoyment, student attention to the story, amount of questions students asked, plans for future use of big books, and other benefits students may have derived due to exposure to big books.

(5) Predictable book: A predictable book is one which enables a child to readily anticipate following text. Predictable books for this research employed at least one of the following schemes: (a) a rhyming scheme; (b) a repeated refrain; (c) a cumulative pattern; (d) a cultural framework scheme (days of the week,

counting scheme, months of the year, color words, an alphabet sequence, etc.); or (e) picture clues.

(6) Big book: A big book is a story or poem which is enlarged to a size of approximately 18 by 20 inches, where the words are printed so that they can be seen easily at a distance of 15 feet.

(7) Frequently miss school: Refers to a child who missed 10 days of school or more during the semester of the study.

(8) Semester: The time period from September 1, 1987 until January 22, 1988.

(9) Young kindergarten children: Refers to children in kindergarten who turned age six on or after December 1, 1987.

(10) Old kindergarten children: Refers to children in kindergarten who turned age six before December 1, 1987.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter will be divided into five main parts. These five parts include: Early Readers, Whole Language Curriculum, Favorite Books, Predictability in Beginning Reading, and Shared-Book Experiences.

Early Readers

While most students enter school at various stages of readiness for reading, there are those who enter school already reading. Over the past two decades, particular attention has been paid to these students. Researchers have tried to determine what, if anything, has caused these students to have reading abilities unlike those of their peers (Clay, 1972; Durkin, 1966; Durkin, 1974; Holdaway, 1979). These researchers have found common trends among the children they have studied.

Researchers found that children who were able to read before the formal instruction of school began came from environments where they were surrounded by language usage. Reading was often observed by the children. Each child was

provided with a variety of language arts opportunities of his/her own choosing and met with positive reinforcement for participating in language experiences. Language experiences included, but were not limited to, access to a wide variety of books, magazines, paper, pencils, and crayons. Early readers were read to often by siblings or parents. They were listened to when they had questions to ask about reading and the questions were answered by a caring respondent. These early readers were in a secure and supportive environment where they felt free to attempt reading at their own level of development without harsh punishment or reprisals from others when errors were made during their attempts at literacy acquisition. An environment where risk-taking with language was accepted was the norm for students who entered school as readers (Fisher, 1987).

Forester (1977) found that children from environments, such as those described above, learned to read in what she termed a "natural" way. Natural reading had many parallels with the natural way in which children learned to speak. Early readers were not taught rules to follow in order to read, but rather learned from the modeling they saw in the world about them. This environment was one where reading and language usage were important but not stressed to unnatural proportions. Learning took place where there was a positive attitude about learning to use all aspects of

language in a natural manner. Specific attempts to teach decoding skills for literacy acquisition were not stressed (Durkin, 1966).

Durkin (1966) also found that the children she studied were curious, were persistent, were self-reliant, had good memories, and had the ability to concentrate. Yet these students were found to be heterogeneous as far as IQ, mental age, and home environment were concerned.

Manning and Manning (1984) found early readers from low socioeconomic environments had language experience backgrounds similar to the language experience backgrounds of early readers from higher socioeconomic environments.

When looking at early readers, the important variables found by researchers were that these children came from homes where parents or siblings readily answered questions about reading, where there was exposure to reading materials, and where oral reading was done often (Forester, 1977).

Whole Language Curriculum

The whole language philosophy for literacy development in school settings had practices similar to the practices found in the homes of children who came to school as readers. A whole language curriculum advocated the philosophy that reading, writing, listening, and speaking were part of the overall picture of language development

and should have been done in a natural manner, not in abstract ways which were unrelated to the experiences of the children who were supposed to be learning the language (Goodman, 1986).

Whole language teachers believed that learning to read should be as natural to learn as learning to speak is for younger children. Researchers in whole language saw that oral language was learned in a positive environment, where meaning was conveyed through learning. They asked, then, why students in schools were expected to learn other parts of the language arts, reading and writing, by having the language broken into parts, and having the reason for communication absent from the learning experiences (Goodman, 1986).

Researchers with a whole language philosophy believed that learning to read and write should be an integrated curriculum, learned in a natural way, where obtaining meaning from learning experiences was the purpose for the learning (Goodman et al., 1987). The environment where formal learning took place should then be similar to the environment where early readers had learned to read naturally.

In a whole language curriculum, teachers needed to help students see language learning as meaningful. The whole language philosophy was based on the premise that learning is an exciting undertaking, where teachers and

learners share the responsibility for learning, where children and instructors value and appreciate each other as coworkers who are eager to learn material that they view as meaningful for them. There was the belief that each individual learner would learn according to his/his individual developmental level if the opportunities were made available (Fisher, 1987).

The whole language philosophy put the language, the culture, the community, the learner, and the teacher together to make language learning easier, more interesting, more stimulating, and more meaningful for the learners (Goodman, 1986). Language learning was considered an important aspect of learning for students because all humans needed to be able to communicate. But too often that learning became senseless, abstract, and vague once a child entered the formal school setting. By using meaningful communication activities with the students, by offering children daily opportunities to read and write, and by modeling in a positive manner the value of communication, a teacher in a whole language environment encouraged language development in the students being taught (Brountas, 1987).

Whole language programs emphasized the need to establish environments where children felt free to take risks in order to learn (Goodman, 1986). The environment where children were learning needed to be a warm and inviting place. Children should have opportunities to

talk, listen, read, and write about meaningful, purposeful activities (Walton, 1985). Only in such an environment would children see a reason for taking a risk which leads to learning new information.

A whole language philosophy was based on the premise that language could and should be easy, a natural part of language development. Barrett (1982) suggested that teachers should help students discover the enjoyment of books. Children who enjoyed good books would want to learn more about print and would grow in their ability to read. Goodman (1986, p. 8) listed what he believed helped to make language learning easy.

It's real and natural.
It's whole.
It's sensible.
It's interesting.
It's relevant.
It belongs to the learner.
It's part of a real event.
It has social utility.
It has purpose for the learner.
The learner chooses to use it.
It's accessible to the learner.
The learner has power to use it.

Language learning has been made difficult in many educational settings. According to Cochrane et al. (1984), schools have made reading difficult by stressing the skills approach which was more concerned with mistakes that children made than with the reading process itself. According to Goodman (1986, p. 8), the following is what has been done to make language difficult to learn:

It's artificial.
It's broken into bits and pieces.
It's nonsense.
It's dull and uninteresting.
It's irrelevant to the learner.
It belongs to somebody else.
It's out of context.
It has no social value.
It has no discernible purpose.
It's imposed by someone else.
It's inaccessible.
The learner is powerless.

A whole language approach to language arts instruction was dependent on the teacher for implementation. A whole language approach to instruction did not have specified materials and curriculum guidelines with a scope and sequence for an instructor to follow. A whole language approach to language arts instruction was considered a philosophy, not a packaged program. When a teacher made a decision to use a whole language approach, he/she accepted the responsibility for teaching each student at his or her individual developmental level using meaningful, interesting, relevant, real activities where the learning environment was student-centered rather than teacher-centered (Goodman, 1986).

A whole language approach to reading instruction was based on the belief that the basic responsibility of a school was to educate students in the use of language and to be able to think and use the knowledge which they acquire (Goodman et al., 1987). When teachers followed these beliefs, they based instruction on materials which

were of interest to students and where students had input as to the selection of the materials to be used for instructional purposes. In early grades, the use of selected favorite books of the students was one consideration of the teacher when selecting materials for instructional purposes.

Favorite Books

Children who have been read to regularly have developed strong ties to selected books (Holdaway, 1979; Trelease, 1982). These books have become favorite selections which have been asked for during reading sessions repeatedly. Bettelheim and Zelan (1981) believed that these selected books met some concern of the child and helped the child deal with a problem. When a certain problem was resolved, the child would change his/her favorite book selection. When parents reread favorite books to children, they helped the child deal with a problem. Children who had no apparent problem also developed strong desires for hearing certain books read (Trelease, 1982).

In an interview by Park (1982), Holdaway described stages through which a book passed as it became a child's favorite. First, a book was read for enjoyment. This procedure was often done as a bedtime story with a young child. There were no demands placed on the child. The

time was spent in a pleasant way, as a relaxing end to a day. At times the child did ask questions about the text and these questions were answered and discussed.

During the second stage, the child asked for the book to be reread. The book was asked for again and again, until the child could repeat many of the words, phrases, or sentences in the story.

The third stage was when the child spent time alone with the book, reading to him/herself. While some people believe that the child was simply memorizing the story, not actually reading it, the fact remained that the child did spend independent time with the book on his/her own volition.

Holdaway (1979) believed that a classroom reading program could be built based on children's enjoyment of selected favorite books. A reading program using favorite books of children would be more meaningful for the children involved with the learning. More meaningful text, rather than the stale, simplistic materials found in basal readers, would help children develop into better readers (Bettelheim and Zelan, 1981; Weaver, 1980).

In 1967, teachers in New Zealand initiated a beginning reading program based on using favorite books of the children (Holdaway, 1979). When basing a reading program on favorite books of children, the teachers did not abdicate all areas of control over text selection. While

they did not control vocabulary in the way basal texts do, they did control material difficulty by choosing appropriate text format for the group of children under their tutelage (Park, 1982).

Smith (1978) believed that the only way children could learn to read was by reading. Teachers who followed the beliefs of Smith, and other psycholinguistic researchers, had difficulty starting young children on the path toward reading because these children had none of the basic reading abilities usually associated with reading (Kavale and Schreiner, 1978).

Teachers had to build on what children did know about language. Children entering school did have knowledge about the structure of language, syntax, and the meaning of language, semantics. Because of their experiences with oral language for four or five years, children knew a great deal about the English language (Weaver, 1980).

Another important aspect in teaching beginning reading was found to be using materials which had meaning and were interesting to the readers. This could be done by using predictable text (Goodman, 1976).

Predictability in Beginning Reading

Predictability has been found to be an important aspect of text to consider when selecting materials for beginning readers (Lynch, 1986). Predictable texts helped

students remember what was written, thus helped them feel like readers as they were able to follow the story when the teacher read aloud. Using predictable books helped children learn because they knew that they could learn. Using predictable books helped children become risk-takers when dealing with text, an important aspect for successful reading development (Bridge, 1979).

Predictable text could be materials which children dictated. When children used their own dictated stories, they had such personal involvement that they were able to predict the material when they read it back to another person (Ashton-Warner, 1963). Allen (1976) believed that readers need to know four things to be able to read: (1) the sound of the material, (2) its meaning, (3) its syntax, and (4) what it looks like in print. Stories written by children themselves had all of these components which made those stories easy for the writer to read.

Reading materials could also be predictable because of their patterned or structured format (Bridge et al., 1983). Predictable materials include text with repetitive structures, text based on cultural or linguistic structures such as days of the week, months of the year and numerals, text with cumulative structure, or text with a rhyming scheme. Because of its predictable structure, students were able to join in with the reading of the material (Bridge, 1979). Bridge et al. (1983) conducted studies

which have shown that the use of predictable materials with beginning readers helped the children acquire sight vocabulary, use context clues with unfamiliar words, and created more positive feelings about reading than with the use of preprimers.

By using predictable text, children could read better because they were able to utilize their knowledge of semantic, syntactic and graphophonic cues, while reading meaningful text which also was enjoyable (Bridge, 1979; Pickert, 1978). Reading fluency was also more naturally developed by using predictable materials (Park, 1982).

The use of predictable materials with beginning readers has been of value both to teachers who work with young children and researchers as they search for instructional means which benefit more children (Bridge, 1979; Bridge et al., 1983; Holdaway, 1979; Park, 1982; Pickert, 1978; Slaughter, 1983).

Shared-Book Experiences

At least 165 different methods can be identified for teaching beginning reading (Aukerman, 1984). All methods have claimed to be "sure-fire" approaches, with the ability to teach all children (Slaughter, 1983). Don Holdaway (1979) has devised another approach for teaching beginning reading. His program was based on using children's favorite books where there was a one-to-one relationship

during the reading process and predictable materials were used for most of the text selections (Slaughter, 1983).

Holdaway (1979) called his program a shared-book experience. A shared-book approach was when teachers did just that -- shared reading experiences with their classes. Teachers shared the enjoyment of discovering good books with students. They shared an awareness of how print functions and the satisfaction of becoming an effective language user. There have been numerous writings regarding how teachers can promote a shared-book atmosphere in their classrooms (Barrett, 1982). One way to approach a shared-book program when teaching beginning readers was through the use of big books.

A big book was a story that was enlarged to the point where a group of children were able to see the words and the illustrations on the page clearly. Any story which children enjoy could be expanded into a big book format, but Holdaway advocated the use of predictable books for the best results (Park, 1982).

By being able to see the words on the page, the children in the group were able to follow along with the teacher during the reading of the story. This procedure was intended to be similar to the experiences of young children from homes with books. By using the big book, children could anticipate words and eventually read along with the leader. Other skills were learned with the big

book lessons that many preschool children learned during bedtime story sessions at home (Holdaway, 1979). Big book lessons helped students learn concepts about print such as left-to-right progression, top-to-bottom of the page sequencing, spacing, punctuation, and the difference between letters and words. Beginning readers learned to associate a written word with a spoken word. They learned that it was the words that were read, not the pictures. The student learned to predict parts of the story, a procedure that all capable readers unconsciously use during reading (Weaver, 1980). The students learned to make self-corrections during their reading, thus reading with meaning. Students learned sight vocabulary and letter-sound associations to assist them in the reading task. Because the print could be seen by all of the children in the group, it was believed that more learning took place (Holdaway, 1979).

Holdaway's program was developed in the late 1960s in New Zealand with children during their first three years of schooling (Park, 1982). Holdaway (1979) reported positive results from the use of shared-book experiences. He claimed that none of the methods used in the instruction with big books were new to teaching. He felt that he had simply taken the oldest form of natural teaching, that of the bedtime story situation, and adapted it for use in the

classroom with a group of students rather than an individual child.

Indeed, as Holdaway (1979) pointed out, many of the methods used in his shared-book experience are not new to the field of teaching beginning reading. Enlarged charts have been part of the beginning reading program for many years (Dolch, 1950). In the 1940s and 1950s enlarged charts, known as experience charts, were in many reading programs. Experiences of the students were recorded in the students' words on chart paper. During this time period, teachers were encouraged to correct any grammatical errors that a student might have made during the retelling of an experience. During this time period, the experience charts were not considered to be a part of the actual reading program (Dolch, 1950). The experience charts were valued because they emphasized experiences that children had which helped them develop capabilities, and because the charts helped develop social capacities.

In addition to the experience charts, companies such as Houghton-Mifflin and Scott, Foresman and Company, have had big books to accompany their earliest basal readers since the 1940s (Ellison, 1987; Murnin, 1987). These big books were sets of large cards which had a reproduction of the cover, the title page, and the first few stories in the series. They were considered an effective way to gain

attention from students because all eyes could concentrate at the same time on a printed page (Robinson et al., 1962).

The stories in basal readers in the 1940s and 1950s used stilted language which actually had little interest for children (Carbo, 1987). In comparison, the shared-book experiences of Holdaway used literature which was often selected by the children in the classroom, and which has been recognized as literature well-liked, enjoyed, and appreciated by the children who are involved with the reading. The language in the books selected for a shared-reading experience was not stilted, but did use the criteria of predictability, which made it interesting and easy to understand by beginning readers.

The shared-reading program by Holdaway (1979) was designed to use big books with readers as long as the interest was present in the learners, rather than limiting the experience for the first few stories in the beginning reading program. The use of big books is considered to be a definite part of the beginning reading program, compared to the programs in the 1940s and 1950s, which held the enlarged charts to be simply an attention-getting device (Dolch, 1950).

In recent years, shared-book experiences have gained popularity in the United States (Slaughter, 1983). Butler (1984) outlined some suggested stages for using shared-book experiences. Phase one consisted of having the teacher

read a story to the whole class using the enlarged copy of the story. The teacher pointed to each word as it was vocalized so the children could see exactly what was being read. After the story, there was time for questions and discussion of the story. The teacher then went back and repeated any refrain or chant that had been in the story, encouraging the children to repeat these with him/her. From the reading and discussion, the children were able to obtain meaning from the selection which had been read.

Combs (1987) and Perez (1986) stressed the importance of modeling by teachers as they instruct students. Modeling helped children realize the value and enjoyment that came from books. Depending on what the teacher has modeled, children have learned about the enthusiasm for books the teacher held, or they have learned that reading is not actually as important as the teacher verbalized. The model the teacher displayed for enjoyment with the text was a vital component to the overall process when using big books in the shared-reading experiences. The enthusiasm displayed by the teacher while reading from the big book is infectious (Lynch, 1986).

The second phase was carried out the following day. The teacher reread the story. After several stories were introduced, the children were able to select the story to be read for the day. The children joined in, reading any parts of the story that they knew. After the story, some

type of activity related to the story was carried out. These activities ranged from close activities to acting out parts of the story or creating some aspect of the story with clay, paint, or another medium.

The final phase of the shared-book experience was having the children reread the story on their own. They could use the large text and read as a group or read from the individual, traditional-sized texts available with the same text material as the enlarged text.

These phases of the shared-book experiences were to copy the phases the individual children experienced when they were read to at home in a one-to-one situation.

Since their introduction, shared-book experiences have been expanded (Slaughter, 1983). Children have been encouraged to make their own big books, which have been very predictable because of each child's ownership of the text. Suggestions for expanding the use of favorite books into older grades and using the big book technique with remedial readers have been offered (Zdaniak, 1984).

An important aspect in using the shared-book experience was the environment in which it was used. Shared-book experiences were to be done in a cooperative, noncompetitive atmosphere, where children were not over-corrected for attempts at reading (Dixon, 1984; Holdaway, 1979; Tierney et al., 1985). Beginning reading taught in this type of

atmosphere, using other techniques, has also been found to have positive results (Veatch et al., 1979).

Slaughter (1983) questioned whether the use of big books was actually a new approach for teaching beginning reading or simply a fad. Holdaway (1979) and Tierney et al. (1985) have indicated that the use of big books will not answer all of the problems for beginning reading programs. But, experiences with this approach have met many needs for individual children because it is a flexible program, which takes children's personal experiences into account, and makes reading meaningful for the children involved.

Newman (1985) reviewed what researchers who deal with emergent literacy have uncovered during the past decade. Children who have dealt with language in written and spoken forms expected it to be meaningful. Children have used what they knew about their world to assist them in making sense out of the print they have encountered. Children have been willing to take risks to learn more about language when the environment where they have learned has been one where they were not censored for their apparent lack of knowledge. Children have used knowledge about one form of language -- reading, writing, speaking, or listening -- to assist them in learning new information about one of the other forms of language.

When these strategies have been allowed to operate in a classroom, children have felt comfortable exploring language, thus learning (Newman, 1986). Teachers who have accepted students as curious people who want to learn, and have acknowledged that each student is a unique individual, who has a wealth of experiences to draw from to help him/her learn new information, have had success helping students learn in an environment which encouraged students to take chances to learn (Goodman, 1986).

Newman (1986) stressed the importance of the environment where children learn. Children learned the best in an atmosphere where they were immersed in active, purposeful language activities. When big books have been used with beginning readers, the environments have been the types that are supportive of children who were actively involved with purposeful, meaningful language activities (Holdaway, 1979).

CHAPTER 3

PROCEDURES

Introduction

The problem of this study was to determine if there were differences in understanding of print concepts, sight vocabulary knowledge, and attitudes about reading between kindergarten children who had been taught for one semester with predictable books of traditional size and children who had been taught for one semester with the same predictable books in a big book format. The gender of the students and the regularity of school attendance were considered when the information gathered was analyzed.

This chapter includes a description of the population and sampling procedure, design of the study, procedures, demographic description of Kalispell, Montana, location of the research project, statistical hypotheses, method employed to analyze the data, precautions taken for accuracy, and the statistical treatment utilized.

Population Description

The population for this study was the kindergarten students in School District 5 located in Kalispell,

Montana. There were five public elementary schools in Kalispell with 12 sections of kindergarten during the time of this study. There were a total of 245 students registered to attend kindergarten during the 1987-1988 school year in Kalispell with six full-time teachers, each teaching one morning and one afternoon class. A frequency distribution of the 1987 kindergarten classes by sex and number of students in each section is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of the 1987 Kalispell, Montana kindergarten classes.

Section	Class Size	Males	Females
1	24	13	11
2	22	11	11
3	19	5	14
4	20	11	9
5	19	6	13
6	17	7	10
7	17	9	8
8	20	12	8
9	24	11	13
10	23	15	8
11	21	13	8
12	19	10	9

Table 2 depicts the locations for each kindergarten section and identifies each as a morning or an afternoon section.

Table 2. Identification of kindergarten sections in Kalispell, Montana schools.

Section	School	Class Time
1	Russell	AM
2	Russell	PM
3	Elrod	PM
4	Elrod	AM
5	Elrod	PM
6	Edgerton	AM
7	Edgerton	AM
8	Edgerton	PM
9	Hedges	AM
10	Hedges	PM
11	Peterson	AM
12	Peterson	PM

Design of the Study

This study was a quasi-experimental study with six control groups and six treatment groups. Table 3 defines the groups of kindergarten children. Each teacher instructed one treatment group using big books and one control group using the same text in a traditional-sized format. The treatment groups were assigned randomly.

According to the director of curriculum and instruction for School District 5, children who entered kindergarten classes in Kalispell, Montana were assigned to sections in the school nearest their home. Students who

left the district during the course of the research project were not included in the final analysis of the study.

Table 3. Control groups and treatment groups.

Section	AM	PM	Treatment	Control
1	X		X	
2		X		X
3		X	X	
4	X			X
5		X		X
6	X		X	
7	X			X
8		X	X	
9	X			X
10		X	X	
11	X		X	
12		X		X

Procedures

On May 4, 1987, the director of curriculum for School District 5, Kalispell, Montana was contacted regarding doing the research for this project in that district. The proposal for the research was presented to the building administrators during a principals' meeting on May 11, 1987. Permission to proceed with the research was secured from the school superintendent on the same day.

Kindergarten teachers had the project explained to them in detail at a teachers' meeting on May 19, 1987. The kindergarten teachers were asked to participate in this research project on a voluntary basis. All of them agreed to participate.

Big books and accompanying traditional-sized books with predictable content were ordered from publishers (see Appendix C) who produced big books. Big books produced by the researcher, with traditional-sized books to accompany them, were also used.

Kindergarten teachers met with the researcher prior to the beginning of the research project to learn how to consistently use the big books in their classrooms. Individual meetings were held with each teacher in her classroom setting during the week prior to the opening of school for the 1987-1988 school year.

There were 12 sections of kindergarten in Kalispell, Montana at the beginning of the 1987-1988 school year. All of the teachers participated in the research project; there were six teachers and 245 children involved in the study. Six of the kindergarten sections had big books with predictable text read to them, while the other six sections had the same texts read, but from traditional-sized books. Each teacher in the study had one kindergarten session where she read big books and another session where she read traditional-sized books with the same content.

The decision as to which teachers used the big books in the morning or afternoon and which used the traditional-sized books was randomly determined before the beginning of the research project.

A letter was sent to parents of the kindergarten children informing them of the research project and the use of big books in the kindergarten program (see Appendix A). There were no responses, questions, or criticisms from any parent.

During the first week of the research project, a random sampling of the kindergarten children were individually tested by the researcher and a trained assistant using Marie M. Clay's "Concepts About Print Test" and "Ready to Read Word Test" (see Appendix D). These instruments identified the children's awareness of printed language concepts and indicated the extent to which a child had accumulated a basic reading vocabulary of frequently used words.

In preparation for the testing, the researcher and an assistant reviewed the tests and discussed any questions either had about the test instruments. Then each tester administered the instruments twice. Problems encountered were discussed following these practice sessions. Each tester then administered the test while the other kept score. The results of these testing sessions were compared to establish inter-rater reliability.

The "Concepts About Print Test" and the "Ready to Read Word Test" were then individually administered to 112 randomly selected kindergarten students, of which 101 were posttested and therefore form the basis of this assessment. The pretest results were compared using one-way analysis of variance. There were no statistically significant differences between the scores of the two groups on either of the test instruments. Thus it can be inferred that the experimental and control groups began the study at the same levels with regard to concepts about print and sight word vocabulary. These data are reported in Tables 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Table 4. One-way ANOVA table for pretest scores between experimental group and control group based on "Concepts About Print Test."

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-Ratio	p-Value
Between groups	11.5001	1	11.5001	.9666	.3279
Within groups	117.8600	99	11.8976		
Total	1189.3663	100			

Table 5. Means for pretest scores between experimental group and control group based on "Concepts About Print Test" (N indicated in parentheses).

	Experimental Group	Control Group
Mean Scores	6.58 (51)	7.25 (50)

Table 6. One-way ANOVA table for pretest scores between experimental group and control group based on "Ready to Read Word Test."

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-Ratio	p-Value
Between groups	.0294	1	.0294	.0123	.9119
Within groups	236.2082	99	2.3859		
Total	236.2376	100			

Table 7. Means for pretest scores between experimental group and control group based on "Ready to Read Word Test" (N indicated in parentheses).

	Experimental Group	Control Group
Mean Scores	.260 (51)	.294 (50)

The experimental group used big books three days a week for five months of the school year. Teachers began using big books following the administration of "Concepts About Print Test" and "Ready to Read Word Test" on September 14, 1987. They continued using big books for five consecutive months. Teachers in the experimental groups read three big books each week during the experimental time period. A card was attached to each big book and the teacher recorded the amount of time spent reading each big book to the class (see Appendix F).

An easel which was appropriate for holding the big book was provided for each teacher. The teacher pointed to the words in the big book as she read to the students. The big books were displayed in the classroom so the students could use them during any free time they had during the day. Traditional-sized texts of the same story were also available in the library section of the classroom. The big books read each week were selected by the researcher and were distributed to the teachers on Thursday afternoons or Friday mornings. The researcher rotated the big books so that by the conclusion of the experimental time period, every class had exposure to the same big books (see Appendix G).

The control groups had the same three stories read to them each week as the experimental groups, but from a traditional-sized text. Questions were not initiated by the teacher; however, any questions these children asked regarding the story or the print were answered. Since the amount of time spent with text was not the issue addressed by the research project, teachers were encouraged by the researcher to spend the same amount of time reading the traditional-sized books as they had spent reading the big books. A card was attached to each traditional-sized book and the teacher recorded the amount of time spent reading each traditional-sized book to the class (see Appendix F).

The research was continued for the first semester of the 1987-1988 school year. The researcher visited each school each week to exchange big books and traditional-sized books for the teachers. Any questions or problems were discussed at that time. Comments made by teachers regarding their observations of the children's reactions to the big books during the week were shared with and recorded by the researcher at that time.

Children who entered the school after the third week of the semester were not included in the study. Also, students who left the school prior to the end of the semester were not included in the study. One child who had been hospitalized at the time of posttesting was eliminated from the study.

At the conclusion of the first semester for the 1987-1988 school year, the research project was completed. There were 101 children from the group of 112 children in the original random sample who were individually posttested at the conclusion of the project. Parallel test forms of the original test instruments, Marie M. Clay's "Concepts About Print Test" and "Ready to Read Word Test," were readministered to the test subjects.

An instrument based on Betty Heathington's (1976) "Primary Attitude Scale" (see Appendix E) was developed by the researcher. The instrument was used to determine the attitudes about reading the kindergarten students had at

the conclusion of the research project and to determine if attitudes differed between students taught with big books and students taught with traditional-sized books. The attitude scale was individually administered to the test subjects at the same time as the other two test instruments.

During the two weeks following the posttest administration, each kindergarten teacher was individually interviewed by the researcher using a structured interview developed by the researcher.

Validation and Reliability of the Test Instrument

The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties: A Diagnostic Survey, developed by Marie Clay in 1972, is a series of tests which includes a variety of methods to identify early reading behavior and detect reading difficulties (Clay, 1979). Two sections of the test were used for establishing concepts about print and sight vocabulary scores for each participant tested.

The "Concepts About Print" section tested the child's knowledge of printed language conventions. "Concepts About Print" was reported as being a sensitive indicator of one group of behaviors which support reading acquisition (Clay, 1979).

This section of the test was normed on 320 urban children aged 5.0 to 7.0 in New Zealand in 1968. Concurrent validity was reported at 0.79 when correlated with the Burt Word Reading Test. Reliability was reported at .095 when the Kuder-Richardson Test was applied (Clay, 1979). Test-retest reliability was reported at 0.73-0.89 by Day and Perkins (cited in Clay, 1979). Day and Perkins (Clay, 1979) also reported the corrected split-half coefficients as being between 0.84-0.88.

The "Ready to Read Word Test" section tests a child's sight word vocabulary. The word lists compiled for this test were high frequency words in reading materials. The score obtained indicated the extent to which a child had acquired basic sight vocabulary.

This section of the test was also normed by Marie Clay on 320 urban children aged 5.0 to 7.0 in New Zealand. Reliability was reported at 0.90 with the Kuder-Richardson Test. Validity was reported as 0.90 when correlated with the Burt Word Reading Test and 0.90 when correlated with the Schonell R1 Word Test (Clay, 1979).

A revised version of the Heathington "Primary Attitude Scale" was used to determine attitudes about reading that the kindergarten students held at the conclusion of the research project. The Heathington "Primary Attitude Scale" consisted of questions regarding student attitudes about reading. Some of the questions on the scale referred to

reading groups in the classroom. Reading groups were not a part of the kindergarten program in Kalispell, Montana; therefore, those questions which referred to reading groups were omitted. The answer sheet on the Heathington instrument used a Likert scale. This sheet was adapted by the researcher for the kindergarten children so there were two choices rather than five (Appendix E).

The revised scale was tested for reliability by administering it in two kindergarten classes, one morning section and one afternoon section, in a town adjacent to the research site. The classrooms in which the revised scale was tested were in a school in a socioeconomic area similar to the research site. The students in the school were randomly assigned to kindergarten sections according to the school principal. The test was administered on February 16, 1988, and readministered two weeks later on February 29, 1988, at the same times of the day. Thirty-two students were involved in the reliability check. A reliability correlation coefficient for the test-retest score was established at .81 (Ferguson, 1981). Minimum acceptance for the reliability coefficient had been set at an r of .70.

A structured interview survey was devised by the researcher to collect data from teachers regarding their perceptions about using big books in the classroom (see Appendix H). The researcher consulted with Dr. Carol

Santa, the curriculum director of School District 5 in Kalispell, Montana, who was a member of the Board of Directors for the International Reading Association, concerning the types of information which would be beneficial to obtain regarding the use of big books in the kindergarten program. With this information, plus knowledge about how children learn to read based on psycholinguistic theory, the researcher devised a structured interview survey aimed at obtaining divergent responses from teachers involved in the research study (see Appendix H).

This structured interview was reviewed with three teachers who were not involved with the research project, but who had used big books in their classrooms. These three teachers were questioned regarding the clarity of the instrument and the responses which they gave were analyzed by the researcher to determine how well the information in question was being communicated. As a result, minor adjustments to the survey were made prior to using the instrument with the teachers involved in the research project.

The information about the use of big books which was collected from teachers during the research project is reported in narrative format (see Appendix H). Information about the use of big books collected from teachers at the conclusion of the study is reported in narrative format in

Chapter 4. The regularity of student attendance and student age were determined by examination of the school records and are reported in Appendix B.

Demographic Description of Kalispell, Montana

A demographic description of Kalispell, Montana, the location of the research project, will aid those in other areas of the country who might be interested in considering the use of big books in their kindergarten programs.

All of the kindergarten sections in Kalispell, Montana, School District 5, were a part of this research project. There were a total of 12 kindergarten sections, in five different elementary schools, located at various points inside the city limits of Kalispell. During the 1987-1988 school year there was one high school with grades 10, 11, and 12. There was one junior high school which contained grades 7, 8, and 9. There was one middle school serving only the sixth grade. These schools, plus five additional private elementary schools, served the city of Kalispell during the time of this study. There was also one community college located in the city of Kalispell.

The following is based on 1980 census information from the State Capitol in Helena, Montana. Kalispell is the county seat of Flathead County, located in northwestern Montana, with a population of 10,648 in 1980 and an

estimated population of 12,247 in 1987. The total population for the county was 61,001 in 1987. The population of Kalispell is predominately white with approximately one percent of the population being American Indian, Eskimo, Asian, Hawaiian, Vietnamese, or of Spanish descent.

There were seven banks in Kalispell with approximately $381,604,206 in deposits. The mean income for households in Kalispell, Montana in 1979 was $17,342.

The principal industries in the county were lumber mills; an aluminum plant; fruit packing plants; semi tool industry which produces industrial machinery parts; and farming of grain, mint, cattle, dairy cattle, and seed potatoes. In 1980, 3159 people who lived in the city had completed high school, 1783 had attended college, and 1295 had completed four or more years of college. Retail trade occupations employed the largest amount of people, as identified by employment group, in Kalispell, Montana.

There were three covered shopping malls in the area and five blocks of downtown shopping. There was one newspaper business which served the county six days a week with an evening paper. There was one local television station which served the area. There was one hospital with 150 beds in the city. There was one alcohol and drug abuse center. There was one city airport located in the city

limits and one international airport which was located four miles outside of the city limits.

Statistical Hypotheses

The following statistical hypotheses tested the questions asked in Chapter 1. Question number one was tested by Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Question number two was tested by Hypothesis 17. Question number three was tested by Hypotheses 7, 8, 9 and 10. Question number four was tested by Hypotheses 15 and 16. Question number five was tested by Hypotheses 11, 12, 13 and 14. Question number six was answered using a narrative format.

Null Hypothesis 1. There is no significant interaction between student gender and size of the text used for instruction based upon concepts about print scores.

Null Hypothesis 2. There is no significant difference between males' and females' concepts about print scores when taught with big books.

Null Hypothesis 3. There is no significant difference between concepts about print scores of students taught with big books and students taught with traditional-sized texts.

Null Hypothesis 4. There is no significant interaction between student gender and the size of the text used for instruction based on sight word scores.

Null Hypothesis 5. There is no significant difference between males' and females' sight word scores when taught with big books.

Null Hypothesis 6. There is no significant difference between sight word scores of students taught with big books and students taught with traditional-sized texts.

Null Hypothesis 7. There is no significant interaction between frequency of school attendance and the size of the text used for instruction based upon concepts about print scores.

Null Hypothesis 8. There is no significant difference between concepts about print scores of students who frequently missed school and students who seldom missed school.

Null Hypothesis 9. There is no significant interaction between frequency of school attendance and the size of the text used for instruction based upon sight word scores.

Null Hypothesis 10. There is no significant difference between sight word scores of students who frequently missed school and students who seldom missed school.

Null Hypothesis 11. There is no significant interaction between age of kindergarten students and the size of the text used for instruction based upon concepts about print scores.

Null Hypothesis 12. There is no significant difference between concepts about print scores of young

kindergarten children and old kindergarten children taught with big books.

Null Hypothesis 13. There is no significant interaction between age of kindergarten students and the size of the text used for instruction based upon sight word scores.

Null Hypothesis 14. There is no significant difference between sight word scores of young kindergarten children and old kindergarten children taught with big books.

Null Hypothesis 15. There is no significant difference between the control group and the experimental group concepts about print scores of students taught by different teachers.

Null Hypothesis 16. There is no significant difference between sight word scores of students taught by different teachers.

Null Hypothesis 17. Students' responses to questions regarding attitude about reading are independent of the size of text used for instruction.

Analysis of Data

Mean gain scores were obtained from analysis of posttest data minus pretest data. The ANOVA hypotheses were analyzed based on mean gain scores data.

Hypotheses 1 through 14 were tested with a two-way analysis of variance to determine if there was interaction

between the independent variables when either a concepts about print score or sight vocabulary knowledge score was the dependent variable.

Hypotheses 15 and 16 were tested with a one-way analysis of variance to determine if there was a significant difference in test scores between students taught by different teachers.

Hypothesis 17 was tested using Chi Square to determine if student attitudes were independent of the size of text used for instruction.

At the conclusion of this study, each classroom teacher involved was asked to discuss her perceptions about the use of big books with the researcher. The responses from the teachers were reported in summative fashion as part of the narrative analysis of the data from this study.

This study is of an exploratory nature and the level of significance for the statistical tests was appropriately set at .10 (Gay, 1981). At the time of this study the researcher was more willing to accept a Type I error which may have encouraged further research into the question than a Type II error which may have discouraged further research.

Precautions for Accuracy

Teachers using the big books were advised of the experimental nature of this research and the importance of

following the controlled design of the study by adhering to the directions given by the researcher. The researcher made weekly visits to the school during the course of the study and was able to remind teachers to use the appropriate procedures.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Introduction

The data reported in this chapter are arranged according to the order of the hypotheses listed in Chapter 3. Additional data that added clarification to the study regarding the population were included as a preface to the analysis of the hypotheses. Additional data that added clarification to the study regarding teacher perceptions about the use of big books in the kindergarten program were gathered and are included following the analysis of Hypothesis 17.

The problem of this study was to determine if there were differences in understanding of print concepts, sight vocabulary knowledge, and attitudes about reading between kindergarten children who had been taught for one semester with predictable books of traditional size and children who had been taught for one semester with the same predictable books in a big book format.

Seventeen hypotheses were formulated to guide this study. The level of significance was set at $p \leq .1$. The

results of the analyses of these seventeen hypotheses and related data are reviewed in this chapter.

Population Sample

Table 8 illustrates the division of the population sample according to gender, age classification, absence classification, and treatment and control group classification.

Table 8. Classifications of population sample.

Classification	Girls	Boys	Total
Number of students	51	50	101
Experimental Group	27	24	51
Control Group	24	26	50
Young Students	23	18	41
Older Students	28	32	60
Often Absent	3	3	6
Seldom Absent	48	47	95

Hypotheses Findings

Null Hypothesis 1

There is no significant interaction between student gender and size of the text used for instruction based upon concepts about print scores.

Data based on scores recorded from students' responses on Marie Clay's "Concepts About Print Test," used to

determine if there was significant interaction between student gender and the size of the print used for instruction, are presented in Tables 9 and 10. The comparison of the mean gain scores obtained on the "Concepts About Print Test" for the experimental and control groups was analyzed using a two-way analysis of variance with gender and print size serving as the independent variables.

Table 9. Two-way ANOVA table including main effects for gender and size of text based on "Concepts About Print Test" scores.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-Ratio	p-Value
Main Effects					
Gender	11.532	1	11.532	1.231	.270
Size of Text	163.985	1	163.985	17.502	.000*
Two-Way Interac.	0.013	1	0.013	.001	.971

*Statistically significant ($p \leq .10$)

Table 10. Mean scores for gender and size of text based on "Concepts About Print Test" scores (N indicated in parentheses).

Gender	Big Books	Traditional-Sized Books
Males	5.56 (24)	2.56 (26)
Females	5.88 (27)	2.67 (24)

No significant interaction between gender and print size used for instruction based on concepts about print scores was found. The two-way analysis of variance yielded

an F-ratio of .001, a statistic that was not significant beyond the .1 level (p=0.971) (see to Table 9). This finding led to the retention of Null Hypothesis 1. There is no significant interaction between student gender and size of the text used for instruction based on concepts about print scores.

Null Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between males' and females' concepts about print scores when taught with big books.

Hypothesis 2 is a main effects hypothesis from Hypothesis 1, for question number one. The comparison of the main gain scores recorded on the "Concepts About Print Test" between the male students and female students in the experimental group showed no significant difference based on the scores obtained on the "Concepts About Print Test." There was no significant difference between male and female students' concepts of print scores who had their educational program supplemented for one semester with big books. The obtained F-ratio of 1.231 (p=0.270) is a statistic that is not significant beyond the .1 level (see Table 9). This finding led to the retention of Null Hypothesis 2. There is no significant difference between males' and females' concepts about print scores when taught with big books.

Null Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference between concepts about print scores of students taught with big books and students taught with traditional-sized texts.

Hypothesis 3 is a main effects hypothesis from Hypothesis 1, for question number one. The comparison of the mean gain scores recorded on the "Concepts About Print Test" between the experimental group and the control group resulted in a significant difference. There was a significant difference between the kindergarten students taught with traditional-sized texts and the kindergarten students whose beginning educational course of study was supplemented for one semester with big books. The kindergarten students who had their educational program supplemented with exposure to big books scored significantly greater gains on the "Concepts About Print Test" than did their counterparts whose instruction was restricted to traditional-sized texts. The obtained F-ratio of 17.502 ($p=0.000$) is a statistic that is significant beyond the .1 level (see Table 9). This finding led to the rejection of Null Hypothesis 3. There is a significant difference between concepts about print scores of students taught with big books and students taught with traditional-sized texts.

Null Hypothesis 4

There is no significant interaction between student gender and the size of the text used for instruction based on sight word scores.

Data based upon scores recorded from students' responses on Marie Clay's "Ready to Read Word Test," used to determine if there was significant interaction between student gender and the size of the print used for instruction, are presented in Tables 11 and 12.

Table 11. Two-way ANOVA table including main effects for gender and size of text based on "Ready to Read Word Test" scores.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-Ratio	p-Value
Main Effects					
Gender	10.649	2	.232	.136	.713
Size of Text	10.239	1	10.239	5.999	.016*
Two-Way Interac.	.609	1	.609	.357	.552

*Statistically significant ($p \leq .10$)

Table 12. Mean scores for gender and size of text based on "Ready to Read Word Test" scores (N indicated in parentheses).

Gender	Big Books	Traditional-Sized Books
Males	.80 (24)	.24 (26)
Females	.96 (27)	.21 (24)

The comparison of the mean gain scores obtained on the "Ready to Read Word Test" for the experimental and control

groups was analyzed using a two-way analysis of variance with gender and print size serving as the independent variables.

There was no significant interaction between gender and print size used for instruction based on sight word scores. The two-way analysis of variance yielded an F-ratio of .357, a statistic that was not significant beyond the .1 level (p=0.552)(see Table 11). This finding led to the retention of Null Hypothesis 4. There is no significant interaction between student gender and the size of the text used for instruction based on sight word scores.

Null Hypothesis 5

There is no significant difference between males' and females' sight word scores when taught with big books.

Hypothesis 5 is a main effects hypothesis from Hypothesis 4, for question number one. The comparison of the mean gain scores recorded on the "Ready to Read Word Test" between the male students and female students in the experimental group showed no significant difference based on the scores obtained on the sight word test. There was not a significant difference between male and female students' sight word knowledge who had their educational program supplemented for one semester with big books. The obtained F-ratio of .136 (p=.713) is a statistic that is not significant beyond the .1 level (see Table 11). This

finding led to the retention of Null Hypothesis 5. There is no significant difference between males' and females' sight word scores when taught with big books.

Null Hypothesis 6

There is no significant difference between sight word scores of students taught with big books and students taught with traditional-sized texts.

Hypothesis 6 is a main effects hypothesis from Hypothesis 5, for question number one. The comparison of the mean gain scores recorded on the "Ready to Read Word Test" between the experimental group and control group resulted in a significant difference. There was a significant difference on test scores between the kindergarten students taught with traditional-sized texts and the kindergarten students whose beginning educational course of study was supplemented for one semester with big books. The kindergarten students who had their educational program supplemented with exposure to big books scored significantly greater gains on the "Ready to Read Word Test" than did their counterparts whose instruction was restricted to traditional-sized texts. The obtained F-ratio of 5.999 ($p=.016$) is a statistic that is significant beyond the .1 level (see Table 11). This finding led to the rejection of Null Hypothesis 6. There is a significant difference

between sight word scores of students taught with big books and students taught with traditional-sized texts.

Null Hypothesis 7

There is no significant interaction between frequency of school attendance and the size of the text used for instruction based upon concepts about print scores.

Data based upon scores recorded from students' responses on Marie Clay's "Concepts About Print Test," used to determine if there was significant interaction between frequency of school attendance and the size of the print used for instruction, are presented in Tables 13 and 14.

Table 13. Two-way ANOVA table including main effects for frequency of school attendance and size of text based on "Concepts About Print Test" scores.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-Ratio	p-Value
Main Effects					
Absences	15.275	1	15.275	1.638	.204
Size of Type	168.974	1	168.974	18.119	.000*
Two-Way Interac.	.550	1	.550	.059	.809

*Statistically significant ($p \leq .10$)

Table 14. Mean scores for frequency of school attendance and size of text based on "Concepts About Print Test" scores (N indicated in parentheses).

Frequency of School Attendance	Big Books	Traditional-Sized Books
Often absent	7.00 (3)	5.00 (3)
Seldom absent	5.65 (48)	2.46 (47)

The comparison of the mean gain scores obtained on the "Concepts About Print Test" for the experimental and control groups was analyzed using a two-way analysis of variance with frequency of school attendance and print size serving as the independent variables.

There was no significant interaction between frequency of school attendance and the size of the text used based on concepts about print scores. The two-way analysis of variance yielded an F-ratio of .059, a statistic that was not significant beyond the .1 level (p=.809)(see Table 13). This finding led to the retention of Null Hypothesis 7. There is no significant interaction between frequency of school attendance and the size of the text used for instruction based on concepts about print scores.

Null Hypothesis 8

There is no significant difference between concepts about print scores of students who frequently missed school and students who seldom missed school.

Hypothesis 8 is a main effects hypothesis from Hypothesis 7, for question number three. The comparison of the mean gain scores recorded on the "Concepts About Print Test" between students who frequently missed school and students who seldom missed school showed no significant difference based on the scores recorded from that instrument. The obtained F-ratio of 1.638 (p=.204) is a

statistic that is not significant beyond the .1 level (see Table 13). This finding led to the retention of Null Hypothesis 8. There is no significant difference between concepts about print scores of students who frequently missed school and students who seldom missed school.

Null Hypothesis 9

There is no significant interaction between frequency of school attendance and the size of the text used for instruction based upon sight word scores.

Data based upon Marie Clay's "Ready to Read Word Test," used to determine if there was significant interaction between frequency of school attendance and the size of the test used, are presented in Tables 15 and 16. The comparison of the mean gain scores obtained on the "Ready to Read Word Test" for the experimental and control groups was analyzed using a two-way analysis of variance with frequency of school attendance and print size serving as the independent variables.

No significant interaction between frequency of school attendance and print size used for instruction based on the sight word scores was found. The two-way analysis of variance yielded an F-ratio of .089, a statistic that was not significant beyond the .1 level (p=.766)(see Table 15). This finding led to the retention of Null Hypothesis 9. There is no significant interaction between frequency of

school attendance and the size of the text used for instruction based on sight word scores.

Table 15. Two-way ANOVA table including main effects for frequency of school attendance and size of text based on "Ready to Read Word Test" scores.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-Ratio	p-Value
Main Effects					
Absences	.993	1	.993	.583	.447
Size of Type	10.402	1	10.402	6.105	.015*
Two-Way Interac.	.152	1	.152	.089	.766

*Statistically significant ($p \leq .10$)

Table 16. Mean scores for frequency of school attendance and size of text based on "Ready to Read Word Test" scores (N indicated in parentheses).

Frequency of School Attendance	Big Books	Traditional-Sized Books
Often absent	.33 (3)	.00 (3)
Seldom absent	.92 (48)	.24 (47)

Null Hypothesis 10

There is no significant difference between sight word scores of students who frequently missed school and students who seldom missed school.

Hypothesis 10 is a main effects hypothesis from Hypothesis 9, for question number three. The comparison of the mean gain scores recorded on the "Ready to Read Word Test" between students who frequently missed school and

students who seldom missed school showed no significant difference based on the scores obtained on the sight word instrument. The obtained F-ratio of .583 (p=.447) is a statistic that is not significant beyond the .1 level (see Table 15). This finding led to the retention of Null Hypothesis 10. There is no significant interaction between frequency of school attendance and the size of the text used for instruction based on sight word scores.

Null Hypothesis 11

There is no significant interaction between age of kindergarten students and the size of the text used for instruction based upon concepts about print scores.

Data based on scores recorded from students' responses on Marie Clay's "Concepts About Print Test," used to determine if there was significant interaction between age of kindergarten students and the size of the text used for instruction, are presented in Tables 17 and 18. The comparison of the mean gain scores obtained on the "Concepts About Print Test" for the experimental and control groups was analyzed using a two-way analysis of variance with age of the student and print size serving as the independent variables.

No significant interaction between age of the student and the size of the text used for instruction based on concepts about print scores was found. The two-way

analysis of variance yielded an F-ratio of .477, a statistic that was not significant beyond the .1 level (p=.491)(see Table 17). This finding led to the retention of Null Hypothesis 11. There is no significant interaction between age of kindergarten students and the size of the text used for instruction based on concepts about print scores.

Table 17. Two-way ANOVA table including main effects for age and size of text based on "Concepts About Print Test" scores.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-Ratio	p-Value
Main Effects					
Age	8.463	1	8.463	.905	.344
Size of Type	173.144	1	173.144	18.507	.000*
Two-Way Interac.	4.464	1	4.464	.477	.491

*Statistically significant ($p \leq .10$)

Table 18. Mean scores for age and size of text based on "Concepts About Print Test" scores (N indicated in parentheses).

Age	Big Books	Traditional-Sized Books
Young students	5.50 (20)	2.82 (22)
Old students	5.88 (32)	2.44 (27)

Null Hypothesis 12

There is no significant difference between concepts about print scores of young kindergarten children and old kindergarten children taught with big books.

Hypothesis 12 is a main effects hypothesis from Hypothesis 11, for question number five. The comparison of the mean gain scores recorded on the "Concepts About Print Test" between young kindergarten children and old kindergarten children showed no significant difference based on the scores obtained on the "Concepts About Print Test." The obtained F-ratio of .905 (p=.344) is a statistic that is not significant beyond the .1 level (see Table 17). This finding led to the retention of Null Hypothesis 12. There is no significant difference between concepts about print scores of young kindergarten children and old kindergarten children taught with big books.

Null Hypothesis 13

There is no significant interaction between age of kindergarten students and the size of the text used for instruction based upon sight word scores.

Data based on scores recorded from students' responses on Marie Clay's "Ready to Read Word Test," used to determine if there was significant interaction between age of kindergarten students and the size of the text used for instruction, are presented in Tables 19 and 20. The comparison of the mean gain scores obtained on the "Ready to Read Word Test" for the experimental and control groups was analyzed using a two-way analysis of variance with age

of the kindergarten students and print size serving as the independent variables.

Table 19. Two-way ANOVA table including main effects for age and size of text based on "Ready to Read Word Test" scores.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-Ratio	p-Value
Main Effects					
Age	.675	1	.675	.398	.530
Size of Type	10.008	1	10.008	5.903	.017*
Two-Way Interac.	1.272	1	1.272	.750	.389

*Statistically significant ($p \leq .10$)

Table 20. Mean scores for age and size of text based on "Ready to Read Word Test" scores (N indicated in parentheses).

Age	Big Books	Traditional-Sized Books
Young students	.60 (20)	.18 (22)
Old students	1.06 (32)	.26 (27)

No significant interaction between the age of the kindergarten students and the size of the text used for instruction based on sight vocabulary test scores was found. The two-way analysis of variance yielded an F-ratio of .750, a statistic that was not significant beyond the .1 level (p=.389)(see Table 19). This finding led to retention of Null Hypothesis 13. There is no significant interaction between age of kindergarten students and the

size of the text used for instruction based on sight word scores.

Null Hypothesis 14

There is no significant difference between sight word scores of young kindergarten children and old kindergarten children taught with big books.

Hypothesis 14 is a main effects hypothesis from Hypothesis 13, for question number five. The comparison of the mean gain scores recorded on the "Ready to Read Word Test" between students who were identified as young students and those identified as old students showed no significant difference based on the scores obtained on the sight vocabulary test. The obtained F-ratio of .398 (p=.530) is a statistic that is not significant beyond the .1 level (see Table 19). This finding led to the retention of Null Hypothesis 14. There is no significant difference between sight word scores of young kindergarten children and old kindergarten children taught with big books.

Null Hypothesis 15

There is no significant difference between the control group and the experimental group concepts about print scores of students taught by different teachers.

Hypothesis 15 was analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the scores on Marie Clay's

"Concepts About Print Test" in groups of kindergarten students taught by different teachers involved in the research project. The data collected are presented in Tables 21 and 22.

Table 21. One-way ANOVA table for teacher groups based on "Concepts About Print Test" scores.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-Ratio	p-Value
Teacher Groups	49.344	5	9.869	.902	.483
Residual	1039.784	95	10.945		
Total	1089.129	100			

Table 22. Mean gain scores for students in different teacher groups based on "Concepts About Print Test" scores (N indicated in parentheses).

	Teacher Groups					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Mean Gains	5.21 (13)	5.23 (18)	4.00 (16)	3.75 (16)	3.68 (19)	5.00 (19)

There was no significant difference between the groups of students taught by different teachers based on the concepts about print scores. The one-way analysis of variance yielded an F-ratio of .902, a statistic that was not significant beyond the .1 level (p=.483)(see Table 21). This finding led to the retention of Null Hypothesis 15. There is no significant difference between the concepts

about print scores of students taught by different teachers.

Null Hypothesis 16

There is no significant difference between sight word scores of students taught by different teachers.

Hypothesis 16 was analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the scores on Marie Clay's "Ready to Read Word Test" in groups of kindergarten students taught by different teachers involved in the research project. The data collected are presented in Tables 23 and 24.

Table 23. One-way ANOVA table for teacher groups based on "Ready to Read Word Test" scores.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-Ratio	p-Value
Teacher Groups	12.318	5	2.464	1.423	.223
Residual	164.513	95	1.732		
Total	176.832	100			

Table 24. Mean gain scores for students in different teacher groups based on "Ready to Read Word Test" scores (N indicated in parentheses).

	Teacher Groups					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Mean Gains	.142 (13)	.294 (18)	.20 (16)	1.06 (16)	.85 (19)	.72 (19)

No significant difference between the groups of kindergarten students taught by different teachers based on the sight vocabulary instrument was found. The one-way analysis of variance yielded an F-ratio of 1.423, a statistic that was not significant beyond the .1 level (p=.223)(see Table 23). This finding led to the retention of Null Hypothesis 16. There is no significant difference between the sight word scores of students taught by different teachers.

Null Hypothesis 17

Students' responses to questions regarding attitude about reading are independent of the size of text used for instruction.

Data based on scores recorded from students' responses to an attitude survey designed by the researcher (see Appendix E), to determine if there were significant attitude differences about reading between students taught with big books and students taught with traditional-sized texts, are reported in Table 25.

Analysis of the data indicates that attitudes about reading are independent of the size of text used for instruction. This finding led to the retention of Null Hypothesis 17, answering question number two. Students' responses to questions regarding attitude about reading are independent of the size of the text used for instruction.

Table 25. Chi Square table for student attitudes toward reading based on group inclusion.

Positive Responses Attitude Scale	Text Size: Big Books	Text Size: Traditional-Sized Texts	Row Total
5-7	28	32	60
8-10	23	18	41
Column Total	51	50	101
Chi Square = 0.53509	DF=1		p=0.4664

Teacher Perceptions About Using Big Books

This research project employed the services of six, full-time kindergarten teachers, the total number of kindergarten teachers in the district where the project took place. During the course of the project, the researcher visited each teacher, each week, to exchange the big books and the traditional-sized books and to discuss any concerns the teachers may have had about the project. During this time the teachers shared information regarding the use of the big books in their classrooms. At the conclusion of the research project, the researcher spent one hour with each teacher, uninterrupted outside of the school setting, to discuss perceptions regarding the use of big books in the classroom setting. A structured interview designed by the researcher (see Appendix H) was used to

guide the collection of data from each teacher. Appendix H relates specific information received from teachers during the course of the research project. Teacher perceptions collected during the structured interview are reported here.

During the research project, each teacher was encouraged to use big books in the experimental group and the corresponding traditional-sized books in the control group for the same amount of time each day that the research project book was used. Table 26 shows the total amounts of time that each kindergarten teacher used each style of book. (Appendix F gives a detailed account of the amount of time spent by each teacher with each different style of book.) The average amount of time spent using big books during the semester of the research project was 292 minutes. The average amount of time spent using traditional-sized texts was 275 minutes. Four of the teachers involved in the study had minor differences between the amount of time they spent using the big books and the amount of time they spent using the traditional-sized books. Time differences were three minutes, four minutes, five minutes, and eight minutes. One teacher had a 39-minute time difference and one teacher had a 46-minute difference.

All of the teachers involved in the research project reported positive attitudes about the use of big books.

Each teacher interviewed claimed that she enjoyed using the big books. Every teacher stated that she was glad that she had been involved in the project and each felt that her students had definitely benefitted from having had the big books to use. One teacher, who had been reluctant to become involved in the project in the beginning stages, repeatedly told the researcher how glad she was that she had decided to become involved with the research project.

Table 26. Amount of time in minutes spent reading from big books and traditional-sized texts by each teacher.

Teacher	Big Books	Traditional-Sized Texts
A	319	280
B	294	290
C	285	282
D	283	275
E	266	261
F	306	260
Totals	1753	1648
Averages	292	275

All of the teachers reported that the students in the big book group attended to the stories better than did the students in the traditional-sized group. While students in both groups enjoyed the stories, the students with the big books paid better attention. Every teacher felt that since the students could see the picture better, they lost interest less frequently than those students who were

unable to see the pictures. The teachers reported that the students also attended to the print. The students could see the print, so became curious, asking questions about the text as well as the pictures. Students who asked questions about the text were especially curious about punctuation. Students in the traditional-sized text group did not ask questions about the pictures or the print.

Four of the teachers interviewed discussed how the students in their classes joined in with reading when big books were used. Even the quietest children would read aloud as part of the group when the big books were used. Students who never joined the group in reading-aloud activities when small books were read aloud joined their peers in reading aloud with the big books. As one teacher explained, children in the big book group "just seem to know what is going on more when they can see the print and the pictures."

All of the teachers believed that the students in the big book groups enjoyed story time more when the big books were in use. The students appeared to be more involved with the story. They wanted to participate more, especially with the stories that had a repeated refrain or a rhyming scheme. Two teachers reported that the students noticed common words often and asked questions about these words, then looked for these words when subsequent big books were used. Teachers reported that there were no

children who did not pay attention to the story when big books were in use. When traditional-sized texts were being read, there were always a few in the back of the group who were not paying attention.

Two teachers reported that they thought the students in their classrooms "felt like readers" when reading from the big books. The way the students followed along with the stories, the expression in their voices, and the movements of their bodies made one realize that they were really involved with the story. The students in the traditional-sized group rarely joined in with the story being read, but rather sat, listening. Observations by these teachers concur with findings by Huck and Kerstetter (1987).

Four of the teachers reported that the students in the big book group would seek out the big books during free time to read to each other, often with one child acting as teacher. Not only did the students use the big books during free time, but they also were apt to reread the same story using the traditional-sized format. Students in the traditional-sized groups did not appear to select the stories they had been exposed to during story time any more frequently than any other text in the library center.

All of the teachers in the research project reported that they felt the students in their classrooms had benefitted from using the big books for the semester. One

teacher reported that the big books were cumbersome to use but, because of the benefits to the children, she was happy to have them to use with her class.

Teachers named numerous benefits they felt their students had received from exposure to the big books. The children enjoyed story time. They could see the pictures and the print, so paid better attention. They noticed concepts about print that teachers often take for granted, such as punctuation, spacing, capital letters, and directionality, and as such learned about these concepts with meaningful, interesting materials. Many students also noticed common words. The students became more involved with the story lines in the texts and there was more participation in reading aloud by the students exposed to the big books.

All of the teachers said they want to use big books with their kindergarten classes in the future. Five teachers reported that they would not only use big books, but would develop extending activities to go along with the stories because the big books lend themselves to developing across the curriculum activities.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the key points from the previous four chapters and to analyze the information presented. There are three sections in this chapter. The first section contains a summary of the literature on whole language curriculum at the beginning reading level. The second section presents the conclusions of the study and the final section presents recommendations based on the findings from the research.

Summary of the Literature

The use of big books has become popular with teachers in the primary grades during the past decade. The use of big books grew from the whole language philosophy regarding the teaching of reading. Based on psycholinguistic research, the whole language philosophy advocated teaching beginning reading as a natural process. As a natural process, reading was learned by placing children in an environment which was rich in print and where there was support for attempts to read, write, explore and

communicate. Whole language advocates believed that students do not need sequenced materials, controlled vocabulary, workbooks and worksheets to learn to read.

Whole language teachers believed that students learned from being in an enriched, supportive classroom, similar to an environment in which children learned to walk and to talk in their homes, and in which some children learned to read before the formal school experience began. In such an environment students were encouraged to risk attempts at learning new material which had meaning for them, without the fear of harsh reprisals. When infants were learning to walk and to talk, significant others in the children's lives encouraged them with positive feedback. Researchers have observed that when children were learning to read and write, too often significant others in their lives only recognized the errors they made and encouraged them to correct the errors, with little attention being paid to the correct responses they had learned.

In a whole language classroom, learning was done by using wholes, not parts. Teachers did not start with parts, such as letters and letter sounds. They began instruction with whole stories, poems, chants, and songs. Whole language teachers used books, fairy tales, nursery rhymes, and language experience stories, and only some of the stories out of basal readers with their related activities. In whole language classrooms, children were

read to every day; there was reading with the children and there was reading done by the children. The teacher was a model for reading and writing, demonstrating daily the joy and excitement that accompanied learning to read and write.

Research has shown that children who learned to read before going to formal school settings had experiences with print in the supportive environment of their homes. In supportive homes there was an abundance of opportunities for children to use books, pencils, papers, and other materials associated with the language arts. There were significant others in the environment who answered questions that children asked, without pressure or intimidation. There were people who modeled reading and writing activities in the child's environment. Children in such environments had many experiences where they were read to, such as bedtime stories, where there were opportunities to be in close proximity to the print and the pictures of the stories. Children in these environments had exposure to aspects of printed material which made learning to read a natural part of their development.

From examining the environments of children who came to school as readers, researchers believed that imitating such an environment in the school setting might help beginning readers, who came from a variety of home backgrounds, deal with print in a positive way.

In keeping with the whole language philosophy, some whole language teachers enlarged the print and pictures of books which their children enjoyed reading, so that the group of students could view the text at once. Since 25 children in a classroom could not sit on the teacher's lap to have experiences similar to a bedtime story experience, the enlarged text, or big book, was used to establish a supportive, shared-reading atmosphere for the beginning readers.

Not only was the concept of enlarging the text important to the whole language teacher, but the type of content in the books which were enlarged was of importance also. The content was to be predictable. Teachers selected books that had elements that made the material easy to remember. By using books that had rhyme, rhythm, repeated lines, or a story structure that repeats, students could join in with the reading of the text, feeling like readers, thus encouraging the supportive atmosphere where beginning readers feel success with reading materials.

By using the big books, teachers could point out rhyming words, letters, punctuation, spacing, left-to-right progression, and other concepts about print which were important for beginning readers to learn. By using big books teachers could point out these concepts about print using meaningful materials which all of the children could see at once. Research (Clay, 1979) has shown that a

child's knowledge of print concepts is an indicator of ability in successful beginning reading experiences.

The positive impact of using predictable materials with children who are learning to read has been established by researchers. The importance of using big books with beginning readers has only been reported using narrative style. This research project attempted to establish whether or not the enlarged print did have an impact on helping beginning readers learn concepts about print knowledge and sight vocabulary words. The attitudes that beginning readers held were also examined.

Conclusions

The results of the study allowed the researcher to draw the following conclusions:

(1) Kindergarten students who were in classrooms where big books were used obtained significantly more growth in concepts about print knowledge than students who did not have exposure to big books.

(2) Kindergarten students who were in classrooms where big books were used obtained significantly more growth in sight word vocabulary knowledge than kindergarten students who did not have exposure to big books.

(3) No specific group of kindergarten students identified by this research project benefitted more from the big books than others. All classifications of students,

younger students, older students, males, females, frequently absent students, and students who were seldom absent, benefitted from exposure to big books.

(4) No kindergarten section had students who significantly out-performed the students in any other section when compared on the basis of which teacher they were assigned to in the district.

(5) The attitudes about reading of the kindergarten students were similar regardless of exposure to big books or traditional-sized books.

(6) Kindergarten teachers who had not used big books as a part of their curriculum previous to this project saw benefits to using them as a part of the kindergarten curriculum.

Recommendations for Instruction

Significant differences regarding concepts about print knowledge and sight vocabulary knowledge were found between the kindergarten children who were exposed to big books and kindergarten children who had the same stories read to them in traditional-sized format. The following recommendations are made in regard to employing the use of big books in kindergarten programs:

(1) It is recommended that kindergarten teachers use big books as a part of the kindergarten curriculum. The students who were exposed to the big books for a

relatively short amount of time did improve their knowledge of concepts about print and their sight vocabulary knowledge significantly more than the students who were not exposed to the big books. Knowledge of concepts about print is an important aspect to consider when dealing with beginning readers. Sight vocabulary development is another important area which beginning readers need to develop. The experimental group grew significantly in both of these important areas. Alexander (1987) reported that many children were unaware of numerous concepts about print even at the end of first grade. An approach, use of big books, which aids children in learning print concept knowledge should be used with any group of children during the beginning stages of reading development. While there was no statistical support regarding students' positive attitudes toward reading, teachers' perceptions regarding students' attitudes while using the big books support the recommendation that the big books should be used as part of a kindergarten curriculum. All of the teachers reported that the students in the big book group did attend to the stories better and appeared to be more interested in the stories when they could view the print and the pictures.

(2) It is especially recommended that kindergarten teachers in areas that are demographically similar to Kalispell, Montana, supplement their current curriculum with big books. During the research project time period, a limited amount of time was spent with the treatment. When teachers implemented the treatment, reading from big books, they simply read from an enlarged text rather than from a traditional-sized text. Teachers in the study reported that this had been a very simple task, easily fitting into the kindergarten program. If such a simple procedure gives significant gains to the students on sight vocabulary knowledge and concepts about print knowledge, then this tool should be made available to other students who might benefit.

(3) It is recommended that first grade teachers that have children who do not understand concepts about print use big books in their classroom settings. The use of big books in the kindergarten showed significant advantages for the children exposed to them. Alexander (1987) reported that many students at the end of first grade were still unaware of adequate knowledge regarding print concepts that are necessary for successful reading ability. No kindergarten student in the research project obtained a perfect score on the concepts about print test. The best

score was 20 correct out of 24 possible. The poorest score was four correct out of 24 possible. Based on this information, it is recommended that first grade teachers use big books as a part of the first grade curriculum until students have a clear grasp of concepts about print knowledge.

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher recommends the following research:

(1) Research following the format of this project for schools in demographic locations which differ from Kalispell, Montana could add validity for using big books in kindergarten and other primary grade programs in a variety of locations.

(2) Similar research could be conducted using a different research instrument to test student attitudes toward reading. While the instrument selected for this research project was tested for reliability and a correlation coefficient for the instrument was established at .81, it may not have discriminated between the experimental group's and the control group's attitudes toward reading. Based on teacher comments regarding the involvement of the students in the experimental group compared to those in the control group, the researcher believes that a more sensitive instrument may indicate a more positive

attitude toward reading is held by students who have exposure to big books as part of their reading curriculum.

(3) The time spent using the big books in the classroom setting was minimal. Teachers used the three big books each week during the semester of the research project. With this limited exposure to the big books there was significant improvement in concepts about print knowledge and sight vocabulary knowledge by the children in the experimental group compared to the control group. Further research could be conducted using extended activities to accompany the big books as suggested by whole language curriculum guides. Several teachers discussed with the researcher the desire to use extension activities with the big books. Several teachers planned on pursuing that course of action after the completion of this research project. A planned, statistical research project could help teachers decide if using big books with extension activities would be a valuable part of a beginning reading program which would benefit the students in their classrooms.

(4) If similar research is conducted using Marie Clay's "Concepts About Print Test," it is recommended that an item analysis be done in regard to the test instrument. Knowledge about exactly on which concepts

students in the experimental group surpassed those in the control group, as identified by the test instrument, would be a contribution to the literature regarding the benefits of using big books in a beginning reading program.

(5) Similar research using a different test instrument could add useful information to the body of knowledge dealing with whole language curriculum in the early grades. The test instrument showed that there were significant differences between the control group and the experimental group based on sight vocabulary knowledge scores and concepts about print knowledge scores. It would be of interest to those involved in the field of beginning reading to see if there were other types of growth that were promoted by incorporating the usage of big books into the existing kindergarten curriculum.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PARENT INFORMATION LETTER

September 1987

Dear Kindergarten Parents,

In conjunction with the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Montana State University, I will be doing a research project with the kindergarten teachers during the first semester of this school year.

The project consists of placing Big Books in the kindergarten classrooms. Big Books are simply stories that have been enlarged so that the children can see the pictures and the print more easily. Research indicates that when children are able to see the print easily they develop more positive feelings about reading. Enlarged texts also help children develop concepts about print, which are necessary prereading skills, more readily. A random sample of the children will be asked how they feel about reading and about books in general before and after the introduction of the Big Books into the classroom.

If you have any questions about this project, I would be eager to discuss them with you. My previous work using Big Books with young children convinces me that it is an exciting development which helps children discover the joy of reading. My home phone number is 892-4879. I would be happy to show you the Big Books that will be used in the classroom and discuss the development of programs which use them.

Sincerely,

Gwen Taylor

APPENDIX B

SUBJECTS' BIRTHDATES AND ABSENCES RECORD

Table 27. Subjects' birthdates and absences record.

Student No.	Birthdate	Absences
Section #1:		
1	Moved	--
2	09/12/81	12
3	12/26/81	4
4	11/26/81	14
5	03/12/82	0
6	01/26/82	0
7	Moved	--
8	07/18/81	0
9	03/06/82	5
10	08/09/81	1
Section #1:		
1	11/28/81	1
2	Moved	--
3	11/05/81	4
4	08/31/81	2
5	Moved	--
6	Moved	--
7	09/11/81	7
8	Hospitalized	--
9	Moved	--
10	12/04/81	4
Section #3:		
1	05/11/81	2
2	12/17/81	2
3	Moved	--
4	02/07/81	3
5	08/06/81	3
6	01/20/81	7
7	12/23/81	1
8	10/14/81	7
9	11/24/81	0

Table 27--Continued.

Student No.	Birthdate	Absences
Section #4:		
1	03/29/81	11
2	11/14/81	11
3	02/23/81	3
4	06/20/81	12
5	01/22/82	3
6	05/19/82	7
7	01/07/82	1
8	12/08/81	7
9	10/19/81	0
10	06/12/82	2
Section #5:		
1	03/29/82	3
2	05/22/82	0
3	07/19/81	0
4	10/15/81	0
5	Moved	--
6	02/08/81	2
7	07/07/81	6
8	05/04/82	11
9	11/06/81	1
Section #6:		
1	04/20/82	6
2	12/30/81	11
3	02/28/82	0
4	10/12/81	0
5	11/09/81	3
6	04/03/82	0
7	04/09/82	8
8	09/25/81	2

Table 27--Continued.

Student No.	Birthdate	Absences
Section #7:		
1	05/28/81	3
2	08/12/81	9
3	12/30/81	0
4	Moved	--
5	10/11/82	8
6	01/09/82	2
7	09/29/81	4
8	02/21/82	0
Section #8:		
1	08/20/81	0
2	08/08/81	1
3	12/31/80	0
4	05/16/81	4
5	05/24/81	6
6	10/30/81	0
7	05/11/82	0
8	06/17/82	2
9	05/19/82	2
Section #9:		
1	09/13/81	5
2	08/02/81	4
3	08/19/82	2
4	01/15/82	1
5	03/31/82	1
6	09/18/81	3
7	02/24/82	1
8	07/07/82	3
9	08/18/81	0
10	12/--/81	0

Table 27--Continued.

Student No.	Birthdate	Absences
Section #10:		
1	11/10/81	7
2	08/04/81	6
3	04/26/82	9
4	10/02/81	2
5	04/18/82	0
6	03/27/82	1
7	08/18/81	6
8	07/12/81	11
9	Moved	--
10	08/30/81	3
Section #11:		
1	05/13/81	1
2	07/29/81	3
3	12/11/81	1
4	06/23/81	2
5	09/18/81	10
6	07/14/81	2
7	11/09/81	0
8	04/15/81	0
9	10/12/81	9
10	07/06/81	2
Section #12:		
1	09/24/81	1
2	01/31/81	6
3	01/22/82	1
4	03/01/82	3
5	05/27/81	3
6	12/30/81	0
7	03/01/81	3
8	09/02/81	3
9	08/30/81	3

APPENDIX C

BIG BOOK PUBLISHERS

PUBLISHERS OF BIG BOOKS

USED IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Class Sized Books, Limited
P. O. Box 366
Port Coquitlam, B.C. V3C 4K6

Holt, Rinehart and Winston
383 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Scholastic Publications
P. O. Box 7501
2931 E. McCarty Street
Jefferson City, MO 65102

The Wright Group
10949 Technology Place
San Diego, CA 92127

APPENDIX D

TEST INSTRUMENTS

CONCEPTS ABOUT PRINT SCORE SHEET

Date:_____

Name:_____ Age:_____ TEST SCORE: /24

Recorder:_____ Date of Birth:_____ STANINE GROUP:

PAGE	SCORE	ITEM	COMMENT
Cover		1.Front of book	
2/3		2.Print contains message	
4/5 4/5 4/5 4/5		3.Where to start 4.Which way to go 5.Return sweep to left 6.Word by word matching	
6		7.First and last concept	
7		8.Bottom of picture	
8/9		9.Begin 'The' (Sand) or 'I' (Stones) bottom line, top OR turn book	
10/11		10.Line order altered	
12/13 12/13 12/13		11.Left page before right 12.One change in word order 13.One change in letter order	
14/15 14/15		14.One change in letter order 15.Meaning of ?	
16/17 16/17 16/17 16/17		16.Meaning of full stop 17.Meaning of comma 18.Meaning of quotation marks 19.Locate M m H h (Sand) OR T t B b (Stones)	
18/19		20.Reversible words was, no	
20 20 20 20		21.One letter: two letters 22.One word: two words 23.First and last letter of word 24.Capital letter	

SOURCE: Clay (1979).

WORD TEST SCORE SHEET

[Use any one list of words.]

Name:_____ Age:_____ Date:_____

Recorder:_____ Date of Birth:_____

Test Score:_____/15

Record incorrect responses beside word.

LIST A	LIST B	LIST C
I	and	Father
Mother	to	come
are	will	for
here	look	a
me	he	you
shouted	up	at
am	like	school
with	in	went
car	where	get
children	Mr.	we
help	going	they
not	big	ready
too	go	this
meet	let	boys
away	on	please

COMMENTS:_____

APPENDIX E

ATTITUDE SCALE

KINDERGARTNERS' ATTITUDES ABOUT READING

Your answer sheet has 10 numbers on it. Beside each number are two faces, an unhappy face and a happy face. I will ask you how you feel about certain things and you will put an X on the face that shows how you feel. Suppose I said, "How do you feel when you eat chocolate candy?" Which face shows how you feel? Now I'll read some questions to you and you mark the face that shows how you feel about what I read. Remember to mark how you feel because everyone does not feel the same about certain things. I'll read each question two times. Mark only one face for each number. Now listen carefully.

How do you feel.....

(1) when you go to the library?

(2) when you read instead of playing outside?

(3) when you read instead of watching TV?

(4) when you read with a friend after school?

(5) when you read in a quiet place?

(6) when you read a story at bedtime?

(7) when you read while you are on a trip?

(8) when you read outside when it is warm?

(9) when you read instead of coloring?

(10) when your teacher reads a story at school?

STUDENT ANSWER SHEET
FOR
KINDERGARTNERS' ATTITUDES ABOUT READING

(1) 

(2) 

(3) 

(4) 

(5) 

(6) 

(7) 

(8) 

(9) 

(10) 

APPENDIX F

TIME SPENT READING RESEARCH

PROJECT BOOKS

Table 28. Time spent reading big book versions.

Title	Teacher Identification A	B	C	D	E	F
Hickory Dickery Dock	3	4	4	5	3	2
Jack Be Nimble	2	3	4	3	3	3
Little Bo-Peep	5	4	3	5	4	3
Little Boy Blue	5	4	3	4	4	–
Little Dog	3	3	3	3	3	3
Little Jack Horner	2	4	3	3	3	2
Little Miss Muffet	3	4	2	5	3	3
Old Woman in a Shoe	3	3	4	4	4	5
Three Little Kittens	5	4	5	3	4	4
Wee Willie Winkle	3	4	4	3	3	–
Brown Bear, Brown Bear	20	10	8	8	8	15
Chicken Soup with Rice	10	5	8	6	6	8
In a People House	5	12	9	8	6	8
Noisy Nora	11	10	10	9	7	9
Very Hungry Caterpillar	5	12	5	9	6	8
What Do You Do with a Kangaroo?	20	15	15	12	15	15
The Big Toe	8	7	8	7	8	6
Boo-Hoo	5	5	5	5	5	5
Dan, The Flying Man	5	6	8	6	5	5
The Farm Concert	10	7	7	8	7	8
Grandpa, Grandpa	8	7	8	6	7	8
Hairy Bear	8	5	6	7	7	8
The Hungry Giant	9	3	6	6	6	6
In a Dark, Dark Wood	10	5	8	7	5	10
The Jigaree	12	10	8	10	8	10
Lazy Mary	6	8	5	7	7	10
The Meanies	6	7	8	7	7	6
The Monsters' Party	5	6	6	5	6	5
Mrs. Wishy-Washy	7	5	6	6	6	6
Obadiah	8	10	8	6	7	6
One Cold, Wet Night	5	8	5	6	6	7
Poor Old Polly	8	6	7	10	7	7
The Red Rose	4	7	5	6	5	8
Sing a Song	5	8	6	7	8	7
Smarty Pants	6	7	6	6	5	8
Three Little Ducks	6	8	6	6	5	5
To Town	8	7	5	5	5	5
Who Will Be My Mother?	5	5	5	5	5	7
Woosh!	6	6	6	8	10	10
Yes, Ma'am	8	7	7	5	6	6
Boss for a Week	8	7	10	8	6	7
Clifford's Family	10	6	8	8	8	10
Bunches of Bunnies	13	8	12	10	8	23
More Spaghetti, I Say!	15	12	10	10	9	12
Totals in Minutes	319	294	285	283	266	306

Table 29. Time spent reading traditional-sized versions.

Title	Teacher Identification A	B	C	D	E	F
Hickory Dickery Dock	3	4	3	4	4	2
Jack Be Nimble	2	4	4	3	4	3
Little Bo-Peep	3	3	3	5	4	4
Little Boy Blue	5	4	3	3	4	4
Little Dog	3	2	2	2	2	3
Little Jack Horner	2	3	3	3	3	3
Little Miss Muffet	3	3	2	5	3	4
Old Woman in a Shoe	4	3	3	3	2	4
Three Little Kittens	4	3	5	5	4	4
Wee Willie Winkle	3	4	4	4	4	–
Brown Bear, Brown Bear	15	13	15	16	15	14
Chicken Soup with Rice	10	7	10	9	6	8
In a People House	5	10	7	8	6	8
Noisy Nora	10	10	9	10	8	10
Very Hungry Caterpillar	6	8	5	7	6	9
What Do You Do with a Kangaroo?	20	15	15	10	10	12
The Big Toe	5	5	5	5	6	5
Boo-Hoo	4	4	5	5	4	7
Dan, The Flying Man	5	8	5	5	5	4
The Farm Concert	8	7	6	7	8	8
Grandpa, Grandpa	7	7	7	8	7	7
Hairy Bear	7	5	6	7	7	6
The Hungry Giant	8	4	6	4	5	4
In a Dark, Dark Wood	5	5	5	5	4	6
The Jigaree	8	6	10	12	8	10
Lazy Mary	5	8	5	6	6	6
The Meanies	11	8	8	7	7	6
The Monsters' Party	5	5	5	5	5	5
Mrs. Wishy-Washy	6	5	5	6	7	4
Obadiah	7	8	5	7	6	6
One Cold, Wet Night	5	5	5	6	6	6
Poor Old Polly	7	6	5	8	6	6
The Red Rose	4	10	5	5	5	6
Sing a Song	5	9	5	7	8	4
Smarty Pants	6	6	7	6	8	7
Three Little Ducks	6	10	8	3	5	5
To Town	5	7	6	4	5	5
Who Will Be My Mother?	5	5	5	5	6	5
Woosh!	6	5	5	8	6	6
Yes, Ma'am	8	7	7	5	6	7
Boss for a Week	7	6	10	8	6	6
Clifford's Family	6	7	8	6	8	7
Bunches of Bunnies	11	8	10	8	7	6
More Spaghetti, I Say!	10	12	10	10	8	7
Totals in Minutes	280	290	282	275	261	260

APPENDIX G

SCHEDULE FOR BOOKS IN CLASSROOMS

Table 30. Schedule for books in the classrooms: Dates for 1987-1988 school year.

Title	Teacher Identification					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Hickory Dickery Dock	09/21	09/28	10/12	11/16	11/02	10/26
Jack Be Nimble	12/14	10/12	01/04	09/28	11/02	09/21
Little Bo-Peep	09/28	10/12	11/02	12/14	09/21	11/23
Little Boy Blue	10/12	10/26	11/02	09/21	11/23	12/14
Little Dog	10/26	11/02	11/23	01/11	12/14	01/11
Little Jack Horner	11/23	09/28	09/21	12/14	10/12	11/02
Little Miss Muffet	01/11	11/02	09/21	11/23	10/12	09/28
Old Woman in a Shoe	01/18	11/23	12/14	11/02	09/28	10/12
Three Little Kittens	10/12	01/18	09/28	10/26	11/02	12/14
Wee Willie Winkle	11/16	09/21	10/26	10/05	01/18	---
Brown Bear, Brown Bear	09/21	09/28	11/02	10/05	10/26	11/23
Chicken Soup with Rice	09/28	11/02	10/12	11/23	09/21	12/14
In a People House	10/26	10/05	11/02	09/21	01/11	12/07
Noisy Nora	10/12	10/26	12/07	09/21	11/02	09/21
Very Hungry Caterpillar	12/14	11/16	09/21	11/02	10/12	09/28
What Do You Do w/a Kangaroo?	11/23	10/12	01/18	12/14	01/11	11/02
The Big Toe	10/12	10/26	11/02	11/16	09/28	12/14
Boo-Hoo	11/02	01/11	10/12	11/16	12/07	10/26
Dan, The Flying Man	12/07	11/23	01/11	01/18	12/14	01/18
The Farm Concert	11/02	11/16	09/21	10/26	10/12	09/28
Grandpa, Grandpa	11/02	01/11	01/18	12/07	10/26	10/05
Hairy Bear	12/14	11/02	10/05	11/23	01/18	10/12
The Hungry Giant	01/18	12/14	11/23	11/02	10/05	10/12
In a Dark, Dark Wood	10/05	12/07	01/11	11/02	11/23	10/12
The Jigaree	10/05	12/14	11/23	10/12	01/18	11/02
Lazy Mary	12/14	10/12	09/28	12/07	11/23	11/02
The Meanies	11/23	01/11	11/02	12/07	10/26	10/05
The Monsters' Party	01/11	10/05	12/07	10/12	11/05	10/12
Mrs. Wishy-Washy	01/18	12/07	11/23	11/02	10/05	10/12
Obadiah	09/21	09/21	10/05	10/12	10/12	10/26
One Cold, Wet Night	10/12	12/14	09/28	11/02	01/18	11/23
Poor Old Polly	09/28	10/12	12/14	11/23	09/21	11/02
The Red Rose	10/26	01/18	10/05	01/11	12/07	01/11
Sing a Song	11/23	11/02	10/12	09/28	12/14	09/21
Smarty Pants	10/26	11/23	01/18	12/14	11/16	10/05
Three Little Ducks	11/16	09/21	10/26	10/05	01/11	12/07
To Town	10/05	11/02	12/14	10/12	01/18	11/23
Who Will Be My Mother?	12/07	10/05	01/18	10/12	12/14	11/02
Woosh!	11/02	12/14	10/12	10/26	09/28	11/16
Yes, Ma'am	11/16	01/18	10/26	01/11	10/05	12/07
Boss for a Week	11/02	12/07	12/14	01/18	01/11	11/16
Clifford's Family	12/07	11/16	12/14	01/11	11/02	01/11
Bunches of Bunnies	01/11	12/07	11/02	01/18	11/23	01/18
More Spaghetti, I Say!	11/02	01/28	11/16	01/11	12/07	01/01

APPENDIX H

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ABOUT USING BIG BOOKS

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ABOUT USING BIG BOOKS

(1) Did you find teaching with the big books enjoyable? Why or why not?

(2) Did you find that students in the big book group attended to the story better or worse than the students in the traditional-sized book group?

(3) Do you think your students in the big book group enjoyed story time more or less than students in the traditional-sized book group?

(4) Did you find that students in the big book group asked more or less questions about the stories than students in the traditional-sized book group?

(5) Did students in the big book group want to reread the stories?

(6) Did students in the traditional-sized group want to reread the stories?

(7) Do you think your students benefitted from being in the big book group? If yes, in what ways?

(8) Will you use big books in the future?

COMMENTS MADE BY TEACHERS

DURING THE COURSE OF THE STUDY

September 28 — This is one of the nursery rhymes we've been using in class. The kids are really paying attention to the words when they see it enlarged. I wish I could share the enlarged version with my other class.

The children with the big books like to play "school" during free time and read the big books to each other. (Similar comments about "school" were made often.)

October 5 — The kids in the big book group noticed these question marks and wanted to know what they were for. I really think that the guys in the big book group are paying better attention to the stories than my other class.

October 12 — All of the children are getting so they read along with the repeating parts of the story, even those who sit in the back. With the little books, there are always a few in the back who don't pay much attention.

I am sure glad that I decided to participate in the experiment. I really am enjoying using these big books. The kids think they are so neat! (This teacher voiced this type of statement repeatedly throughout the project.)

You know, these big books are kind of awkward to handle, even with the easel, but the kids do respond to them; so I guess I don't mind. The kids seem to feel like they are reading, which is what they want to do now that they are in school.

November 2 — We read this book at the beginning of the year. The kids sure liked the story. Do you want me to reread it to the little book group? [yes]

TEACHER COMMENTS--Continued

Some of my kids recognized some works from the big book this week. Then they pointed them (the words) out to other children as they encountered them in other print.

These big books are really great. I think the kids with the big books do pay better attention to the stories than the other students. They just seem to feel like they are a part of the story. They're more involved with reading.

I am glad I decided to do this project with you. The students pay attention so much better with the big books.

We are sure enjoying these stories. Even in the little book group, the kids are interested in the stories because they can guess what is going to happen next.

November 16 — I thought the kids wouldn't want this story since we had done it early this year, but the kids in the big book group asked for it several times, then read it over and over to each other. The little book group didn't seem all that interested in repeating it.

Some of my children asked about the quotation marks and the periods in this one.

My kids (in both groups) wanted to act out this story. Should I let them? [Not until after the study is over.]

One of my students asked me where I got these big books. Then he told me that he sure liked them. He wants to get some for home.

November 23 — This one was my kids' favorite yet. We should have had it for Halloween!

December 14 — I didn't have much time to read this week. We got them read, but pretty fast.

TEACHER COMMENTS--Continued

We enjoyed this book particularly (Obadiah). The big book group wanted it reread several times. I tried to reread it to the little group for the same amount of time. Can I borrow the big version after this project is completed?

January 11

How much longer do we do this? I am sure going to miss having these big books. We're going to order some for the kindergarten classes. There are so many things you could do with them after you read them aloud.

My kids are going to miss having these big books. I'm sure glad that I did this! Everyone enjoyed them so much. They help the kids feel like readers.

The books from last week were so good! The kids wanted to reread all of them.

January 18

I didn't do this nursery rhyme, and I don't really want to do any more nursery rhymes with my class.

My kids could guess the rhyming words that came next in this story!

You should have seen my students reading to each other this past week from the big books. I hope I don't really act like the teacher they were pretending to be! They were so stern with each other, but I did notice that they were really sincere in explaining the story to each other as they played teacher.