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Introduction

The National Research Council's Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education issued in 1999 *A Strategic Plan for Education Research*, before the No Child Left Behind legislation was enacted (Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, 1999). The Plan called for a reform in the way education research was conducted and communicated to teachers. A major difficulty of education research in such a large country as the United States of America was identified. "In education, however, the potential of research had not been realized. The sheer complexity of the enterprise had been a factor, as have underinvestment, lack of focus, and the difficulties of translating research results for practical ends" (Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, 1999, p. 11). The Plan additionally explained that the individual teacher had a difficult time accessing research because there was no centralized system of communication for research results to be relayed to teachers. Even when a teacher seeks out research to improve their individual classroom, there is often a disconnect between the language used by said teacher and that of the researchers to convey findings. The identified difficulty of national research in education was a consideration when conducting this small research project to see how teaching within the area of a few schools would provide suggestions and findings for teaching.

The Plan provides motivation for conducting research in education. "Research in education examines an ever-changing process, without end and without final answers" (Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, 1999, p. 12). Despite there being no final answers, it is imperative to continue conducting research in education

to seek what is being found in the field to improve practice and student learning. Research in the area of literacy is especially important for teachers to conduct and understand.

Literacy can be defined as the dynamic interaction of text, reader and context (Solheim & Skaftun, 2009). Effectively teaching reading literacy is vital because students use different modes of literacy to communicate in school and in their everyday lives. We all convey ideas and thoughts through our speech and writing, and we take in others' notions through our ability to read and listen. Many preservice teachers take these literacy skills for granted and, therefore, it is difficult to understand how to effectively teach them. It is necessary to break down how to read and thus start the students off at those beginning steps of decoding text. Students in the very beginning, in kindergarten, need to learn that the symbol of a letter has a sound associated with it, and then, that a group of letters stands for a word that has meaning beyond those sounds being pieced together. This is called the "alphabetic principle," which means that "letters represent sounds in a systematic way, and words can be segmented into sequences of sound from left to right" (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2008, p. 11). In first grade, these students have to organize their handwriting to show that letters are formed and progress from left to right, and they have to begin practicing the exchange of listening and speaking. In second grade, the students have to learn how to spell and recognize more words in context so that their reading and writing both hasten and increase. By third grade, these students are using the vessels of reading and listening to learn new content and can no longer be struggling as they did in kindergarten or first grade to form their letters, their

words, their thoughts in reading and writing. Therefore, teaching good strategies for being successful with reading literacy is necessary for the primary grades.

The development of students' reading literacy is a factor within the music teachers' instruction in primary grades. It is all too easy to focus on the core content of music itself. However, elementary music teachers can use the instruction of their subject to help students in other subjects as well. "As music teachers, we are trained to teach music, but the truth is that we teach children. We must consider the whole child in our teaching. To be successful in school and in life, children need literacy skills" (McIntire, 2007). Thus, music teachers are being encouraged to include reading literacy strategies in their classroom to help students improve both with music and reading literacy.

Students focus most of their reading literacy practice time in their general classroom and therefore second-grade teachers need to have multiple strategies for instruction. These include activities in decoding words into syllables to understand text (Combs, 2010, p. 92), listening to text (Dragan, 2003, p. 161), writing responses to text and creating original writing (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2008, p. 26), and increasing spoken vocabulary and improving pronunciation (Temple, Ogle, Crawford, & Freppon, 2011, p. 89). These same teachers also have methodologies for helping the diverse students in their classroom—students who have disabilities or are English Language Learners. It has been identified that using songs is a beneficial way for English Language Learners to practice the language, because of the repetition, use of common vocabulary, and the connection that is made between words and rhythm (Paquette & Rieg, 2008). Music is a modality that enables us to remember lyrics and words and is

used often for repeated readings with beginning readers (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2008, p. 114). Surely, pitch and ability to quickly sing text is a goal of the music teacher, and perhaps there is some collaboration between the music teacher and second-grade teacher in achieving this ever important goal of improving literacy.

Understanding effective methods for instructing literacy is crucial because literacy itself is vital to good learning. Being literate means being able to decode text to analyze information and create writing to convey opinions (Temple, Ogle, Crawford, & Freppon, 2011). Literacy is practiced in every aspect of the classroom. For example, students can read “everything from outstanding pieces of children’s literature to the chart that shows the milk count” (Metsala & Wharton-McDonald, 1997, p. 518). It is especially essential to teach students literacy skills in primary grades, because they are just starting their journey of literacy. Students mature to a stage in which they convey meaning through printed words and have the necessary tools to understand and create text (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2008). Only then can they progress to become learners who use their ability to read to understand new information. Therefore, if they do not learn how to read well while younger, they will struggle greatly in reading to learn when older.

Primary students also need practice with forming sentences and making meaning with what words they have in their vocabularies already, in the same way they might learn to ride a bicycle; one needs practice riding to become proficient and feel comfortable. The music classroom provides that practice of literacy skills. According to McIntire, the skills that are reinforced in the music setting are decoding, listening, and

communication (2007). Just as music is a means of communication, the listening and decoding skills used in reading literacy are practiced as music content is explored.

Study Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate components related to reading literacy in the second-grade classroom and the general music classrooms. Music teachers were chosen to participate in this study to see what, if any collaboration exists between them and the general classroom teacher, but most especially to see the ways in which the music teachers were helping further the literacy goals of each student. Collaboration could happen with any special subject, such as computers, library, or physical education, to which the students go throughout the week. However, the subject music was studied specifically for the application of reading literacy methods used in the music classroom. Students can practice their literacy in those other subject areas outside of the general classroom, but this study was looking at how the music classroom can help promote literacy, and how music might be used in the general classroom to support literacy as well. Literacy has received greater emphasis due to recent laws and trends in professional development and the monitoring of student achievement. To improve literacy, music teachers might have to incorporate reading literacy methods into their schedules.

Second-grade teachers were chosen because reading literacy in this grade is crucial for the general development of learning as the student progresses throughout each grade (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2008). Therein lies the reason there was such a strong emphasis on a national and local level to improve literacy: because it was crucial to the students' success in every subject area. This study was started in the hopes

of finding out which successful methods are being used in the area in which the study is done.

There is much focus on improving literacy in the second grade. Students are developmentally ready to spread their use of literacy to greater writing skills and increasing vocabulary knowledge. The next stage of reading literacy is “reading to learn” and usually starts happening in third grade. Therefore, students learn how to read successfully throughout second grade. The orthographic stages in which most second-graders find themselves are called the “Within Word Pattern” spelling stage and the “Transitional” reading stage. In fact “if students in late second, early third, or later grades are in the early part of this stage [within word pattern], there is a greater sense of urgency to catch them up with their peers” (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2008, p. 179). Hence, second grade was selected as a focus to see what these teachers do to support their students’ success in literacy before academic content becomes more challenging.

A second-grade teacher and the music teacher from two elementary schools within the same district were interviewed. There has been some research done on the correlation of music and literacy (Lapp, Flood, Brock, & Fisher, 2007; Liberman & Shankweiler, 1991; Lloyd, 1978), but this study examines how each teacher acts in her own field. The purpose of this study is not only to investigate the participating teachers’ pedagogies in these two disciplines, but also to see those pedagogies within the context of the relationship between the music classroom and the second-grade classroom within a

school community. Therefore, some cooperation was anticipated to occur between the music and literacy fields to demonstrate a school community.

The research questions are:

1. What are the main methodologies used and how do they manifest in the classrooms?
What teaching strategies and resources are used? How do teachers attend to the multiple levels of students within their class?
2. What is the collaboration between music teachers and literacy teachers?
3. How does the logistical set up for the classroom affect student learning of reading literacy?
4. How does the presence or lack of a reading specialist affect students' reading?

Definitions

The scope of literacy is large. One of the teachers in the study responded to the first interview question about literacy goals with, "By literacy are you including all of the language arts? Writing, reading, listening, speaking? That's a huge question!" Because literacy pertains to being able to communicate in many modes, such as speaking and writing, teaching how to be proficient in these modes is a huge task. Literacy practice consumes much of the school day and is practiced in every subject. Literacy "provides, like nothing else can, information, feelings, and the closest thing we have to real experiences" (Dragan, 2003, p. 311). It is a "social practice that we acquire by using language in different settings," and this language shifts as we enter and exit different

situations (Rowell, 2006, p. 16). The reason it is so prevalent in the school day is that literacy is the means of the majority of communication.

Literacy is especially important at the younger ages because students build upon previous experiences to improve their means of communication. One cannot write without first learning how to spell or organize thoughts onto paper. Therefore, second-grade teachers have a responsibility to help young students start practicing their communication skills. “Learning is not age-specific. If students do not gain needed skills in the early grades, they need to acquire them in order to progress” (Deeney, 2009, p. 155). Students become frustrated and continue to fall further behind if they do not acquire the necessary literacy skills near the appropriate stages of development.

As it applies in this study, “differentiation” is how teachers offer their instruction and assessments at varied levels of difficulty to accommodate for those students who have gaps in learning and proficiency with literacy. It means having several options for students who are above the grade level, on target for grade level work, or performing below a grade level (Greenwood, Bradfield, Kaminski, Linas, Carta, & Nylander, 2011). One effective way to differentiate is to scaffold instruction, which means starting with something very basic and building in difficulty with the student to help support and guide learning. The teacher helps the student start at the level that is attainable, and then works together with the student to reach a point that helps him or her catch up or understand a new concept that is then connected to previous knowledge (Combs, 2010).

“Phrasing” is how to express thoughts and emotions through tone of speech or song. Fluency is the rate at which readers read. Hearing examples of phrasing and fluency

before attempting the phrase on their own helps students gain a sense of how the phrasing and fluency should be. Hearing the example also strengthens the students' aural skills, which helps those students who are not as strong with their reading (Curtin, 2009).

“Decoding” is the making of meaning from smaller segments of a word. Students are taught how to recognize sound patterns and use those familiar patterns when encountering new words. If a student knows the word *cat*, he or she could break it further apart to identify the [k] and [a] and [t] phonemes. From there he or she could see the word *mat* and with knowing the [m] sound, he or she could piece together and make a connection that this new word is pronounced [m][a][t] or *mat* (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2008).

Method

All participating teachers are required to have taught for at least ten years, and therefore be considered experts in their field. Site locations were selected based on the recommendation of interested music teachers. The researcher's mentor is a music educator professional in the community and made these recommendations. After selecting the two schools based on the music teacher, one of each school's second-grade teachers was selected based on years of experience.

Teachers were initially e-mailed to determine availability and interest. Once the four teachers were selected from the two schools and the principal from both schools gave permission for research to be done onsite, consent forms were given to each participating teacher. The consent forms had more information about the project and its

voluntary nature with no incentive offered beyond helping a future teacher and potentially gaining new ideas from other teachers.

Once the teacher consent forms were obtained, interview times were arranged to last for an hour or two. A list of potential interview questions was devised before the interviews took place; one set was made for the second-grade teachers; a second set was made for the music teachers. However, the interview questions served as a guide for the discussion that took place with each teacher. Written notes were taken as the interviewee responded to questions. All interviews were also recorded with an Olympus digital voice recorder.

Each interview took place within the respective teachers' classroom. All teachers were interviewed once, except for one of the music teachers who was interviewed more than once. All interviews were reviewed, transcribed and typed. These transcriptions were coded by themes to find commonalities and differences between the responses and various methods used at each school. To protect anonymity, all identifying information such as school and teacher names have been changed. Final copies will be given to all participating teachers and school site administrators.

Background and Context for the Elementary School Setting

Both Hailstock Elementary School and Westerly Elementary School use a system called Positive Behavioral Support. The focus of this system is far reaching and includes many different parts of the school environment. One study looked at the effect of Positive Behavioral Support and how it focused on "school-wide teaching of social skills, praise notes from teachers to students, posting of school rules, proactive screening for students

at risk for emotional and behavioral disorders, and referrals of at-risk students for targeted interventions” (Caldarella, Shatzer, Gray, Young, & Young, 2011). Using the system affected the way the music teachers encouraged positive behavior because each class could earn a token from the music, computer, and physical education teachers for being good throughout the session. After sufficient tokens were earned, the class would enjoy a small reward such as extra recess time or Popsicles.

Hailstock Elementary School. Hailstock Elementary School is located within a suburban community in a city of approximately 400,000 in the western United States. The school has 597 students, of which 51% are male and 49% female. The school population consists of 6% Asian, 19% Hispanic, 68% White/Caucasian, and 7% Multi-Race students. The school has only 50 students who are classified as being Limited English Proficient, and are offered English as a Second Language services; 72 students have Individualized Education Plans, which means that these students have some type of special need. The school supports 17% of its students with free and reduced lunches. The teacher to student ratio for the entire school is 1:22, with the second-grade average being 1:23 (Washoe County School District, 2011).

Mrs. Brown is a Caucasian woman in her thirties, with two elementary-aged children of her own. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Music Education and a Master of Arts in Education-Curriculum and Instruction. She has taught general music in elementary schools for 16 years and at Hailstock Elementary for 10 years. She has served as a mentor for first and second year music teachers. She is highly involved with her school community. She attends meetings with other classroom teachers to be informed of

classroom choices. She communicates regularly with the Special Education teachers to ensure proper accommodations are being made for the students with special needs. She also helped to devise the general music curriculum for the school district and a potential sequence with assessments for general music teachers to use within the school district. She considers herself a perfectionist and is always trying to improve her classroom and school community.

The music classroom, led by Mrs. Brown, is located in the front of the school, not more than 30 feet beyond the front door. There are two doors connecting the classroom to the main hallway, one of which is accessed via five steps and the other by a ramp. The classroom itself is large with a front carpeted area with a whiteboard and a Promethean Activboard, an interactive whiteboard, attached to the front wall. On one side of this teaching tableau is a desk and on the other is an upright piano. The students walk past the piano when entering and exiting the classroom. The back of the classroom has linoleum floors and an accordion-like heavy curtain separating the classroom from the cafeteria. The specific layout was designed so that the teacher could have easier access to a stage for practicing and performing musical concerts and programs, but the accordion curtain also is a nuisance when staggered lunches placed chattering students on the other side of a music lesson. The sides of the classroom are lined with bulletin boards and word walls which are above cabinets and countertops.

Mrs. York is a Caucasian woman in her forties with three children. She has a Bachelor of Science in Education with a dual certification in Special Education and General Education, and a Master's in Liberal Arts. She is a veteran teacher of second-grade, as she has been teaching that age for more than two decades; she has been teaching

elementary aged children for twenty-three years, and has been at Hailstock Elementary for nineteen years. She has a daughter who has also gone into teaching special education, thus there is obviously respect for the teaching profession in her life and home.

Mrs. York's second-grade classroom has many different working surfaces spaced evenly throughout the room which include class cubbies, a teacher's desk, a rectangular project table, four sets of five desks, a reading nook with bookshelves and rocking chair, and a semi-circle table for reading groups. The cubbies are located along the wall to the left upon entering the classroom, with the teacher's desk at the end of these. There is a sink and counter space along the opposing wall to the door where art supplies and books are stored. The rectangular table is in front of this counter, adjacent to the teacher's desk. At the end of the rectangular table is a tall bookshelf which helps separate the book nook where the rocking chair is located. The semi-circle table is located to the right upon entering the classroom with the desks placed in the middle of the classroom. The whiteboards are located on the wall opposing the cubbies, in front of the desks and adjacent to the reading corner.

Westerly Elementary School. Westerly Elementary School is also located in a suburban community, but in a different section of the same city as Hailstock Elementary. The school has a population of 598 students, 51% of which are male and 49% female. The school consists of 2% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 9% Asian, 20% Hispanic, 5% Black/African American, 59% White, and 5% Multi-Race students. The school serves free and reduced lunch to about a third of its students. There are 78 students who are considered Limited English Proficient, and 112 students with Individualized Education

Plans. The teacher to student ratio for the entire school is 1:22, with the second-grade average being 1:20 (Washoe County School District, 2011).

This school was built around the same time as Hailstock Elementary, such that the architecture is mirrored—Hailstock’s music classroom is located on the left when one passes through the main entrance, and Westerly’s music classroom is located on the right. Otherwise, the music classrooms were designed exactly the same, and also not surprisingly, are set up with seating area and whiteboards in the same way. Westerly Elementary School’s music classroom, run by Mrs. Cates, had a Promethean Activboard interactive whiteboard installed at the front of the room.

Mrs. Cates is a Caucasian woman in her fifties with two college-aged daughters. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Music. She has taught for thirteen years, twelve of which have been at Westerly Elementary. She is an established pianist in the community. Her daughters are classical musicians and she plays piano for numerous musical programs and choirs outside of school as well as directing her own elementary school’s honor choir. Mrs. Cates runs the musical programs at her school and collaborates with other teachers to produce theatrical performances.

Mrs. Cates’s music classroom has an interactive whiteboard and a whiteboard with a musical staff permanently outlined in the front of the room. Above these whiteboards is her musical vocabulary and ‘listening quilt’ which is a pattern of paper with a series of questions for listening to music. She has posters of composers and instrument families above the countertops and cabinets that store the district-provided textbook and music folders and smaller instruments. There are colored risers in the middle of the room, separating the carpeted area in front of the whiteboards and the

linoleum area in the back that converts into a stage when the accordion curtain is drawn back. Mrs. Cates stores her larger xylophones in this back area behind the risers. She uses the risers as a means of creating groups because they are brightly colored.

Mrs. Dennis is a middle aged Caucasian woman who has taught for fifteen years, five of which have been at Westerly Elementary. She has taught kindergarten for many years and more recently switched to second grade. She loves incorporating art in her classroom. She continues to take professional development classes to gain more ideas and to show the initiative of working towards obtaining a raise.

Mrs. Dennis's second-grade classroom also has a very similar set up to the other second-grade classroom, with a sink and counter space to the right of the door and cubbies along the wall to the left of the door. There are twenty-five desks situated in groups in the middle of the classroom, with a semi-circle table near the cubbies in the back of the classroom. There is a whiteboard and word wall area with a calendar where students start their day. There is a large book shelf near the main whiteboards which are opposite the cubbies and semi-circle table, similar to Hailstock Elementary. The teacher's desk is located directly to the right of the door, next to the sink and counter space where the students store their watercolors.

In 2012, Westerly Elementary School instituted a "no homework" policy. The teachers still ask their students to read every day, but there is no other daily expectation of practicing spelling words or math computations, or other at-home practice. The new policy in no way affects Mrs. Cates, but it is a struggle for Mrs. Dennis to encourage her students to practice and study their schoolwork whilst not at school.

Four Aspects of a Classroom that Promotes Literacy

Common themes are based upon the responses to interview questions which were based upon the research questions. Some themes developed naturally through the teachers' discussions of their classrooms and school communities. The first aspect, therefore, is classroom and school environment. Within this context there is discussion about how the No Child Left Behind legislation has shifted teacher and student expectations. The discussion of this legislation is a topic that emerged from the interview and therefore was not included in the initial interview questions. One of the main interests in conducting this research was to explore the collaboration between general music teachers and second-grade teachers, and therefore the theme of collaboration is analyzed as part of the school environment. The next major theme that emerged is that teachers need to have clear expectations and requirements regarding reading literacy methods and routines. Once these expectations are set, a teacher can go on to use the third major aspect, which is other effective and engaging methods. The fourth contributing factor to the teacher's implementation of literacy techniques is the available resources within the classroom and school. These are the four necessary aspects of a classroom that promote literacy, whether it be a music classroom or second grade classroom.

School and Classroom Communities

The strength and tone of a school community are established by the personality of the principal and the other administrative staff members who help make school-wide decisions. The teachers are appreciative of their principals in how supportive they are. Getting the interactive white boards for the music teachers is an example of this

community. “I am really fortunate here, I have a really supportive principal.” Mrs. Cates substantiates the claim to a supportive administration by explaining that she was granted the interactive whiteboard after other teachers had successfully obtained their own through a grant and demonstrated that it improved student learning.

One huge influence on school and classroom environment was the size and layout of the rooms available. According to Mrs. Dennis, “This school was built for when we had a smaller ratio [of teachers to students].” Therefore, when she sets up her groups of desks, they have to be somewhat larger than she’d prefer because otherwise there would be no room left for moving about the classroom. She feels that her classroom is too small for the number of students. The music teachers did not mention needing more space to accommodate certain instructional activities.

Mrs. York talked about space in terms of a previous class where she had “27 [kids] by myself and I thought I was going to die!” Therefore, space and the number of kids in a classroom are major factors on the teacher’s perception of control and what she is able to direct and instruct. However both second-grade classrooms have enough space for the students to move around and work in different areas. Both teachers have a reading group table with room for the teacher and a few students, but spaced well away from the small groups of student desks. One of the second-grade teachers moves her students to different areas of the room during their ‘reader’s theater’ where they practice fluency by reading aloud to a small group of students. Mrs. Dennis set up a morning task corner of her room where the students gather in the beginning of the day to review words on the word wall, talk about the weather, the day of the week, to do some brief math, and

otherwise participate in their weekly classroom jobs which also include speaking and listening. The teachers take advantage of the size of their classroom to develop these literacy skills of listening and speaking.

There is a new system used in organizing classes at Hailstock. The new idea is to sort the students in classes based on individual needs: there is one class of students with special needs, one of students who are English Language Learners, and one of the remainder of the regular kids who do not fall into those two categories. There are plans to also create a class for the gifted students, but that is not yet implemented. One of the teachers remarked that this system is “best for the planning but not best for the kids.” The students are obliged to have several needs met, and setting up the classes in this way means that the special education teacher and the English as a Second Language teacher can go into one classroom and focus her time there rather than going into several different classrooms, or having the students pulled out from their respective classrooms. Another result of this organization, according to Mrs. York, is that she, the second-grade teacher, does not have to differentiate much for her students.

Mrs. Brown explained that many schools in the district are starting to implement this plan of separating students. She described that there are some average-achieving students in the classes along with the students with specific needs. However, Mrs. York described the system as distinct classes where students with special needs are solely with other students with special needs. Having a program set up like this means that the special education teacher can service more students in a day than if she were rotating between classrooms or had students leaving their classrooms to work with her.

Additionally, as evidenced by the second-grade teacher's lack of needing to differentiate, this program means that the students are getting more instruction closer to their level of ability more of the time during the school day.

One downfall of such a program is that the students are not learning how to work cooperatively with their peers of differing needs and abilities. The students who are English Language Learners do not have as many examples of native English speakers and the students with special needs do not have as many examples of regular behavior. Mrs. Dennis also has no need to provide "any accommodations for [her] special needs kids for their reading, writing" because another teacher takes these kids out of the classroom to work with them on their specific needs.

Classroom community at Westerly Elementary School was impacted by their intervention schedule which affects student interaction. Struggling students are pulled out of the classroom several days a week. Scheduling interventions like this affects planning instruction because the teacher has to provide whole group activities on certain days when the students are all in the classroom. Mrs. Dennis plans to only read aloud the book that showcases writing skills on days when the struggling students are still in the room. "Then they get to enjoy the story, they get to hear the lesson." Having to plan around such a schedule could have a negative impact on those low students in their literacy in addition to the impact it has on the classroom community. The low students would miss much of the instruction done of the piece of literature for the week because they would be out of the classroom working with another teacher on another piece of literature. The argument in favor of this intervention is that the students are so low that they would be struggling greatly with that same level of literature that the rest of the class studies.

Therefore, pulling the low students out is to their benefit because they are then studying literature that was much closer to their ability levels. There was not enough research done in this project to be conclusive about either argument. However, these intervention programs are a result of No Child Left Behind and how the school is addressing the requirement to show improvement and progress in all children. Schools seem to be required to log intervention hours for these students, but of course do it in as many different and diverse ways as the schools themselves are diverse.

Mrs. Dennis uses weekly jobs as a means of differentiation. The students take turns rotating each week through the jobs, many of which require speaking in front of the class. She said, after “everyone has had every job, I move things around depending on who needs to do leading, who needs a little bit more help.” Picking particular jobs for specific students means the teacher is able to differentiate her classroom responsibilities so that students are getting more practice with the literacy skills they need in reading, speaking and listening. The use of weekly jobs did not seem as important or prominent in Mrs. York’s classroom. She still uses them, but likely more for the daily needs of a classroom, such as being line leader or classroom messenger.

Mrs. Dennis uses classroom jobs in her fun Friday activity of painting with watercolor. After the art is created and set to dry on the floor, the students engage in art appreciation and paying compliments. Complimenting is built into Mrs. Dennis’s routine in response to the students’ participation in classroom jobs. However, complimenting comes into play on a whole class level when the students take turns identifying a piece of art and paying it a compliment. The teacher helps build vocabulary with words like

appreciate, texture, lines, ideas, reminds and inspire. The paintings are placed in a random order so “they do not know who painted it, so oh yeah it builds community because they are feeling so appreciated. I think it’s a beautiful thing.” Students build a classroom community by supporting each other and learning together about art and vocabulary.

Participating in the art appreciation helps build individual confidence in that someone liked their painting and that they as second graders are able to use such sophisticated vocabulary to express the appreciation. Building such individual confidence fosters great classroom community, all the while promoting the use of certain vocabulary in a real life context. Mrs. Dennis feels strongly about practicing the art of complimenting. “To me complimenting is a huge, important part of social graces.” As Mrs. York pointed out, the primary grades are crucial for “building social language.” Practicing social language is especially important at this stage because it is still new to the students; they haven’t had too much practice in the school environment, having only been in school for at most three years. The practice of social language and skills is also essential in second grade because students at this age are still just seven or eight years old and are in what is called the “prelogical” stage (Cruickshank, Jenkinds, & Metcalf, 2006). They therefore need as much practice as possible with social interactions to compensate for the lack of reasoning and logic. Mrs. York uses art as a means of building classroom community, and she uses music to accompany the admiration of the art: after the students finish creating, “they leave it on their desk and we do what’s called art museum and I turn on quiet music and you walk around until the music stops and you admire the picture

where you're at." Both second-grade teachers use art and the appreciation of each other student's art to build a strong sense of classroom community.

Another way to build the classroom community and help foster a literacy skill is having the students share their writing out loud. Practicing reading out loud "develops intonation, appropriate pausing, and breath control" (Curtin, 2009, p. 155). Reading out loud helps the students practice their speaking skills, and listening skills for those who are not sharing, as well as boosting more confidence about the piece of writing. The second-grade teacher ensures that the students have this opportunity: "they read their stories that they've written, they all get a chance to read to the class." Mrs. York explained that show and tell in primary grades is an exercise in speaking and listening skills. "Well it all seemed like fun and games, telling about it. But really in second grade, we call show and tell sharing and do it at the end of the day." The students enjoyed getting to talk about themselves or their hobbies, and they did not realize that they were learning and practicing how to appropriately listen, how to speak about a subject for five minutes, and how to ask and answer questions.

Mrs. York also had her students read out loud from a book that they had practiced reading to improve fluency. She has several students at once in different parts of the classroom who "for 5-7 minutes get to read out loud in a special chair to their own audience." Having such responsibility and power helps the students practice their reading, speaking and listening skills as well as building classroom community. This same sense of taking turns speaking and listening was manifest in one of the music classrooms in the form of leading a song. Mrs. Cates' system was that "One of them will

hold the stop sign and lead. And I'll ask them to spell it. It's so musical too. I get to hear them sing, if they're going to hold the stop sign and lead." Mrs. Cates' version of leading the class helps her assess individual needs and strengths just as Mrs. Dennis does with students leading the daily review of the word wall. Having one student lead the class regardless of subject is useful for creating classroom community, fostering confidence, and assessing individual students in literacy skills.

Whole class singing and recitation helps students practice literacy skills as does individual exercises done during seatwork. Mrs. Dennis requires all students to remain quiet during this time. "I need to have a quiet room. When I'm working with reading groups, they cannot be talking or playing games." Having a silent classroom for the teacher as she works with small reading groups is also beneficial to the individuals who have specific work to accomplish because a lack of noise generally means a lack of distractions. However the individual seatwork does not limit the student in terms of movement. In fact, "it can take them out of their desk; it's not like they're just locked at their desk." Having students move helps them focus because they are able to wiggle and relocate, which is helpful to their brain (Jones, 2009) and yet they all still work on their own and try to not distract each other. Working independently and quietly means the students are accomplishing what they need at their own pace, which is a form of differentiation.

The music teacher uses her system of greeting the students as a way of increasing individual leadership and classroom community. The music teacher may have a harder time establishing her sense of authority over the community that had already been set in

the regular classroom because the music teacher sees the students less frequently. Her greeting is also her way of establishing the psychological environment, or the “atmosphere of the class that potentially influences what students learn” (Cruickshank, Jenkinds, & Metcalf, 2006, p. 379). Part of setting the psychological environment is establishing the music teacher as the authority. The use of any strategy that builds a sense of authority and classroom community in addition to practicing individual skill is a major benefit to the music teacher.

Building a strong sense of school community helps with the transition between the regular classroom to the music classroom. Some music teachers and teachers of other ‘specials’ have to have strong methods for harnessing and maintaining students’ attention. Transition time from the general classroom to the music classroom is particularly long in the elementary school because the students do not have daily practice as much as secondary students do of switching equipment and location. Major transitions, such as moving from the general classroom to the music classroom, “when poorly planned, are a major contributor to classroom disruption” (Cruickshank, Jenkinds, & Metcalf, 2006, p. 350). The music teacher is faced with a short amount of time to accomplish much in the first place, so setting up routines and strong psychological environments is especially important for music teachers. The psychological environment is the areas in which students feel comfortable and welcome to share and explore as much as they do in their general classroom. Mrs. Cates has a piece of music playing as the students enter the classroom, which means they have to be quiet to hear the music. She writes a number on the board and it corresponds to a task from her ‘listening quilt,’ an idea she got from a magazine. The ‘listening quilt’ is a set of activities printed on

different colored paper to look like a quilt that is posted on the wall above Mrs. Cates' whiteboard. Examples of activities she uses to focus the students' listening would be determining the tempo or pace of the music, guessing which instruments might be making the music, from where the music might originate, and other feelings the students can interpret from the music. Mrs. Brown does a very similar activity, but uses stick figure pictures of a person walking and a person running, which she posts on the board to start a discussion about tempo.

Collaboration between music teacher and second-grade teacher. There was very little direct collaboration between the music and second-grade teachers in either school, but there seemed to be an enormous amount of respect from the second-grade teachers for what the music teacher has to accomplish. Each second-grade teacher feels that there could be collaboration, but fears it would interfere with what is going on in the music classroom. Mrs. Cates seemed intrigued by the idea of collaboration and might work more toward it. Mrs. Dennis remarked the following:

I mean I'm sure she has them read songs, but we do not say, "Could you have them learn songs about early America?" I'm sure we could do that, but she has her own agenda. She does her programs, she's wonderful at it.

It appears that these teachers had not previously discussed the idea of collaboration at length, but they seem to agree that although there is a possibility, it has yet to come to fruition.

Mrs. Brown mentioned how there was a different kind of collaboration. She works with her colleagues to find better ways to serve the needs of their students. She asked to attend meetings with the special education teachers “so we can find out what I am doing differently and what are they doing differently and we work together” to find the best ways to help the students. She collaborated with the special education teachers for the benefit of the students.

I give them a piece of paper that says, ‘in music class students need to be able to do this’ and I check the boxes that they need to do for that year. And they check the boxes showing what the student struggles with or is successful with.

Communicating so clearly means the music teacher can best accommodate the needs of her particular students with special needs.

Mrs. York mentioned one way in which she and Mrs. Brown have collaborated over the use of music to enhance literacy: “The music teacher would give me the xylophones, where she took [the keys] off so it would sound good no matter what they hit.” The students would read the poetry they had written and play the xylophones along with their reading to augment their experience and practice rhythm and expression. Other than this experience, Mrs. York explained how the teachers’ professional desire to help the students makes for trust and respect between them. “It’s also a trust thing, that the amount of time she’s spending with them is valuable, and what she’s doing is valuable and I do not need to tell her what to do.” This reaction was unanticipated but understandable, demonstrating her high level of respect for the music teacher’s goals within the school community.

Both sets of teachers were asked how they use the other subject or methods in their own classroom; the second-grade teachers about the use of music, the music teachers about reading literacy. Both second-grade teachers used music in some way and found that it was effective with the younger students. Not only were these younger students more willing to sing in the classroom, but they are able to rely on the context of familiar songs to introduce rhyming, patterns, and bridge the gap between known words and sight words (Combs, 2010). Mrs. Dennis explained how she successfully used music when she taught a different grade.

In kindergarten, they learned the months by music, they learned the days of the week by songs. I had a song every week. So it was always an academic song. So every week I had a song that went with the letters we were learning, or the stories we were reading, and they loved it.

However, Mrs. Dennis explained that she doesn't use songs to teach content as much in second grade because those students don't seem to enjoy singing as much, or that class didn't take to songs in the general education classroom.

No Child Left Behind and how it has changed literacy instruction. One goal of the No Child Left Behind law is to ensure that all children are making adequate yearly progress in the important content area of literacy (Combs, 2010). However, the requirements placed on schools, districts, teachers, and students are proving to be unbearable and certainly unachievable. The idea is to get every child to 100% grade-level abilities, which is and never will be possible with the factors of migration, disabilities, and language barriers (Curtin, 2009).

There was a relatively new requirement that “after two years, overall improvement must be shown or the administration must act by (1) replacing staff who are contributing to student failure, (2) changing the curriculum, or (3) reorganizing the school. A school that fails to improve student achievement over a given period of time can be closed down and the reopened as a charter school” (Curtin, 2009, p. 18). Wanting to hold teachers accountable for significant learning in the classroom is understandable, but the stakes on the standardized assessments that determine achievement are really steep, as outlined above by Curtin. Every part of the school hierarchy feels the pressure: the students to perform, the teachers to instruct, the site administration to guide, the district to support so that such progress is shown. The teachers who participated in this study were frustrated because they realize how the goals required are unattainable. Thankfully, there seems to be some changes coming in what is required and how achievement is measured so less stress is placed on everyone involved, and so that schools can realistically prove their success.

Teachers were asked how they are accommodating the expectations of accountability for learning when it is such a challenge to get all students to the unachievable goal. One teacher gave a metaphor of increasingly smaller and smaller goal posts through which the students have to throw their football. By the time the final goal post is presented, it’s such a small target that there is no physical way for the football to go through, meaning for that goal to be achieved.

All of the teachers had a definite opinion about the No Child Left Behind legislation and how it affected their classroom and school communities. One teacher

expressed that “the only way you do not leave a kid behind is to not go anywhere.” Another teacher stated how these goals may have looked good from the beginning but they are completely unattainable. She suggested that instead there be “a goal of having every student make growth, now we’ve got something that’s more realistic.” She understands how having a goal of all students making progress is attainable because her school achieved that this last year.

Another teacher talked about how No Child Left Behind had left some students out because it focuses so very much on literacy and math. She argued, “Some kids are really good at science and they’re not great readers, and there has to be room for those kids in school.” Yet, there is not room because the amount of time dedicated to teaching those subjects that are tested leaves no more time for social studies or science. Some of the officials in charge of explaining the shift away from other subjects have explained that literacy and the use of the English language is to be taught through “the use of regular academic content” (Curtin, 2009, p. 69). The multi-tasking ability to practice literacy through science or social studies is how teachers support the needs of their English Language Learners. One could extend this connected instruction for an entire class and say that the students are not missing out on the other subjects beyond math and English language arts. It seems that good literacy practices will be presented through other subjects if a teacher can be organized and creative enough to connect them.

Teachers face many challenges when it comes to standardized testing. There is a focus on preparing for the test which unfortunately sometimes eliminates other activities that promote the practice of literacy skills. One of the music teachers complained that her

subject is sometimes cancelled during testing times. Fitting so many tests into an already crammed schedule means that the schedule has to focus on preparing the students for those tests as best as possible, which is done with interventions. These intervention schedules are so rigid that it affects how all teachers prioritize schedules. “Some music teachers cannot teach anything during certain times, often one or two hours, because the whole school is doing reading or math.” The focus on test-preparation seems to be a narrow view that consumes all instructional time. One teacher feels frustrated with how negatively the testing and pressures affect her classrooms, a feeling shared by her colleagues. She cannot instruct her entire class when those students who need intervention are pulled out every day.

Clear Expectations and Requirements

A positive way to engage and begin a class is to have a routine, especially for entering a music classroom. Routines also help the students understand what they are supposed to be doing so that the students can self-regulate. “Having well-understood routines helps ensure that children are able to control themselves peacefully” (Temple, Ogle, Crawford, & Freppon, 2011). Mrs. Cates almost always starts her class period with a sung greeting which the students echo back. Listening and singing back every day is good ear training for the young students and yet many musicians do not practice this skill until college. She set up the routine and then progresses to more material to augment the activity. She explained:

I always start with a greeting, and pretty soon I use hand signs. “Hello, boys and girls.” Then I’ll do a greeting and I’ll pull from the [list of names in the class] and

she'll come up and we'll sing the scale up and sing the scale down and then she can choose which pitches we sing. So it's really good ear training. So we always do a scale and we always do a greeting.

Mrs. Cates has effectively incorporated the practice of music content into her greeting routine that reinforces her expectations of the students' behavior and musical performance abilities.

Just as a teacher has to set up a strong expectation for the classroom, she or he also has to establish expectations for homework, or the lack of assigned homework. Mrs. Dennis remarked, "This year because I have "no homework," I have not had the kids be as ambitious." They were feeling no push to be self-motivated or work extremely independently to progress because it was now solely the student's responsibility to practice at home and the parents' responsibility to encourage it. While it is true that "good homework, like a good school assignment, encourages love of learning while bad homework is destructive" (Cruickshank, Jenkinds, & Metcalf, 2006, p. 209), it still stands that homework can be used as a form of independent study. Homework is more effective if there is communication and guidance coming from the classroom. The parents may be inclined to help, but they may not know the best sequence or amount of work to expect of their growing children. The lack of ambition on studying spelling in Mrs. Dennis' classroom could be attributed to a different classroom dynamic, but it also could be a pattern that shows how the students are reacting to the new "no homework" policy. Those students who would excel and study much even with the requirement will still continue to do so with parent support, but many more students are satisfied with the minimum.

However, the teachers' high expectation to read every night is in place to encourage all students to practice their literacy skills.

The students seem to care about getting a higher level for their reading assessment though. Mrs. Dennis designates her assessments with colors. Yellow is for the students who are below grade level and green being for those who are on grade level. "They figure that out, but pretty soon they want to get a green test rather than yellow. We cannot hide from them that they're below grade level, that's not real world." She differentiates her instruction to provide the support and challenge that the students need, and the added bonus is that the students could set a goal to improve and move up to the next color.

Mrs. Dennis also tests for fluency, which is how quickly the student reads, but she has to combine that with another test for comprehension, because there is no benefit to a student reading quickly if he or she does not understand the content of the passage. Mrs. York does not perform as many weekly assessments but she still has expectations of students' progress. She uses her own observations throughout the week to determine how students are doing. Mrs. York explained that one aspect of improvement she can easily notice is the students who are taking the time to read at home. Reading every day at home is an expectation of Mrs. York's for the students and the parents to help their children improve in reading. She has several years' experience discerning this, and she "can tell which parents read with their kids and which do not" because "the parents who read to their kids, their kids make really great growth." She explains that even those students who read above grade level will remain stagnant unless they were being read to at home. Mrs. Dennis begs parents to read with their kids as well. She said, "The only kids who are

progressing are the ones for whom the parents are responsible.” She reinforces her expectation that parents are still responsible for reading with their children and discussing what was learned at school.

Effective and Engaging Methods

The issue of a quiet classroom is an area where the music classroom and second-grade classroom will differ because the practice and application of what is learned in a music classroom by nature produces sound. Having students with instruments or the awareness of how to effectively produce sound means music teachers have to be especially crafty and clever at regaining their students’ attentions (Cruickshank, Jenkinds, & Metcalf, 2006, p. 342).

A big push in the school district is the use of a new strategy called “Daily 5.” The reading and writing activities of this program focus on five activities that were developed by two sisters, Gail Boushey and Joan Moser (Boushey & Moser, 2011). The five activities are meant to foster independent work on literacy and some social interaction. The social interaction part helps promote social skills and uses cooperative learning, or interacting with peers on a social level, to enhance that practice of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The activities are individual work on writing, listening to reading, reading to self, reading to someone, and word work which usually is comprised of vocabulary and spelling work (Boushey & Moser, 2011). Some schools in the district have chosen to implement this in all of the classrooms, but of course each teacher teaches it and fits it into the schedule as much as possible. Mrs. Dennis explained how she uses the system by stating, “Maybe it’s the daily 4 or the weekly 4, I keep changing it so it can

fit for me.” Her use of the “Daily 5” system was not unique, and she explained that much of teaching was taking what others do and making it fit her own teaching style. Mrs. York has a similar explanation of borrowing strategies from other teachers and suiting them to her style.

One of the more social aspects of the “Daily 5” program is to read to someone. Both second-grade teachers have clever strategies for coaching partner reading. Mrs. Dennis focuses on helping her students learn how to help each other in their reading. Her goal is to explicitly teach them how to coach their partners so that the better reader is not always just giving the answer to the struggling reader. She reminds them of several strategies for decoding a word and then sets them up to practice. She explained, “That’s their method for sounding it out: back up and read it again, or chunking, the beginning of the ending, look for the base word. So kids learn to be teachers, to be helpers and teachers.” Mrs. Dennis helps her students become more independent learners and better helpers for each other by teaching them coaching strategies.

Mrs. York has three specific ways in which her students partner-read. She explained her methods.

One of the ways is that they always have to share a book because it keeps them engaged with each other, even though it started back when I did not have enough books for kids. But I’ve found that if they share a book, they do much better than if they have their own.

The second strategy she explained, “I put them in pairs, and the first person is the better reader—they do not know this—so they read first, and the other person echoes them and reads right after they read.” Her third strategy is ‘knock-knock’ reading where “I read in the book as long as I want until you knock on the book to say you want to read.” She especially likes using the last strategy towards the end of the year when the students have more confidence and are able to manage having more control. She explained that it also helps with the social needs of her readers because, “for reluctant readers, it gives them some safety because they might know this page really well and want to read that.” It seems that this teacher supports the social needs of her students while providing independent and differentiated methods for partner reading, an important literacy skill.

The creators of the “Daily 5” seemed to want students focusing on working together, and all the teachers involved with this study were interested in helping their students become more independent in their work. The music teachers were focused on musical independence, because the music teacher’s goal is music literacy; the second-grade teachers’ is literacy, among many others. All of the teachers have much to teach within their subject as well. One of the music teachers remarked that they teach social skills, too. “When each person gets a turn, they sit down, so they’re following directions and everything is integrated.” Therefore, it is beneficial to use partners or small groups to foster social learning along with the topic at hand (Temple, Ogle, Crawford, & Freppon, 2011). It is important for teachers to set up the social dynamics of the classroom that uses this cooperative and partner work so that all students are engaged and working together.

To go along with her regular greeting of listening and responding, or listening to a piece of music, Mrs. Cates also plays songs for the students to hear on compact discs that were provided with the textbook. The regular classroom teachers were also provided with the resource of compact discs with the district textbooks. The students listen to a reading selection before they read it to provide some background knowledge and help all the students start on the same level of basic understanding with the story despite differing reading abilities. One of the second-grade teachers stated that she starts her week with listening on the first day. “The first day, we listen to the story on tape or compact disc and I push pause and I ask the questions, and I get them to find those answers in the book.” The music teacher does the same thing to help her students learn the lyrics; just like the second-grade teacher plays the recording to help students listen and begin to comprehend the story, the music teacher would “usually play a song for them,” so the students could start to get familiar with the lyrics.

Another very similar strategy between the music teacher’s introduction of text and that of the second-grade teacher’s is the use of echo reading or echo singing. The teacher would say or sing a line of the text, which the students listen to and then sing or read back. Some students are able to simply listen and repeat what is read or sung, while others read along in the text while the teacher does it before reading or singing it themselves; this would be a form of differentiation. Differentiation can be seen in how groups are formed, in what materials are used, or even in presentation of information. Being able to just listen and repeat back or use other supports is a form of differentiation because more students can be engaged with the discussion and activity without needing the same reading capabilities. Mrs. Cates stated that she does much echo singing, while

she listens for fluency and accuracy. She uses the strategy of echo singing especially with the younger students, and does not “always give words to the younger kids.” She uses this as a means of accommodating the younger students’ lack of proficiency with reading, because her focus was teaching about pitch and using a singing voice.

Mrs. Brown, however, differed in that she does not use echo singing at all. Describing the strategy as a crutch for the students’ individual progress and independence, she said “I do not sing it for them first. This is their first time reading vocally without my help; they’re not echo reading. This is to remind them, ‘you can read music and you do not need me to do it.’” Her focus is to train autonomous students who will attempt difficult tasks without relying on the teacher to do it for them. It seemed she is working on long-term reading skills when she pushes her second-grade students to read their music independently, so that they are not codependent when they sing a three-verse song in third grade. She justified her reasoning by saying, “Musical independence is the goal. If we’re constantly feeding them the answers, they’re not going to be able to do it on their own.” Her logic applies to all aspects of the students’ school day, and it presents the ultimate challenge for educators to encourage students to achieve as much as they can while working independently so that the success is their own and not overly aided by the teacher. To that end, Mrs. Brown added that the “really good teachers were the ones who taught [us] how to do the thinking” whether that be with music or reading.

Just as Mrs. Dennis uses music in her classroom to help teach the days of the week, another teacher in a different report on teaching through music explained how she uses music in her classroom to bring context to other subjects like social studies. “One of

my favorite methods of enhancing each social studies unit is through the use of music. The rich music is familiar to everyone, and, with the Internet, quite easy to locate and play” (Robinson, 2009, p. 217). Her comment on this incorporation of music in her teaching is that “my students love the fact that music enters into the regular curriculum in addition to the official music class” (Robinson, 2009, p.218). The students thrive on the use of different methods for learning new material, and are drawn to the variation and excitement of music as a means of learning. Another teacher explains how music enhances learning because it enables us to remember more. “Music can be a hook for hanging onto facts and concepts. It can also help resurrect a day or lesson gone awry” (Dragan, 2003). Her comment shows how music is not only helpful for the learning of new material and mastering of familiar concepts, but also a fantastic way to manage a classroom that is rowdy.

General classroom teachers understand the use of songs as employing a different modality and improving literacy. Dragan (2003) said, “If we can sing them, we can read them!” (p. 73). Mrs. Dennis also has sets of musical instruments in her classroom so the students can experiment with music. She believes that “music develops new pathways, so it helps us with learning. I think music is a fabulous tool for teaching.” For just as important as it is for students to be engaged in multiple different modes of communication, it is also vital for the students to move and keep their blood flowing and their attention alert.

Both Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Cates employ many interesting methods in their literacy connections when teaching lyrics. They both use a word wall, which is a resource

for sight words and vocabulary in the classroom. Mrs. Brown uses the pictures of people running or walking to talk about tempo, to have her students define tempo, but she ran into the problem that her younger students did not know what it meant to define something. She took advantage of the literacy teaching moment and developed upon what the students must have been exposed to in their general classrooms. She remarked, “And then we define what tempo is, but they do not quite understand what it means to define something. So I’ll say, ‘Define what a chair is.’ They start thinking and associate something that they’re familiar with.” She was building upon a skill they need for understanding literacy of not only her classroom, but also that of other classrooms and other contexts. She uses a similar technique when introducing other musical vocabulary, and makes a connection with it, but she sees the goal of not only the students’ capabilities with comprehension, but their capabilities with expression, all of which tie into literacy. She explained, “You’ve got musical terms that you’re building their vocabulary. You’re teaching them how to express themselves,” which is an important life skill in both musical and literacy.

There is an equivalent with reading music and reading text, composing music and writing text, reading text with fluency and phrasing, and doing the same with musical phrases and passages, but there seems to be little that directly corresponds with rhythm. However, Mrs. Brown used rhythm while telling a story about a man walking steadily up and hill and then running back down it to show an example of how rhythm is both in music and speech. She paced her words to create a image of the strain of going uphill and then the release of going downhill, to which the students could relate. She also related rhythm in a fun game of playing with names and syllables; the students each were

“finding how many syllables their name has, like if you’ve got Alexander, it translates into *ti-ti-ti-ti*.” Playing a game means the students get to know each other and practice finding syllables, which was an important literacy skill, and they can practice their rhythm of quarter notes and eighth notes, which are often designated as *ta*’s and *ti-ti*’s at that age.

Rhyming is a literacy skill used by the music teachers with the second graders that is beneficial for acquiring sight words and learning lyrics. Mrs. Cates said, “That truly is the way of teaching literacy, it’s the patterns and there are rhyming words.” She elaborated the differences between her students. “All of a sudden someone will go, ‘They all have *op* at the end!’ A lot of them get rhyming right away, and others can only think of beginning sounds.” The challenge is set before both music and regular classroom teachers alike of showing students the sense of rhyme in text as a beginning step to reading. The text structure of many Dr. Seuss books demonstrate this scaffolding of rhyming to help students guess what word comes next as a reading strategy (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2008). Rhyming words also are easier to remember, which comes into play when the students have to remember lyrics of songs. Even just the practice of listening for rhyming words helps with learning literacy because “rhyming games help call children’s attention to sounds in words” (Temple, Ogle, Crawford, & Freppon, 2011). Children may struggle as they are singing with the task of paying attention to pitch and the correct pronunciation of words, and so rhyming can help the students establish a familiar pattern.

Students focus on patterns when learning spelling words and practicing literacy. Mrs. Dennis found a way to push her students by offering different spelling lists. She has

three separate lists, which the students attempt on Monday. The students who do exceptionally well on the first list are given the option to try for the harder list, and again for the third list if the pattern continues. She mentioned that there are words that are challenging and above the second-grade level, but that some students really succeed with it. There didn't seem to be a list directed at her below-grade students, and therefore she pushes each student to study and try their best with the material they are expected to learning. She used to give homework that would help students practice these words by writing them in sentences, or reading them aloud but the "no homework" policy has changed her system.

Mrs. York focused her phonics work so that her students gain strategies for spelling. "When they're spelling a word they realize it's not just memorization." Teaching spelling through the use of phonics was also how Mrs. Dennis organizes her weekly routine, and her students practice with different spelling sounds. She explained that these lists based on phonics are provided with the reading series; therefore, the teachers are encouraged to use phonics practice as a means of spelling practice. Students in second grade learn their spelling through phonics because they are still being introduced to new spelling patterns, such as word families like *-op*, *-at*, *-ig* and are working through the long vowel sounds such as (*ee*), and (*ea*) (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2008). All second-grade students should be learning in a similar sequence and manner, since the materials and strategies are almost uniform throughout the district.

All of the teachers help their students comprehend the text being discussed, whether it is song lyrics or a story from the district-provided anthology, by discussing the

select vocabulary found within. A set of vocabulary words is provided to accompany the district text, but Mrs. Dennis augments hers because she wants to make sure the students understand the content of the text. She explained, “They were just the words that were in the story that either the book recommended or I took out and thought they were hard.”

Having a word wall is one way the teachers address the vocabulary. The music teachers also use their interactive whiteboards to help with specific words in the lyrics. They also pick out words in their materials with which the students will need extra help. Not only are some of the vocabulary words used solely in the context of music, but music teachers are faced with the challenge of not seeing the students often enough. Mrs. Cates bemoaned this fact. “While music is my whole life and I see what is coming next and how it all ties together, they might not remember what we’d done last week because they’ve done 10,000 others things before they got here.” Therefore, Mrs. Cates understands that these students need extra help with vocabulary, which means constant reinforcement and support.

Available Resources

The music teachers do not use desks for the students because there is too much other equipment that dictates how much space students need. There was the location of the piano and the white boards, both the interactive one and the traditional one, that for Mrs. Cates has a musical staff permanently drawn on. She also uses colored risers that can be moved and mixed to create groups of students. Mrs. Brown uses the interactive whiteboard situated in the front of the room, and her students sit in designated spots on the floor. Both teachers have a space in the back of the classroom where other

instruments are kept until they are played, which is necessary to lessen distractions for the students.

One of the latest developments in classroom technology within these two schools is the digitally interactive whiteboard. The flat space also works in multiple ways. It can be a projection screen, show websites, and store flipcharts. Flipcharts are a means of having multiple sets of notes, tasks, and reminders ready for each new class for the music teachers and for each subject for the second-grade teachers. Mrs. Cates lauded it when she said, “What I like about it is that you put interactive stuff on it and you can just reset it for the next class,” Mrs. Brown uses her interactive white board as a means of displaying the tasks for that day and the goals of the lesson.

The joy of having a large and tall classroom means having more wall space to use for the sake of literacy. A staple in many classrooms is a word wall. A word wall is a space on the wall, usually a bulletin board, where words that show up often in text, writing, or speech, otherwise known as high frequency words, are posted for students to reference. Seeing the words every day helps the students build sight words, or those words that they automatically recognize without having to use any strategies to read. These word walls are helpful for writing because the student can reference them for accurate spelling. A different teacher, who specialized in first grade explained that her “children will do a variety of activities as they locate words, celebrate them, and learn to write them” (Dragan, 2003, p. 181). The music teachers employ this resource; one teacher explained how she uses hers for vocabulary building as well. She chose “a lot of these the first couple of years I was here, and then I went back and reorganized them.”

When this music teacher is instructing a particular concept and she asks for a review of a word, the students can respond with what they know, or they “can find out what it is” by using the word wall. She has taught the students that the word wall is a classroom resource; they know that they can often find words and definitions on the wall to go with what is being discussed in the lesson.

The word wall is a daily exercise in Mrs. Dennis’ classroom, and she color codes her words based on the week. She creates a nonsense sentence from the high frequency words, and students may choose “today we’re going to do pink words or blue words” when leading the class in a review because “every week the sentence is in a different color.” After practicing the words of the week, her students may sometimes “play word games, “I see two words that rhyme ending in *-ing*” And we can do that for a few minutes, it’s a sponge if I have a few extra minutes.” Mrs. Dennis uses her word wall for not only a major classroom job every day, but also refers back to it to reinforce spelling patterns whenever she had a spare moment.

Mrs. Brown’s word wall is very tall and organized by grade level. The most important thing to note is that both music teachers have a word wall that they regularly use and almost as regularly update. Mrs. Dennis has a word wall built from “our high frequency words. Every week I make a high frequency sentence, it’s a nonsense sentence, but they read it every day and learn the words. At the end of the week, then those words go on my word wall.” Her use of the classroom space is integral in her daily routine.

One of the resources all four of the teachers used is the size of their classrooms to provide for movement between literacy activities. The second-grade teachers have their

students move from their desks to other carpeted areas of the classroom and to the other tables and center work areas in the room. Regular motion is important for children because they have smaller attention spans and need to constantly be engaged, and one way of accomplishing that is to have them moving in and out of their desk areas (Jones, 2009).

A required resource is the district-provided Houghton Mifflin reading anthology text book and resource workbooks for instructing literacy. The textbook has a structure set up for lesson plans and practicing literacy skills of listening, reading, and writing, with some speaking being practiced when discussing the text. The reading book for the second-grade teachers is well used in both classrooms because it comes with so many additional resources. These additional resources are compact discs of all the stories, but one teacher uses the texts very infrequently. However, the stories in the anthology are not in progressively difficult order.

Mrs. York used the text for two reasons: “[we]’re required to use it,” and it had all the extra materials that coordinate with the focus of the week. There were leveled readers that were differentiated for reading groups, a set of spelling words that go with the spelling patterns of that week, a silly story that had several examples of that spelling pattern and compact discs of the stories “so the kids can listen to it first.” She explained that the requisition to use the textbook is in place because the district provides the text, and a teacher cannot complain about her students not making progress if she is not using what the district provided. The weekly stories are based on a theme and set up in units, so Mrs. York would also read aloud to her students something that had to do with that

theme. Reading aloud helps the students get a sense for some background knowledge and it also helps them practice their listening comprehension skills. One researcher explained that “reading is different from listening in that it is, in some significant way, a secondary, less natural use of language—part discovery, part invention” (Lieberman & Shankweiler, 1991, p. 5). It follows that students would listen to the story first and then dive into reading it, so they can facilitate in sequence both sets of understanding language.

There is a district-provided music textbook that also comes with compact discs of all the songs. Mrs. Brown mentioned that she likes how the text is color coded to help teach the literacy aspect of reading more than one verse to a song; as she said, “the series is actually so good for the literacy side because it is high-lighted.” Also the use of a textbook in the music classroom is great support for literacy in general because the students have to independently follow along with the song, or practice reading text or decoding pictures.

Just as both music teachers augment the district-provided text with extra resources and music and stories, both second-grade teachers have a small library in their own classroom and even borrowed more books from the library. Mrs. Dennis adds books to her leveled readers provided by the district. “I get from the library a bunch of little readers because they got stuck at a certain point. So I’d jump out of HM for a while and just do readers from the library.” She will do this when she feels that one set of students or a reading group is not making much progress. By bringing in different texts she is able to continue working with the group of students without remaining stagnant on one particular story.

Mrs. Dennis also has a prodigious number of picture books in her classroom. She explained how she incorporates the additional reading materials.

I use picture books for... well, that might be how I introduce a writing skill. We'll look at the author... maybe the word *roar* is in there and I'll say, "How do you know how to read this word?" "Well it's really big, it's bold letters, it's written this way." Good, this author helped you see that they wanted you to read that word loud and with emphasis.

It is beneficial for these students to see the example of the writing trait in a real setting. She also uses the books for other subjects, including social skills. "I use them for teaching school rules, a story about a bully, connecting to that. My books over there {pointing to her library} were all about lessons. I teach math with those books, a lot of those books were for social studies or science." Being an experienced teacher means that she has built a collection of books over the years of practice and has found how these can best work in her classroom. She also uses them at the end of the day of if there are some spare minutes when other instructional goals and activities have been met and completed.

Both schools have provided agendas for each student. These agendas are used for distinctly different purposes. One school uses them to record the homework in grades 2-6; the other school uses them to record "I can" statements for the students to take home and show their parents/guardians. This shift from homework to statements is a result of the "no homework" policy. The school-provided agenda becomes a classroom resource because the teachers use it to help teach their students more about calendars and

planning. The students have a fantastic opportunity to start learning about organization and practicing being responsible for their own tasks and homework.

Both second-grade classrooms employ some sort of writing folder or notebook. Westerly Elementary School has a school-provided notebook with spaces for sketching out pictures as a means of pre-writing and organizing ideas. Mrs. York has a different notebook that includes several prompts in the beginning of the folder, with space in the back for the students to write. Their writer's notebook is for trying different types of writing. "You look at the front of the notebook and pick something you want to write. I give them an assignment like whatever you write today has to have three color words and two number words." Other than using this writing notebook, the students practice "writing pretty much three times a week in their journals." Although Mrs. York said she has a hard time including enough writing in her weekly instruction, having a routine established can be helpful to make sure that her students are in fact writing three times a week.

A different approach to learning text in the music classroom that both music teachers use is pictures, and matching them with specific songs or ideas. Both music teachers use pictures to augment their discussion of lyrics, using visuals to create context for the vocabulary within the lyrics. Mrs. Cates explained how her younger students had a hard time remembering the sequence of lyrics, and so she added some pictures to the chart which she displayed on her interactive whiteboard. Her students saw the corresponding pictures and actually moved the pictures and interacted with the text. This is an example of using the available resources to help with a specific strategy, and one

that could easily be duplicated without the specific resource of the interactive whiteboard. Yet, this interactive whiteboard technology allows Mrs. Cates to store the lesson for the following year without having to store anything concrete. Her students see the corresponding pictures and actually moved them thereby interacting with the text. Even beyond using pictures to demonstrate which word comes at which part of the song, this same song also spurred a conversation about a harvest moon. Mrs. Cates said “they did not know what a harvest moon was so we talked about that. So now [they] can remember.” The use of pictures is a great support for context and learning new vocabulary.

Mrs. Brown also uses pictures and did the same thing teaching lyrics for “Jingle Bells” and explaining the lyric about a one-horse open sleigh.

And then I show them a picture of a horse with an open sleigh. It was amazing this year! I’ve drawn it on the board before, but to have this interactive whiteboard and show an actual picture. They go, oh, it does not have a top to it because it’s an open sleigh. And they have that “Aha!” moment.

She was excited to help the students understand their music more clearly and also to help them make the connection with the odd vocabulary and the historical background of the song.

While there was not mention of a reading specialist at one school, Mrs. Dennis explained that her lowest readers are pulled out of her classroom to work with a reading interventionist twice a day. When asked if this professional was a reading specialist, Mrs. Dennis responded that the teacher was not, but had been a teacher at one time and had

changed to helping the lowest readers from all of the second-grade classes. There was also no reading specialist at Hailstock Elementary School, and Mrs. York explained that that responsibility of working with those students who need extra support was “all on the classroom teacher.” She explained, “In the old days they used to have a remedial reading teacher, and people went to see her, or it was something specialized down the hall that you went to, or moms would come in and help.” While there are still moms who come in to help, “it’s really not fair to give a mom a kid who can read 12 words per minute; they do not know what to do with them. You have to give them the middle group.” Therefore, these moms help with the teacher’s workload slightly, but the teacher still has to be the reading specialist with those students who are really far behind.

Conclusion

Two second-grade teachers at two different yet similar schools were interviewed to discover their methods for instructing reading literacy. The music teachers at these same schools were interviewed to investigate how reading literacy was instructed throughout their curriculum and classroom. From these interviews, four aspects that contributed to reading literacy success were identified. They are: (1) school and classroom environment, which covers collaboration between teachers; (2) having and using clear expectations and requirements; (3) employing effective and engaging methods; and (4) the resources available to the teacher and students. These four aspects are labeled in the following figure.

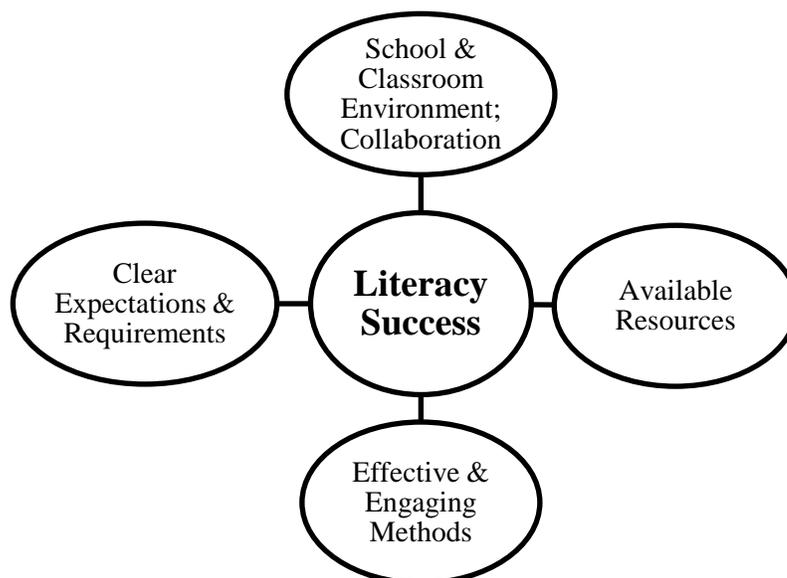


Figure 1. The four aspects that affect an elementary student's literacy success.

The aspects which contribute to literacy success may be grouped into four categories. School and classroom environment, which covers collaboration between teachers, may have a strong positive effect on the students' motivation to practice their literacy skills. The school and classroom communities provide the supplies for the students to practice. The school also supports the student by providing rotating reading interventions. Using clear expectations and requirements for each student's work is important for literacy success so that the students can practice their skills in familiar routines, and can perform up to the high expectations that these teachers have set. Employing effective and engaging methods might be the most influential aspect for literacy success. These teachers are able to encourage their students to participate in literacy practice by having exciting activities and routines. The resources available to the teacher and students seem to make a difference for the students' success with literacy. All teachers interviewed appeared to believe in the strength and importance of using a word

wall to make words more accessible to the students. The schools provided each classroom with an interactive whiteboard, which heightened the kinds of methods each teacher could use to instruct literacy, and it was apparent that each teacher was very grateful for that resource. The district-provided reading textbook came with companion leveled readers and spelling lists so that the teachers had a framework upon which they could build weekly routines. Having the leveled readers provides for extra differentiated support for the students. It is suggested that these four aspects of a learning environment can lead to reading literacy success.

Research Questions That Were Answered

The original research questions were as follows, with their respective answers. The first question led to discovery of the four aspects which relate to methodologies, resources, and differentiation as seen in the classroom environment. The second question pertaining to collaboration quickly became a lesser focus once the teachers revealed there was little collaboration. Yet, it was replaced with the notion of what each teacher is doing to reinforce literacy, both within the music classroom and by using music in the general classroom. The third question looks more closely at the resources portion of the four aspects. One of the easiest comparisons made is how different teachers of the same subject established the physical environment of their respective classrooms. The fourth question about a reading specialist touches upon the school environment and what sort of interventions were provided.

1. What are the main methodologies used and how do they manifest in the classrooms? What teaching strategies and resources are used? How do teachers attend to the multiple levels of students within their class?

The second-grade teachers use small reading groups to differentiate between the varying levels of reading ability within their class. The music teachers use small groups as well to help give students support when performing a simple rhythm or singing a new song. All teachers make ample use of their classroom space by setting up different seating areas, having word walls and bulletins, using technology in the form of an interactive whiteboard, and also relying on the school community in several different ways. The second-grade teachers encouraged and expected their students to read every day and practice their spelling words or their fluency at home as well.

2. What is the collaboration between the music teachers and the literacy teachers?

The answer to this question is similar in both schools. The second-grade teachers both said that the music teacher has so much to do on her own that there was not time to collaborate. Mrs. Dennis said that they do not ask the music teacher to specifically teach about a certain topic that is being discussed in the classroom, and remarked, "I'm sure we could do that, but she had her own agenda." It was interesting to see that Mrs. Cates seemed to ponder the idea of collaboration with the general classroom teacher as a particular possibility. Their individual perspectives do not clearly answer the question or offer a clear explanation as to why collaboration is not happening. Responsibilities of the position may do so. The idea for the second-grade teachers that the music teacher has to know hundreds of students and accomplish curriculum goals when only seeing the

students twice a week was far more challenging than having a smaller number of the same students for the rest of the day. It is *vice versa* for the music teacher thinking that the second-grade teacher has to present so much varied material to the students to learn. One teacher explained that there was a level of trust between colleagues. She respected that the music teacher had valuable things to teach and these things should not be compounded with other requests by the second-grade teacher to collaborate.

3. How does the logistical set-up for the classroom affect student learning?

All the of the teachers used the full space of their classrooms, and only the second-grade teachers mentioned the number of kids in the room and how that affected their teaching. The students need space to sit in cooperative learning groups, to find space to read quietly with a partner, and to participate in listening centers (that have tapes, compact discs, audio players for that medium, and books) or reading with the teacher or performing individual tasks with little distraction from other students doing other tasks. Perhaps the music teachers have their students sitting, standing, moving and playing instruments so much that they do not notice how the size or lack of size of a classroom affects their students. The greater distraction for them is being adjacent to the cafeteria, which meant there is some noise distraction at lunchtime or when a janitor whistles while cleaning in the cafeteria. However, all of the teachers make sure their students are not situated in one same spot throughout the entire day. Each classroom has room on the walls for resources such as word walls, white boards and interactive white boards, and cubbies for both second-grade classrooms.

4. How does the presence or lack of a reading specialist affect students' learning?

Both second-grade teachers had comments about the way their schools provided interventions for the students who need extra help. Westerly Elementary School has a pull-out program where the students are removed from the classroom twice a day for reading and writing help. Hailstock Elementary School has arranged the classes so that the students who need help the most are all within one class. However, some rotating intervention occurs when the majority of students work silently on some writing while each teacher rotates a very small number of struggling students from each classroom.

The lack of a reading specialist does not seem to affect the music teachers at all, but it significantly affects the way the second-grade classrooms are organized and run on a daily basis. There is more responsibility on Mrs. York at Hailstock Elementary School, where there is no specified reading specialist. She has to provide interventions for certain other students herself while the rest of her class works quietly.

Other Questions that Emerged

Soon after the preparation for teacher interviews began, there was a realization of how the trickling effects of the No Child Left Behind legislation have changed the literacy instruction within the classrooms of these teachers. Much research could have been done about this law and how it has affected literacy instruction, and the opinions teachers have of it; this project merely looks at what effect, if any, legislation and subsequent administrative decisions have had on these teachers' classrooms.

One aspect of the classroom community that contributes to choices a teacher makes about literacy instruction that was not considered is the presence of students with special needs and the programs in place to serve these specific needs. The teachers were asked how differentiation of reading groups and materials accommodated the English Language Learners, but they were not asked about those students with special needs. One of the music teachers mentioned how there were certain students with autism who had aides and she talked about how she communicated with these students. Other than this, there was not much mention of students with special needs, or English language learners for that matter.

Implications

The four aspects of a learning environment emerged from this research can play a strong role in supporting elementary student literacy success. It seems that the school and classroom environments have a positive influence on the attitudes and motivation of the students to practice their literacy skills. The available resources within those environments provides for the opportunity to practice literacy in various ways. The teacher's main influence appears to be her engaging methods and her clear expectations, such that the students know what is required and they are familiar with the process of successfully completing those requirements.

One of the most interesting findings was the “no homework” policy throughout an entire school. Based on the idea that the policy was a trend within the school district, at least on an elementary level, the next step with this research could be to look at how the policy changes the expectations and methods used by elementary teachers. Many

educators believe in the routine of having extra practice to be completed at home, a sentiment which is shared by one of the teachers in this project. The stamina built from extending academic tasks past the school day is beneficial practice for future grades, college, and possibly even careers. Though one of the reasons given for a “no homework” policy is that some teachers had used it to punish students, or there were repeated negative consequences for those students who did not have help at home to complete the homework. However, if teachers are found to be employing effective methods and clear expectations, then it is likely that they would also be using homework effectively and not in a negative manner.

One of the largest concerns of a beginning teacher is meeting the needs of individual students. Not only must the teacher provide instruction that is differentiated, well maintained and delivered, but also in such a way that engages all students and encourages social skills and a sense of classroom community. From the interviews there seem to be specific aspects on which a beginning teacher could focus and therefore establish a learning environment that encourages literacy success.

On the subject of differentiation and resources, the school district provides a set of textbooks, compact discs, and leveled readers to accommodate whole group instruction in both the modes of reading and listening, and also for small group instruction. These district-provided resources are beneficial to set up a structured routine with the students getting practice in whole group, small group, and individual settings. Both second-grade teachers mentioned that there will always be some selections better than others, and outside sources are used to augment that which is lacking in the district-provided

resource. For instance, picture books are fantastic sources of writing examples and teaching points for many subjects, including math, science and social studies. The use of picture books in the classroom seems to be effective, especially at the second-grade level for having the students practice their listening skills, and providing context and examples for the subject at hand.

In order to establish a strong sense of classroom community, it seems to be more effective to use a push-in program for students with special needs and who are English Language Learners. A strong classroom community benefits each student's literacy progress.

There will still likely be reading interventions of some sort provided in each school to meet the standards of each student showing progress. Regular assessment is necessary to demonstrate to the school and the district how students are progressing. Continuously assessing students, though it may be a hassle, also helps teachers plan instruction, create small groups according to ability, and provide sufficient support to each student.

Having space to move and create separate groups is beneficial in all of the classrooms because the teachers are able to have multiple groups of students actively engaged in different activities simultaneously. Having space in the classroom also provides for resources such as word walls and interactive whiteboards. These two resources have been shown to be effective in each of the four participating classrooms.

The largest change with this project was the expected discussion on collaboration between the music and general classroom teacher and how little a part it actually played.

It was observed that there are positive school communities where the teachers respect each other. It is important for all teachers to know their students well. The music teachers' diligence to get to know their students and show support for them is impressive. Therefore, a future teacher may not expect much collaboration.

These four expert teachers displayed in their responses to the interview questions that there seem to be certain aspects necessary for literacy success. These aspects are school and classroom environment, clear expectations, available resources, and effective methods. The expert teachers used all of these toward establishing a strong sense of community and learning environment where their students are able to practice the crucial literacy skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It would be suggested that future teachers and administrators should strive to incorporate these four aspects to ensure literacy success.

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Appendix A

Excerpts from an executive summary found in the U.S. Department of Education Archive

INCREASED ACCOUNTABILITY

The NCLB Act will strengthen Title I accountability by requiring States to implement statewide accountability systems covering all public schools and students. These systems must be based on challenging State standards in reading and mathematics, annual testing for all students in grades 3-8, and annual statewide progress objectives ensuring that all groups of students reach proficiency within 12 years. Assessment results and State progress objectives must be broken out by poverty, race, ethnicity, disability, and limited English proficiency to ensure that no group is left behind. School districts and schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward statewide proficiency goals will, over time, be subject to improvement, corrective action, and restructuring measures aimed at getting them back on course to meet State standards. Schools that meet or exceed AYP objectives or close achievement gaps will be eligible for State Academic Achievement Awards.

PUTTING READING FIRST

No Child Left Behind stated President Bush's unequivocal commitment to ensuring that every child can read by the end of third grade. To accomplish this goal, the new Reading First initiative would significantly increase the Federal investment in scientifically based reading instruction programs in the early grades. One major benefit of this approach

would be reduced identification of children for special education services due to a lack of appropriate reading instruction in their early years.

The NCLB Act fully implements the President's Reading First initiative. The new Reading First State Grant program will make 6-year grants to States, which will make competitive subgrants to local communities. Local recipients will administer screening and diagnostic assessments to determine which students in grades K-3 are at risk of reading failure, and provide professional development for K-3 teachers in the essential components of reading instruction.

The new Early Reading First program will make competitive 6-year awards to LEAs to support early language, literacy, and pre-reading development of preschool-age children, particularly those from low-income families. Recipients will use instructional strategies and professional development drawn from scientifically based reading research to help young children to attain the fundamental knowledge and skills they will need for optimal reading development in kindergarten and beyond.

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Music Teacher Interview Form

1. What are the objectives for second grade music?
2. How does music literacy fit into your yearlong goals?
3. How do you teach music literacy? Do you use a specific methodology?
4. How do you accommodate for various learning levels in the same class?
5. How do you use groups in your class?
6. How do the available supplies (instruments, etc.), classroom set-up, or other logistics affect the type of instruction you do?
7. How do you meet the needs of all your students?
8. Is there a semester project that the students are working towards? Why?
9. How do you assess your students' progress?
10. How has any professional development for reading helped you teach music?
11. How have you worked with the classroom teacher in terms of reading or literacy?

Second Grade Teacher Interview Form

1. What are the objectives for second grade reading literacy?
2. How do you teach literacy? Is there a specific methodology you use?
3. How much do you incorporate individual work, small group and whole class instruction?

4. How do you schedule your literacy instruction time in the week? Are there any other logistical factors in your teaching?
5. How do you accommodate for various learning levels in the same class?
6. What kind of divides are there in your literacy instruction between writing and reading?
7. What types of assessments do you use?
8. What do you do for classroom management?
9. Is there a goal or project the students are working toward currently in literacy?
10. How have you worked with the music teacher in terms of reading or literacy?