

Evaluation of the District Reading Plan  
2002-2003

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report contains findings from the fourth year of the districtwide evaluation of the Comprehensive Elementary District Reading Plan (the Plan). The first year of this four-year evaluation provided baseline information on the implementation of Open Court and Success for All. The second and third years of the evaluation provided information on the implementation of Open Court and Success for All and their impact on student achievement. The focus of this report is on the quality of pedagogy provided to students during Open Court instruction and the impact of that pedagogy on student achievement.

### Research Questions

The research questions for this report include:

1. To what extent is the Open Court Reading program being implemented in classrooms?
2. What is the quality of pedagogy provided to students during the Reading and Responding portion of the reading/language arts instructional period?
3. What is the quality of pedagogy provided to students during the Integrating the Curriculum/Language Arts portion of the reading/language arts instructional period?
4. To what extent was Open Court effective in improving student achievement? What was the impact of teacher pedagogy during Open Court instructional time on student achievement?

### Findings

With respect to the first question, overall, teachers prominently display or make available to their students most of the items identified by Open Court as being necessary for teachers to conduct program activities. On the other hand, very few teachers were observed using the Concept/Question Board with students and only one teacher was observed actively using it to introduce a unit or anthology story, or revisit after completing a unit or anthology selection.

On average, second grade teachers spent less time on reading/language arts than the 150 minutes they were required to spend. During the three days of observation, teachers spent an average of 146 minutes on reading/language arts activities. On average, third grade teachers spent 141 minutes a day on reading/language arts, which was above the 120 minutes required.

The majority of second and third grade teachers (84% and 77% respectively) spent time teaching activities from the Preparing to Read component on at least two days of observation. Similarly, second and third grade teachers taught activities from the Reading and Responding component on at least two days with great regularity (87% and 86% respectively). Finally, all teachers were observed teaching activities from the Integrating the Curriculum/Language Arts component on at least two days of observation. While teachers conducted activities from each of the three components on a daily basis, there was a great deal of variability as to the frequency with which and the extent to which teachers implemented specific activities presented within each component with their students.

Observations also revealed that teachers often spent more time than recommended on a wide range of activities within each of the different program components. The spending of more time did not seem to be the reason that teachers did not always cover activities from each of the three components on a given day. Instead, there were some teachers who spent extended periods of time on one activity and still covered activities from the other two components. This extra time did not translate into higher quality lessons. Instead, in general it seemed to translate simply into more time being spent on that lesson.

The observations also revealed that while 55% of second grade and 45% of third grade teachers had their students work independently or in small groups on at least one of the three days over the course of the observations, most teachers did not have their students engage in actual Independent Work Time as it is defined by Open Court. Additionally, none of second grade and 14% of third grade teachers had their students do Independent Work Time on all three days of observation.

In response to the second question, what was the quality of pedagogy during Reading and Responding instructional time, an examination of the classroom observations revealed that most teachers provide their students with a medium to low quality of pedagogy on a regular basis. Only 2% of second grade and no third grade teachers provided their students with a medium-high quality of pedagogy and no teacher was observed demonstrating high quality pedagogy.

In response to the third question, what was the quality of pedagogy during Integrating the Curriculum instructional time, an examination of the classroom observations revealed that most teachers provide their students with a medium to low quality of pedagogy on a regular basis. One quarter of teachers provided their students with a low quality of pedagogy. Only 5% of second

grade and 7% third grade teachers provided their students with a medium-high quality of pedagogy and no teacher was observed demonstrating high quality pedagogy.

In regard to the fourth question, the majority of third graders in Open Court classrooms district wide maintained the English Language Arts Proficiency score they had achieved during the 2001-02 school year. The majority of students did not move from one performance category (Far Below Basic, Below Basic, Proficient, Advanced) to another category. As a whole, the district maintained its performance levels from the 2001-02 school year.

We found that as the quality of teacher pedagogy improved, so did students' scores on both the CAT/6 and the CST. This finding held true when we controlled for ethnicity, language program, meal program, teacher credential, and teachers' years of experience and for third grade students we found increased strength in the relationship between high quality pedagogy and student achievement for African American students and English Only students. We also found an increased strength in the relationship between high quality pedagogy and student scores on the CAT/6 and the CST for teachers who had less than four or more than 17 years of experience and for non-credentialed teachers. In each case, the higher the quality of pedagogy provided by these teachers to their students, the higher the student achievement on the CAT/6 and the CST reading/language arts tests.

### Recommendations

Given the findings from the final year of the District Reading Plan Evaluation, a variety of steps should be taken to improve the quality of instruction:

1. Teachers should continue to work towards providing their students with high quality pedagogy by fully implementing the Open Court curriculum and using the instructional techniques appropriate to support their students' learning.
2. The central and local districts should continue to provide coaches with the professional development they need to be able to support the teachers with whom they work.
3. Central and local district and school site administrators and teachers should continue the work already underway in changing the culture, structure, norms, and processes necessary to support quality on-site professional development in the service of increasing student learning (Elmore, 2002) in reading/language arts.

4. Consistent with the research literature on teacher professional development, the majority of time dedicated to teacher professional development should be *on-site* in teachers' classrooms. In addition to formal professional development opportunities, informal social networks of teachers to share concrete ideas, values, and norms about their work, or "communities of practice," should be encouraged by administrators and developed by teachers and administrators working together.
5. In the context of on-site professional development opportunities, teachers should continue to increase their knowledge and understanding of the direct and explicit instructional strategies recommended for use with low performing students. As a part of these efforts, teachers should continue to work with coaches in the classroom to learn how to model, prompt, and support students as they struggle to become readers and writers.

## INTRODUCTION

This report contains the findings from the fourth year of the districtwide evaluation of the Comprehensive Elementary District Reading Plan (the Plan). The first year of this four-year evaluation provided baseline information on the implementation of Open Court and Success for All. The second and third years of the evaluation provided information on the implementation of Open Court and Success for All and their impact on student achievement. The focus of this report is on the quality of pedagogy provided to students during Open Court instruction and the impact of that pedagogy on student achievement.

The document is organized in several parts. The introductory section presents the background of the evaluation, a conceptual framework and literature review of research on reading and writing, and the research questions. In the second section the methodology employed to examine the quality of pedagogy provided to students during Open Court instruction and its effectiveness is described, including a discussion of the sample selection, the data collection methodology, and data analysis. The third section focuses on the findings regarding the quality of pedagogy during Open Court instruction and student achievement results for Year 4. The findings are organized to specifically address our research questions. Finally, the conclusions and recommendations are presented.

### Background

As many as 40% of children in the U.S. experience significant problems becoming competent readers (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). In fact, more than two-thirds of fourth graders fail to read at levels considered to be proficient (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2001),<sup>1</sup> and in areas of high poverty it is not uncommon to find 70%-80% of a school's student body reading below the 30th percentile (Snow et al., 1998).

Prior to the 1998-1999 school year, average performance of 2nd and 3rd grade students in over 300 elementary schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) was below the 50th percentile on the Stanford 9 (SAT/9). In an effort to respond to this situation the district

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<sup>1</sup> "Students performing at the *Proficient* level should be able to demonstrate an overall understanding of the text, providing inferential as well as literal information. When reading text appropriate to fourth grade, they should be able to extend the ideas in the text by making inferences, drawing conclusions, and making connections to their own experiences. The connection between the text and what the student infers should be clear." (p. 2) The goal identified by NAEP is that all students be reading at or above the proficient level.

adopted a new reading/language arts policy. As part of this policy, teachers were required to spend at least 90 minutes in kindergarten, 150 minutes in first and second grade, and 120 minutes in third through fifth grade on reading/language arts every day. In September 1999 the district expanded this policy, creating the Comprehensive Elementary District Reading Plan. The Plan required that all schools in which students were reading below the 50th percentile on Spring 1999 grade 2 or 3 SAT/9 reading tests adopt one of three structured reading programs: Open Court, Success for All, or Language for Learning/Reading Mastery.<sup>2</sup> Consistent with practices advocated by researchers, these three programs were expected to provide daily classroom instruction that: 1) was thoughtfully designed and implemented; 2) provided explicit and systematic instruction that would build basic word reading skills; and 3) would be balanced and integrated with rich and meaningful experiences in reading and writing within a literature-rich environment (Mathes, Torgesen, & Allor, 2001). In addition to these programs, the Board action also included professional development for staff and a coaching component as a critical feature of the Plan.

The Plan was phased in over a two-year period. During 2000-2001, Open Court elementary schools were required to implement the program in K-2. During the 2001-2002 school year, Open Court schools introduced the program into the remaining grade levels. During the first two years of the Plan, schools not required to implement the program were referred to as Schools on Waiver. These schools were exempt from choosing one of the programs because students at these schools scored at the 50th percentile or above on second and third grade reading or were making substantial gains using another program. In 2002, the district expanded the Plan to include all elementary schools, regardless of student achievement. Consequently, schools seeking to adopt new textbooks for reading/language arts are now required to adopt Open Court. Charter schools, on the other hand, are exempt from choosing one of these programs.<sup>3</sup> In Open Court schools, students being taught in their primary language (a language other than English) are taught using a variety of different texts and materials.

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<sup>2</sup> During the initial adoption of the Reading Plan, only one school adopted Language for Learning/Reading Mastery and 26 schools adopted Success for All. For the 2003-2004 school year only 7 schools in the district will continue to use Success for All and only one school is using Language for Learning/Reading Mastery.

<sup>3</sup> Some charter schools have chosen to adopt Open Court.

## Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

In the past 15 years an increasing number of school districts across the country have enacted policies that require the adoption of highly structured basal reading curricula to address their students' low reading scores on standardized tests. The most prominent use of highly prescribed curricula has been in large urban school systems and in a number of Southern states with traditions of strong centralized controls (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Districts in New York, Texas, California, Washington, and a host of other states have adopted programs such as Open Court and Success for All.

A review of research on basal reading programs reveals that their use alone does not translate into the deskilling of teachers (Baumann, 1992) or improved student achievement in reading and writing. While there are studies that suggest that the use of some basal reading programs, Open Court included, may have a positive relationship to increased test scores, these studies focus solely on outcome data and do not examine the extent to which program implementation and outcomes are related (McGraw-Hill, 2002; Schacter, 2001; Sacramento City Unified School District, 2000).

Our review of the literature on reading and writing instruction revealed three broad categories of research. The first category is decoding and fluency, the second is reading for comprehension, and the third is writing. We used this literature to identify effective reading/language arts practice and is summarized below.

### Developing Decoding and Fluency

In its work on how to teach children how to read, the National Reading Panel (2000) focused on alphabets, and within that, phonemic awareness instruction and phonics instruction. According to the Panel, phonemic awareness and letter knowledge are the two best school-entry predictors of how well children will learn to read during their first two years in school. Children must learn sounds, letters, and the relationship between them before they can become readers. Students must “progress from global to analytic processing, from approximate to specific linking of sound with symbols, and from context-driven to print-driven reading as proficiency is acquired” (American Federation of Teachers, 1999). As students learn to decode they must also acquire reading fluency. According to the National Reading Panel, a close relationship exists between fluency and reading comprehension. Students who are low in fluency may have

difficulty getting the meaning of what they read (National Reading Panel, 2000 citing Pinnell et al., 1995).

### Reading for Comprehension

Reading can be defined differently in relation to different age children. In kindergarten reading means word reading, not for comprehension but for decoding. By the time students reach first grade, they are reading somewhat independently. Pearson and Duke (2002) argue that comprehension instruction should begin in the primary grades. They state that it is “not only possible but wise and beneficial” to provide comprehension instruction for overall reading development. They argue that comprehension improves when teachers provide explicit instruction in the use of comprehension strategies, when teachers design and implement activities that support the understanding of the texts that students read in their class, that comprehension and decoding can exist side by side as instructional goals and valued student outcomes in exemplary and comprehensive literacy program for primary grade students. Similarly, Ivey (2002) argues that students who are still learning to decode texts are not limited in their ability to think deeply about texts and should be given simultaneous comprehension and decoding instruction.

Duffy (2002) and others (see, for instance Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991) have also argued that struggling readers need to be given explicit teaching of reading comprehension skills and strategies because they do not “pick up on the relatively subtle cues and prompts provided by other activities.” The goal is for the *reader* to learn to control his or her own improved comprehension. This is opposed to other strategies where the *teacher* controls the learning process to guide student reading. Explicit teaching is *intentional* and *direct* about “teaching individual strategies on the assumption that clear and unambivalent information about how strategies work will put struggling readers in a better position to control their own comprehension” (Duffy, 2002). Thus, the expectation is that the teacher will directly and explicitly apply (model) a comprehension strategy for students, give students repeated opportunities to both see those strategies and skills in action in the context of their reading *and* have the chance to engage in those strategies and skills themselves *while* reading (Duffy, 2002, Trabasso & Bouchard, 2002, Pearson, Roehler, Dole & Duffy, 1992). Other approaches focus on

readers' interaction with the text content but do not include explicit teacher talk designed to develop student metacognitive awareness of when and how to use a strategy (Duffy, 2002).

When teachers use less direct methods for teaching comprehension, there is an expectation that the student can understand the method without explanation and adopt it for his or her own use. Yet, many struggling readers cannot, simply by watching a teacher guide their reading or by being asked basic recall questions, figure out what they are supposed to do on their own (Duffy, 2002). Thus, these children do not learn to apply these strategies during their own reading and do not gain the skills necessary for reading for comprehension.

There is a wide range of strategies and skills that research suggests will aid students in their ability to comprehend text. Trabasso & Bouchard (2002) identified activities in which the reader should engage *prior* to reading such as activating prior knowledge to direct the reader's attention to relevant parts of a text and encouraging readers to infer and elaborate what they are reading. Building background helps students begin reading with specific knowledge that helps them to make connections to the text they are about to read, and these connections will facilitate understanding of the text (Narvaez, 2002). Similarly, setting a purpose for reading influences recall and the pattern of inferences that a reader generates as he reads (Narvaez, 2002).

The specific strategies and skills students need to learn *during* reading instruction in order to read for comprehension are also supported by research. Some of the strategies students need include thinking aloud to monitor comprehension, visualizing, asking and answering questions, and summarizing the text (Trabasso & Bouchard, 2002). Thinking aloud helps the student see when he or she is having difficulty understanding the text and provides the student with a procedure for seeking clarification by looking back at the text to try and solve the problem. Visualizing helps the reader create a mental image of what he or she is reading and the image can help create a memory representation of the reader's interpretation of the text. Asking questions of the text as the student reads helps to focus attention and improve understanding. These questions should be focused on the text. Answering questions can facilitate reasoning and increase memory of what was read. The reader can begin to see what questions can be answered by the text and what questions require conclusions generated from inferences. Summarizing helps the reader become more aware of how a text is structured and how to discern what is important to remember from or about the text.

Collins (1991) examined the negotiation of interpretations of text with others (discussion) and found that this strategy, along with a series of other strategies, helped students become better readers than students who did not receive instruction in these strategies. Through the discussion of the texts, students learn to express their thoughts and opinions coherently and be exposed to points of view that differ from their own.

## Writing Process

As Kameenui and Carnine (1998) assert, “writing is a highly complex process that writers ultimately apply independently.” Prior to the 1970s, writing instruction focused on the final written product. In the 1970s and 1980s, the focus shifted to the writing process itself. Smith (1982, cited in Isaacson, 1991) presented writing as a complex process in which the writer works as both the author and the secretary. In their model, the author is concerned with content, structure and organization of ideas, levels of diction, and other aspects of the text while the secretary is focused on the mechanics of writing. As described by the Massachusetts Department of Education (2001), the process approach to writing instruction emphasizes a cycle of revision where students draft, edit, revise and redraft their work. They say,

Students learn to write well when they are taught strategies for organizing a first draft, writing successive versions, revising, and editing. They learn to polish their compositions by reorganizing sentences or paragraphs for clarity, adding or deleting information, and finding precise words. They learn to correct grammar, spelling, and mechanics.

Collectively, these steps are sometimes referred to as “the writing process” and often take place over several sessions or days. By critiquing one another’s work, students discover how composing differs from conversing and how composing is a craft that can become an art.

This five-step approach – pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing – is now widely used (Smith, 2000) and can be found in writing manuals for all ages. Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, and Hampston (1998) studied nine-first grade classrooms. As stated by Langer (2001) in her literature review, the following was found by Wharton-McDonald et al., to be present in the most effective classrooms: “...a high level of engagement in challenging literacy activities, a web of interconnections among tasks (so that writing, for example, was often related to what was being read), and skills were taught explicitly but in connection with real reading and writing

activities. Pressley et. al. (1998) found similar results when examining 30 first grade classrooms. Langer (2001) looked at similar issues including the teaching of strategies at the middle and high school levels. Teachers in the successful classrooms specifically taught strategies, connected the lessons, and provided opportunities for the students to work collaboratively, sharing ideas. While the five-step approach to writing instruction can be found in writing manuals for all ages, it is not provided to all students. Although not grounded in research, teachers who teach lower performing students frequently use approaches which place less emphasis on composition and more on skill-dominant instruction (Kameenui & Carnine, 1998). Typically, these students receive a great deal of skills instruction (Kameenui & Carnine (1998) citing Englert et. al., 1988; Graham et al., 1991; Isaacson, 1989; and Roit & McKenzie, 1985), very little writing instruction, and even less writing process instruction. And according to Kameenui and Carnine, “even that instruction is poor, in that it occurs in isolation and is unconnected with its presumed eventual use” (Kameenui & Carnine citing Graves, 1985).

Much of the preceding research on teaching children to read for fluency, to read for comprehension, and to write is reflected in the three Open Court components. Next is an overview of each of these three components of the Open Court Reading program.

### The Open Court Reading Program

The decision by LAUSD to adopt Open Court was motivated by the belief that providing teachers with a research-based standard curriculum and with a structured approach to teaching reading/language arts would ensure that all students received the same content in the same manner regardless of where they went to school. The Open Court Reading program relies on classroom instructional techniques and strategies that have been shown to be effective in aiding students in becoming successful readers (Schacter, 2001). Open Court is structured in such a way as to ensure that students are exposed to three broadly identified categories of reading/language arts activities. These categories are pre-reading, reading for comprehension, and writing. They are contained in the three components of Open Court as: Preparing to Read,<sup>4</sup> Reading and Responding, and Integrating the Curriculum.<sup>5</sup> Preparing to Read includes: phonics and fluency,

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<sup>4</sup> For Kindergarten the Preparing to Read section is called Sounds and Letters.

<sup>5</sup> In the 2002 version of Open Court, Integrating the Curriculum is called Language Arts. Because only a small portion of the classrooms in the district has adopted Open Court 2002, we use the language from the Open Court 2000 version of the program.

blending, developing oral language, building background, previewing and preparing, vocabulary from the big book or anthology reading, and reading a decodable. Reading and Responding includes: student anthology reading, comprehension skills, comprehension strategies, and theme connections. Integrating the Curriculum includes: writing process, dictation and spelling, grammar, usage, and mechanics, literary elements, and study and research.<sup>6</sup> All three components revolve around a unit theme such as friendship. Although individual skills may be taught and practiced in isolation they are part of an integrated system of learning across the three components. Open Court structures each lesson to be given over a three or five day period of time. On each day, teachers are expected to cover activities provided within each of the three categories.

The program has an established pacing plan that is provided in the Lesson Planner. The Lesson Planner is presented along with each unit in the teacher's manual. The teacher is expected to use the Lesson Planner to guide instruction. The teacher can choose to implement each unit over the course of three or five days. The Lesson Planner presents the activities and the accompanying materials that should be used for each day of instruction. The amount of time spent on each component of the program varies by grade level. In kindergarten and first grade, the program focuses more on Sounds and Letters and Preparing to Read activities and less on Reading and Responding and Integrating the Curriculum activities. By second and third grade the emphasis has shifted and students are expected to spend significantly more time on Reading and Responding and Integrating the Curriculum. Within this framework, certain activities, such as blending are taught almost every day in kindergarten and once or twice a week by third grade. On the other hand, activities such as reading from the anthology – the primary reading comprehension activity – and working on the writing process are to take place every day, regardless of the grade level and lesson plan adopted by the teacher.

### Preparing to Read

The Preparing to Read component provides for direct instruction in alphabetic and phonological awareness, as well as phonics. Students learn phonemes and their spelling patterns through the use of alphabet sound/spelling cards, alliterative stories, and decodable texts. In kindergarten through third grade, students should receive some form of instruction from the

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<sup>6</sup> In the 2002 version of the program, dictation and spelling have been placed in the Preparing to Read section.

Preparing to Read component on a daily basis. In Kindergarten, students focus on introducing the alphabet, phonemic awareness, letter-sound connections, print awareness, and easy reading. By third grade, the activities shift mostly to reading for fluency.

### Reading and Responding

Open Court is structured so that reading for comprehension should take place on a daily basis during the Reading and Responding portion of the Open Court time. The primary tool for these activities is the Open Court student anthology. One should expect to see the students using the Anthologies on a daily basis. The primary purpose of reading, according to Open Court, is comprehension. Thus, the second component of the daily lesson plan is Reading and Responding. The Open Court teacher's manual states,

The primary aim of reading is comprehension. Experienced readers generally understand most of what they read, but just as importantly, they recognize when they do not understand, and they have at their command an assortment of comprehension strategies for monitoring and furthering their understanding. Research has shown that students don't develop comprehension skills and strategies on their own. These strategies need to be taught and modeled before students begin to use them effectively. . . *SRA/Open Court Reading* is based on the belief that students learn best when they are actively involved in constructing meaning. Instruction builds and supports the development of critical metacognitive strategies through teacher modeling and by demonstrating behaviors and strategies used by expert readers. The second part of every lesson, **Reading and Responding**, focuses on modeling comprehension strategies while reading **Big Books** and **Anthology** selections. . . . After the teacher models each strategy, gradually the responsibility for using strategies shifts to the students.

According to Open Court, "good readers use a variety of *strategies* to help them make sense of the text and get the most out of what they read. Trained to use a variety of comprehension strategies, children dramatically improve their learning performance" (emphasis added). Comprehension strategies include setting reading goals, summarizing, asking questions, predicting, making connections, and visualizing. Open Court states that,

The goal of instruction in reading comprehension *skills* is to make students aware of the logic behind the structure of a written piece. If the reader is able to discern the logic of the structure he or she will be more able to tell if the writer's logic is in fact logical and gain an understanding both of the facts and the intent of what they are reading. By keeping the organization of a piece in mind and considering the author's purpose for writing, the reader can go beyond the actual words on the page and make inferences or draw conclusions based on what was read. These are the 'between the lines' skills that strong, mature readers utilize to get a complete picture of what the writer is not only saying, but what the writer is trying to say.

Comprehension skills include understanding point of view, sequencing, main idea and detail, comparing and contrasting, cause and effect, classifying and categorizing, and author's purpose.

Thus, for each reading selection, the Open Court teacher's manual provides both comprehension strategies and comprehension skills to be either modeled by the teacher or enacted by the students during each day's Reading and Responding time. These suggestions are located within the teacher's manual next to the story and teachers are guided through their use by the daily lesson plan. For example, for the story *Corduroy* the teacher is directed to model the following comprehension strategies over the course of the reading: clarifying, predicting, and confirming predictions. The teacher is also supposed to prompt the students to clarify, predict and confirm predictions. For comprehension skills, the teacher is to discuss the concept of making inferences. Each of these skills and strategies are to be infused into the reading lesson based on directions set forth in the teacher's manual. In theory, the teacher will turn to the teacher's manual, identify those strategies and skills she/he is to focus on for the day's lesson, and then follow the manual to identify both what strategies and skills to focus on for the day and how to shape the interaction. In addition to the directed reading there are supporting activities in the Reading and Writing Workbook and the Inquiry Journal for students to practice the comprehension skills and to connect their reading to writing activities.

#### Integrating the Curriculum/Language Arts

According to the Open Court teacher's manual, students develop their understanding of the writing process, are given opportunities for independent and group writing, and learn the

critical writing conventions – spelling, punctuation, and grammar – in the natural context of writing. For those classrooms using Open Court, students are expected to spend between 20 and 30 minutes during the reading/language arts time each day engaged in the writing process (pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) and another 20 to 30 minutes engaged in activities which facilitate the writing process (literary elements, vocabulary, grammar, usage and mechanics, listening, speaking, viewing, research and study, dictation, and spelling). Mini-lessons take place with the support of the Reading and Writing Workbooks and the Inquiry Journals. It is important to note that Open Court does not use the writing process in isolation but rather integrates it into a system of instruction.

Integrating the Curriculum contains mini-lesson activities as well as the writing process portion. Mini-lessons should take anywhere from 20-30 minutes and should be conducted on a daily basis. They are opportunities for teachers to focus students' attention on the mechanics of writing: literary elements, vocabulary, grammar, usage and mechanics, listening, speaking, viewing, research and study, dictation, and spelling. Many of the activities are located in the Reading and Writing Workbook and the Inquiry Journal. These are expected to be direct teaching opportunities and guided practice for students. Students are not expected to complete these activities on their own, in fact quite the opposite. It is anticipated that the teacher will work with the students to ensure understanding.

For the writing process activities, each lesson identifies a genre or aspect of writing on which the teacher should focus. For example, Level 2, Book 1 focuses on the following genres of writing: personal narrative, biography, letter, folktale, and explanatory paragraph. Students spend time both on a genre or aspect of writing *and* the five-step writing process. According to Open Court, these steps are the ones that “good writers do.” The five steps are taught at the beginning of each school year and then practiced throughout the year as students do different kinds of writing assignments. The first step is prewriting, the planning and designing phase. This step is very important because this is where the student plans by choosing a topic of interest to them, considering who their audience is going to be and what type of writing it is going to be, doing research, and taking notes. The next step, drafting, is when they shape these notes into sentences. The third step is revising for content. Step four, editing, is checking for errors. Students learn how to use proofreader's marks so the last two steps are easier. Finally, students publish their writings. This means they go public with what they have written. This last step helps to motivate

them to polish their work, do their best writing. Good writers move back and forth between these steps as needed. An important part of this process is for the students to discuss their ideas and give each other feedback. The teacher also meets with the students to give them feedback. The students are to work on the writing process every day. For each lesson the teacher is given guidance on how to introduce the writing process topic and how to focus the students' efforts. It is anticipated that teachers will begin the writing process activity on the first day of the lesson, have students spend time on each day writing, and complete that writing process activity by the end of the lesson.

### Independent Work Time

After students have spent time with the teacher engaged in activities from each of the three components, the teacher should have the students spend time working independently. This time is known as Independent Work Time or Workshop (IWT). IWT is designed to accomplish two goals: 1) to teach students how to be independent learners, responsible for their own learning, and 2) to give the teacher a chance to help individual students or small groups of students with specific skills or assessments. The students are given a list of "must do" activities and "may do" activities. These activities are supposed to support and further the learning the students do during the more teacher directed aspects of the program. It is also time during which the teacher can work with small groups and/or individuals who need assistance and for students to work independently and/or collaboratively on a variety of different assignments. These activities should include practicing and reviewing previously taught material, writing skills, fluency, extending their learning, and reading. Independent Work Time should occur on a daily basis at all grade levels.

According to Open Court, teachers should phase in IWT over several weeks. There are four phases of IWT implementation. In the initial phase, IWT is very structured. By the final phase, IWT is very flexible, offering students many choices. Similarly, the amount of time spent on IWT increases as the students become more familiar with the rules and procedures. During Phase I the teacher introduces the rules and procedures to the students. The students all work independently on one task such as reading. The teacher monitors the students and conducts a debriefing at the end. The debriefing makes students accountable for what happens. It is a time for the teacher to give feedback and to discuss what went well, what didn't go well, and how it

can be better next time. In Phase II the teacher continues to go over the rules and procedures but the idea of having activity lists of “Must Do’s” and “May Do’s” are introduced to the class. Students are only given “Must Do’s” at this time. Again the teacher monitors the students and conducts a debriefing. In Phase III the students are given a few “Must Do’s” and one “May Do.” The students are also introduced to the teacher and/or teacher aide pulling out small groups or individuals as needed. The session concludes with a debriefing. By Phase IV IWT should be completely in place. The teacher presents a list of “Must Do’s” and “May Do’s” and starts pulling out small groups as well as individuals to assist them as needed. Debriefing is only conducted if needed. In order to meet the needs of their students, teachers change the number and kinds of activities and the amount of time dedicated to IWT throughout the year. Teachers should be able to phase-in IWT over a few weeks.

### Professional Development

Since 1999, the central district has made professional development available for teachers, administrators, and coaches who were going to be using Open Court in their schools. According to district data between 2001 and 2003, the district provided teacher professional development to teachers in a variety of formats (see Table 1).

Table 1. Teacher Professional Development

	3 Day Workshop	Governor’s Institute	Governor’s Institute Passport <sup>7</sup>	Reading First Grant
Target Population	K-5 general and special education teachers	K-5 general and special education teachers	K-5 general and special education teachers	K-3 general education teachers, coaches, and administrators in 188 identified Title 1 schools
Provider	Instructional Support Services (Coach Coordinators, Open Court Experts)	Sacramento County Office of Education and Instructional Support Services	Instructional Support Services (Coach Coordinators, Open Court Experts, coaches)	Sacramento County Office of Education and Instructional Support Services
Number of Teachers Trained				
2001-2002	1,487	8,899	11,000	0
2002-2003	2,155	9,634	11,000	5,012

<sup>7</sup> Passport activities are follow-up professional development opportunities intended to deepen content knowledge of the Open Court Reading Program.

The most common professional development received by teachers are the three-day workshop or five-day Governor’s Institute. During these activities, the teachers spend time learning about the research underlying the Open Court curriculum, each of the three components, and how to begin to use the teacher’s manual to provide instruction to their students. The district also provides subsequent professional development in the form of several Advanced and Mastery level institutes for teachers who have been using the program for a year or more and are ready to build on the skills and strategies they learned during the first training and their use of the curriculum in their classrooms.

Teachers also receive on-going professional development at their school site. The position of literacy coach (coach) was created in order to support the District Reading Plan. The position was based on the reading program model, *Reading Lions*, used in the Sacramento City School District (Morris, 2002). Coaches are responsible for providing on-going professional development, mentoring, and coaching to teachers in support of the implementation of Open Court. Coaches model classroom lessons, observe and coach colleagues, order and distribute reading materials, plan for and provide professional development, and organize ongoing assessment of student learning (Morris, 2002). According to LAUSD documents, coaches receive a variety of forms of professional development that help them to do their job (LAUSD, 2003).

Table 2. Coach Professional Development

	Citywide Coaches Professional Development	New Coach Institute	Content Focused Coaching	Coach Coordinator Provided Professional Development
Target Population	Elementary Literacy coaches	Elementary Literacy coaches	Coaches and teachers	Elementary Literacy Coaches
Provider	Instructional Support Services, District Reading Programs, Pearson Digital Learning (Waterford), SRA	Instructional Support Services, District Reading Program, Open Court Experts	Institute for Learning, Open Court Experts, Coach Coordinators	Open Court Experts, Coach Coordinators
Number Trained				
2001-2002	450	153	4,450	450
2002-2003	467	122	4,467	467

Since 2000, the district has provided professional development to the coaches on multiple occasions in multiple formats. Citywide Coach Professional Development is provided to all elementary literacy coaches working directly with teachers to implement the District’s core

literacy programs. The New Coach Institute provides professional development for newly hired elementary literacy coaches to prepare the coaches to effectively work with teachers to implement the district’s reading program. Content Focused Coaching professional development promotes student achievement by training teachers to plan and reflect on rigorous lessons and by assisting teachers to become resources to each other in a professional learning community. a Coach Coordinator’s position was created to support coaches in each local district. They also have professional development available to provide them with an in-depth understanding of Open Court and prepares them to work effectively with teachers, school site administrators and coaches and local district leadership.

#### Administrator Professional Development

In addition to receiving off-site professional development and with coaches, teachers are supposed to receive support from their principals and/or other administrators. To that end, the central district has made available administrator professional development (Table 3).

Table 3. Administrator Professional Development

	Governor’s Reading Professional Development Institute
Target Population	K-5 Administrators
Provider	Sacramento County Office of Education and Instructional Support Services (Coach Coordinators, Open Court Experts, central staff)
Number of Administrators Trained	
2001-2002	1,100
2002-2003	1,100

Administrators have the opportunity to attend a week long Open Court Governor’s Institute geared specifically towards providing them with the understanding of the program that they will need in order to provide support to their teachers.

We used our knowledge of the District Reading Plan in all of its aspects in order to identify our research questions, our approach to data collection and our analysis of the data. Next we present the primary research questions, the method of data collection and analysis and the findings for the 2002-2003 school year.

## Research Questions

As a result of our review of the literature regarding reading/language arts instruction and our analysis of the Open Court curriculum, we identified the following primary research questions:

1. To what extent is the Open Court Reading program being implemented in classrooms?
2. What is the quality of pedagogy provided to students during the Reading and Responding portion of the reading/language arts instructional period?
3. What is the quality of pedagogy provided to students during the Integrating the Curriculum/Language Arts portion of the reading/language arts instructional period?
4. To what extent was Open Court effective in improving student achievement?  
What was the impact of teacher pedagogy during Open Court instructional time on student achievement?

## METHODS

This section presents the methodology employed to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the Plan during the 2002-2003 school year. It contains a discussion of the sample selection, data collection methodology and data analysis procedures.

### Sample Selection

In the first year of the evaluation, a multi-stage probability sample of schools, classrooms/teachers, and students was utilized. At the first stage, 50 schools were selected with probabilities proportional to student enrollment from a list of all district schools having K-3 classrooms, after stratification by administrative region, percentage of English learners, and school size. The second stage of selection involved a random selection of one second grade, and one third grade classroom/teacher at each sample school for observation. Efforts were made to observe the same teacher from year to year. In the event that a teacher changed positions and/or left the school, a randomly selected teacher teaching at that grade level replaced that teacher. For the 2002-2003 school year we removed one school from the sample because it was not

representative of schools that had adopted Open Court. Six schools were dropped during the 2002-2003 analysis because they were Success for All schools. This resulted in 44 schools, 44 second grade teachers and 44 third grade teachers.

Of the 44 sample schools using Open Court, eight started prior to 1999-2000, 28 started in 2000-2001, one school started in 2001-2002, and seven started in 2002-2003. Each elementary school identified as a District Reading Plan participant was given the opportunity to be an Alliance School and implement one of the programs starting in 1999-2000, ahead of the scheduled district rollout.<sup>8</sup> At those schools that volunteered to enter this program, the principals received mentoring and leadership professional development for three years. Also, schools in the Ten Schools Program were required to use Collections for Young Scholars, an earlier version of Open Court, Open Court 2000 and 2002, prior to the implementation of the Plan.<sup>9</sup> As mentioned above, there are presently two different versions of Open Court being used in the district. In 2002-2003 most of the Open Court sample schools (32) used Open Court 2000, 8 schools used Open Court 2002, and 4 schools used a combination of Open Court 2000 and 2002.

#### Data Collection Methodology

*Classroom Observations.* The principal method utilized to collect data regarding the implementation of the District Reading Plan was observational. Data collection was carried out in the classroom by graduate students, retired elementary and middle school teachers and administrators or other data collectors trained in observational methods. A classroom visit usually lasted from 3-5 hours during the reading/language arts instructional period. We visited each classroom for three days during the fall semester. Descriptive data (taken from field notes and semi-structured open-ended interviews with teachers) were coupled with quantifiable data taken from observation instruments to answer the research questions. The activities and instruments utilized in the observation included:

- Classroom Environment Map and Scan
- Classroom Environment Checklist
- Fieldnotes
- Reflective Notes

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<sup>8</sup> Only one sample school is an Alliance school.

<sup>9</sup> Three sample schools are part of the Ten Schools Program.

- a. *Classroom Environment Map*: The purpose of the environmental map was to provide a sense of desk or seating arrangement; learning centers; the availability of language arts materials and resources; the presence or absence of Open Court related materials; instructional aides created by the teacher and or students (word walls, teacher made instructional charts); and whether or not children’s work was exhibited. After completing the map, classroom observers scanned the room and noted the seating arrangement, instructional resources, and student activities.
- b. *Classroom Environment Checklist*: The purpose of the environmental checklist was to determine the extent to which there was evidence of Open Court instructional material in each classroom. Observers scanned the room and noted the presence or absence of each item identified on the checklist.
- c. *Fieldnotes*: Fieldnotes are defined as a written narrative describing in concrete terms and great detail the duration and nature of the activities and interactions observed. Classroom observers became the “eyes and ears” of the project and their notes described the overall context in which reading/language arts instruction took place. Observers were instructed to observe any reading/language arts activities that occurred during the school day, even if other subjects or activities occurred in between.
- d. *Reflective Notes*: At the end of each day of observation, observers completed a set of reflective notes. These notes provided observers with the opportunity to record any information or data gathered during their observation that does not belong on any of the other observation protocols. It was also a place for observers to document their experiences, biases, and likes and dislikes of a classroom observation experience. It allowed the observer to intentionally place any subjective comments they had regarding their observation so that they could avoid expressing these comments within the context of the objective fieldnotes taken during the observations.

*Interviews*. In addition to the three-day observations classroom observers conducted interviews with teachers in our sample.

- a. *Pre-Observation Interview*: Classroom observers conducted two types of teacher interviews. First, prior to each day of observation the teacher was asked five questions about his/her classroom. These included information related to what the observer should expect to see during the observation, what the goals of the teacher for the lesson were, the

range of English Language Development levels in the classroom, how the teacher would accommodate for the range of needs/skill levels present in the classroom, and what unit and lesson of Open Court they were working on.<sup>10</sup>

- b. *Post-Observation Interview*. Observers conducted an interview using a semi-structured open-ended interview protocol in the spring with each teacher observed. Questions focused on the use of the different Open Court components, professional development activities, administrator support, use of the Student Online Assessment Records, and other areas relevant to teacher instructional practice. Almost all of those asked, 41 (93%) second grade and 42 (95%) third grade teachers agreed to be interviewed.

### Data Analysis

We created two research teams (one for second and one for third grade) to work closely with us on data coding and initial analysis of the classroom observation fieldnotes and reflective notes completed by the observers after each day of observation. Qualitative data reduction and analysis was conducted with each type of data collected. Our general approach to qualitative data analysis was to use the constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The two teams reviewed classroom observation fieldnotes and developed a coding scheme for the observational data. As we moved forward through the coding process, we met weekly in order to discuss our individual approaches to the analysis and the creation of categories we observed emerging from the data, after which each person then went back and re-examined their data to verify we were analyzing the data with a similar understanding of what we were looking for to ensure consistency in the process. We examined the classroom data in terms of each of the components of Open Court – Preparing to Read activities (e.g., blending, fluency reading, and high frequency words), Reading and Responding activities (e.g. browsing the text, making predictions, making connections, asking questions, etc.), and Integrating the Curriculum/Language Arts activities (e.g., writing process, language conventions, and literary elements).

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<sup>10</sup> The range of English Language Development levels in the classroom and how the teacher would accommodate for the range of needs/skill levels present in the classroom were only asked on the first day of the three-day observation.

We coded teacher interview transcripts by reviewing responses to each question posed to the respondents and determining the frequency of responses. We also developed categories of responses as different responses to our open ended questions presented themselves.

To examine the quality of teacher pedagogy, we used our understanding of the research literature and Open Court curriculum. We brought together literature on effective practices for reading/language arts instruction and the program materials for Open Court in order to craft a set of constructs that were contained within a rubric to be used to determine the quality of pedagogy during Reading and Responding and Integrating the Curriculum instruction. A five-level rubric, ranging from high to low quality pedagogy, was developed. Each level of the rubric integrated aspects of Open Court program implementation with instructional practices known to be instrumental in assisting students in learning to read for comprehension and to write.

Quantitative data arose from two sources: The California Standards Test (CST) data and the California Achievement Test/6 (CAT/6) for second and third grade students. Descriptive statistics, frequencies, and a correlation analysis comprised some of the analytic techniques employed in this study for both the qualitative and quantitative data.

## FINDINGS

### Presence of Open Court related materials in the classroom

The Open Court program has guidelines for what items teachers should have prominently displayed in their classrooms. As we have done in previous years, we collected data using a checklist detailing those items necessary to conduct the program activities. Table 4 identifies those items we expected to see in every classroom. Overall, the findings are almost identical to the 2001-2002 school year. Almost every teacher had a classroom library. Our observations also revealed that teachers and students actively used their classroom libraries for selecting books for sustained silent reading activities. All of the classrooms had the Open Court Sound/Spelling cards displayed although they were displayed in different places in different classrooms. The vast majority of teachers had their cards placed above the chalk or white board in front of the room. Four second and three third grade teachers placed their cards around the sides of the boards, one second and one third grade teacher had displayed the cards on a side wall, and one third grade teacher placed the cards on a back wall.

Table 4. Open Court Classroom Materials

Classroom Material	Second Grade (n=39)	Third Grade (n=42)
Class library	95%	95%
OC Sound/Spelling or Alphabet Sound Card	100%	100%
Word Wall	77%	66%
Concept/Question Board	81%	88%
Inquiry Area	38%	34%
Floor rug area	84%	na

Most teachers (77% and 66% respectively) had word walls and 81% of second and 88% of third grade teachers had Concept/Question Boards displayed. This represents a slight decrease for second grade; in 2001-2002 the Concept/Question Board was present in 86% of second grade classrooms. For third grade classrooms this was an increase over the previous year's findings, as 78% of teachers had a Concept/Question Board prominently displayed in the 2001-2002 school year. On the other hand, our examination of the classroom observation data revealed that 11% of second grade teachers were observed using the Concept/Question Board with their students and 20% of third grade teachers were observed using the Concept/Question Boards during their lessons. Perhaps more interesting is that in most cases the use of the Concept/Question Board was as a reference to something that had come before such as, "remember when we did the Concept/Question Board?" or "during IWT check to see if we have answered any of the questions on the Concept/Question Board." Only once did an observer see a lesson in which the teacher actively used the Concept/Question Board to develop questions with his students. He spent approximately 45 minutes with his students as he prepared them to begin their next unit and the anthology reading. The lesson was conducted with the students in the following way:

Students walk in noisily and sit down. Class gets quiet.

T: Did you notice anything new? I took down all of our concepts and questions on the board. As you can see, we are going to begin a new unit – City Wildlife. When you think of City Wildlife, what do you think of?

Brian answers, Alice answers. The teacher tells the students how possums were eating his dog's food. Jen shares something.

T: Blue jays.

Paul answers Camron's questions.

T: (To Camron) Say 'birds' and you'll think about it. Didn't I tell you about hummingbirds just outside of our room?

The teacher tells the students about a bird flying into the room and not being able to find its way out last year. He tells them how they got the bird out.

T: One child suggested we turn out the lights. We tried it, and it didn't work. Another suggested we put flowers at the door.

At this time a student notes a bird outside of the room. The teacher has table one get up and quietly look at the bird, then Table 2, then Table 3. The bird has now flown away.

T: Don't worry about it, it will come back. What finally happened with the hummingbird in the room is that we had the custodian come in with a broom, and we finally opened the transom and shut off the lights, and the hummingbird was finally able to fly away, it took about 1 ½ hours. What else do you think about when you think about city wildlife?

Students hands go up. Paul tells a long story.

T: That was a very kind thing to do.

Mark shares an experience. Roger is tipping the chair, but listening. Alicia shares a story, and students listen to her. Jen shares a story, and students listen. Roger has tuned out. Other students are listening. Andrea shares a story.

S: There are a lot of birds nests near where we live.

Brian shares a story. The class is quiet as students raise their hands to be recognized. The teacher calls on Tom. He shares a story. Roger shares a story. [20 minutes have passed since the beginning of this activity] Students listen to their peers as they tell their experiences with wildlife. Tom shares a story.

T: We have been talking about birds, but what about other animals?

Alice answers. Mark answers.

T: Any other animals besides birds? When you think about city wildlife, what do you think of? What kinds of experiences?

Silvio and Lauren respond.

T: What kinds of snakes might we see outside?

S: Garter snakes.

An aide comes in and asks a question, then quickly leaves.

T: I am going to take 2 more.

Julie responds. Many students raise hands.

T: I haven't heard from Kathryn.

Kathryn tells of an experience.

T: Thank you! Hands down. We've had a lot of discussion. Remember when we did our unit on friendship we had questions and concepts. We are going to do the same thing. What is a concept?

Alicia and Jen answer.

T: Yes, it's something you already know. But a question? What's a question? What's our big word for question?

Ss: Interrogative.

T: You are going to make a question. Might there be anything else that's alive?

Ss: Plants

T: I'm going to come around. Let's just take a minute. What kind of question statement or concept do you have? I will come around and you tell me how many papers you would like, be sure to put your name on it, and if you would like to decorate it, it's up to you.

The teacher passes out brightly colored post-it notes to all students. Roger is turned around and talks to Tom. The teacher redirects Roger, gives Roger some post-its. Students who have Post-its are writing.

T: Let's give everyone a chance to finish (noisy room).

T: Shhhhh! Let's give everyone a chance to share. Remember – concept or question!

Brian asks for another post-it paper. Roger gets up and goes to the teacher. He redirects him to take his seat.

T: One minute more.

The teacher is helping Kathryn. The class is quiet.

T: While we are going around reading you can add to your questions and concepts.

The teacher takes a cup filled with tongue depressors (they have names on them) and calls on Irene. Irene reads hers.

T: Very nice.

Irene takes her post it and puts it on the board. Carey now reads his.

T: Is that a concept or a question?

Alice reads hers.

T: Is that a concept or a question?

Student answers.

S: Can I read both?

T: Yes.

Jessica reads hers and puts post-its on the board.

T: Why don't we stand when we read, to be heard better?

Andrea stands up and reads hers. [Forty minutes have passed since the beginning of this activity]. The teacher continues calling on students using the tongue depressors with names, asking if the comment is a concept or a question, and the students post their notes on the board. Roger remains at the board. The teacher redirects him back to his seat. Most students are listening when the other classmates read their post-it notes.

T: Andrea, you have another one.

Andrea reads hers. The teacher goes to Camron (who called out, yelling) and whispers something to him. Alice and Lauren read theirs. Roger is tipping his chair. The teacher asks Roger to stop tipping. All students have now had a chance to read their question/concepts notes to the class.

T: These are very good questions. As we read in this unit, we'll be able to answer them.

The last one is Kathryn.

T: A little louder.

Kathryn reads.

T: Some animals are in danger – very good.

The teacher then went on to read the anthology selection to the students. This activity is very similar to the one suggested in the teacher's manual for the unit preview and for the pre-reading exercise. The teacher began by activating students' prior knowledge of animals and plants that live and grow in the city by asking them what they think of when they think of city wildlife. He had them identify different types of animals they know can be found in cities. He also reminded the students about the purpose of the Concept/Question Board and had students record their contributions and then post them. During his reading of the anthology to the students, he connected the reading back to the Concept/Question Board activity by asking, "Ever see the seed pod from a tree? If you can find a seedpod and bring it in, it would be great for our Concept/Question Board."

As with the previous year, very few classrooms (38% and 34%) had an Inquiry Area. While there was an increase to 38% of second grade classrooms over the previous year's finding of 29%, we saw a decrease in third grade classrooms from 42% to 34%.

#### Distribution of activities within the Reading/Language Arts time

Second grade teachers are expected to spend 150 minutes every day focusing on reading and language arts. An analysis of the amount of time spent on each of the three days of observation revealed that 39% (n=17) spent between 141 and 199 minutes on reading/language arts each day. Another 14% spent 200 minutes or more on reading/language arts every day. Thirty percent of teachers spent between 110 and 140 minutes, 9% spent between 80-109 minutes, and another 9% spent less than 79 minutes on reading/language arts during our observations. The average amount of time spent on reading/language arts was 146 minutes. This amount hovers just below the required number of minutes and is less than the amount spent by teachers in both 2001-02 (192 minutes) and 2000-01 (152 minutes).

Third grade teachers are expected to spend 120 minutes every day on reading/language arts activities. We found that 55% spent at least 141 minutes and as much as 200 minutes a day on reading/language arts instruction. Eighteen percent of teachers spent less than 110 minutes a day and 27% spent between 110 and 140 minutes a day. The average amount of time spent was 141 minutes. For the 2001-02 school year we found that third grade teachers spent an average of 175 minutes on reading/language arts. Thus, even though teachers spent more time on

reading/language arts than they were required to, there was a noticeable decline in the amount of time third grade teachers spent teaching reading/language arts.

Further analysis revealed that very few classrooms spent the recommended amount of time on both reading/language arts *and* each of the Open Court components. We only found time spent appropriately in two second and one third grade classroom. Thus, we were not able to examine whether time spent appropriately during reading/language arts had an impact on student achievement. We did find that the amount of time spent on reading/language arts, regardless of how that time was spent, was not a significant predictor of student achievement. Similarly, the right combination of time spent on the Open Court components, regardless of the total time spent on reading/language arts, had no impact on student achievement. However, we did find that in classrooms where too much time was spent on the Integrating the Curriculum/Language Arts component (mainly emphasizing grammar, usage, and mechanics related activities) students did not perform as well as students in classrooms who spent the recommended amount of time during instruction for that component. The quality of pedagogy provided during Reading and Responding instructional time was a better predictor of student achievement.

#### Preparing to Read

Our observations revealed that second grade teachers engage their students in activities from the Preparing to Read component more frequently than do third grade teachers (Table 5). Approximately two-thirds of second grade teachers (64%) engaged their students in one or more Preparing to Read activities on all three days of observation. On the other hand, only 36% of third grade teachers had their students engage in an activity related to Preparing to Read during all three days of observation.

Table 5. Frequency of instruction of Preparing to Read activities

	0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days
Second Grade	2 (5%)	5 (11%)	9 (20%)	28 (64%)
Third Grade	1 (2%)	9 (20%)	18 (41%)	16 (36%)

Interestingly, when asked, 32 (76%) second grade teachers said that they taught a lesson from the Preparing to Read component on a daily basis. There is a relatively high degree of consistency with this self-perception and our observations. On the other hand, 25 third grade teachers (66%)

stated that they taught a lesson from the Preparing to Read component on a daily basis. This self-report is not supported by our observations as we saw only 36% of teachers teach a lesson all three days from the Preparing to Read component.

For second grade, Preparing to Read activities were scattered across blending, developing oral language, reading the decodable books, sustained silent reading, and the teacher reading to the students. We found that 27% of second grade teachers did have their students engage in a blending lesson on all three days of our observations and only 11% of teachers did not have their students engage in any blending activities at all. On the other hand, 75% of teachers did not have their students engage in the developing oral language activity related to blending. Similarly, 50% of teachers did not have their students read the decodable books or any other text (not including the anthology) for fluency instruction. We found very little evidence that teachers are spending time during their reading/language arts instructional time reading to their students. When we did see it, it was sometimes characterized as an English Language Development time activity or used as a transition before or after recess and/or before or after lunch. Yet 48% of teachers did have their students engage in sustained silent reading activities on at least one of the three days.

Table 6. Distribution of Preparing to Read Activities

Activity	Observed during:			
	0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days
<b>Blending</b>				
Second Grade	5 (11%)	12 (27%)	15 (34%)	12 (27%)
Third Grade	14 (32%)	14 (32%)	12 (27%)	4 (9%)
<b>Developing Oral Language</b>				
Second Grade	33 (75%)	7 (16%)	0 (0%)	4 (9%)
Third Grade	24 (55%)	16 (36%)	4 (9%)	0 (0%)
<b>Decodable</b>				
Second Grade	22 (50%)	15 (34%)	5 (11%)	2 (5%)
Third Grade	13 (30%)	21 (48%)	8 (18%)	2 (5%)
<b>Teacher reads to students</b>				
Second Grade	27 (61%)	8 (18%)	4 (9%)	5 (11%)
Third Grade	31 (70%)	8 (18%)	4 (9%)	1 (2%)
<b>Sustained Silent Reading</b>				
Second Grade	23 (52%)	14 (32%)	2 (5%)	5 (11%)
Third Grade	27 (61%)	13 (30%)	3 (7%)	1 (2%)

The same pattern held for third grade. Fourteen teachers (32%) did not have their students engage in blending at all over the three days of observation, 55% did not have their students engage in the developing oral language activities that follow the blending exercises, and 30% of teachers did not have their students read a decodable or other book as a class or with a partner for fluency practice. This finding is to be expected since third grade teachers are less likely to conduct these kinds of activities on all three days. On the other hand, 39% of teachers had their students engage in sustained silent reading on at least one day. The difference between decodable reading and sustained silent reading is very important. During decodable reading, the teacher can observe and monitor students as they read their decodables as a class or with a partner to ensure that they are reading. This monitoring increases the likelihood that students are engaging in fluency practice. As demonstrated in the following example, during sustained silent reading, many students may appear as though they are engaging in the activity without really doing so:

T: Twenty minutes independent reading.

Students choose books and sit down. There is a buzz as they search for books.

T: I'm seeing some problems already. Nathan . . . Robert, I don't see a book in your hands."

Students still in motion. Some read on rug, some at desks. The teacher works with a new girl – Amanda.

T: Alfred, you're doing nothing, just sitting there looking at your chair and chitter – chattering!

Most reading aloud but independently. Three boys sit together at empty desks. They are joined by a fourth and are talking. Two boys share one book. A third boy takes out his own. A fourth leans and talks to another boy, who ignores him. The fourth boy bothers others until he finds a Dracula book. After one minute he says, "I'm done" and puts it down. A group of two boys swells to four again as they read the very same picture book about a hedgehog. Some girls on carpet get very loud.

The teacher continues one-on-one uninterrupted. (9 min) She turns around and breaks up group by calling Nathan over.

T: What did I ask you to do?

They go back to independent reading. Alfred is talking.

T: I hope there's no chit-chatting going on!

Two girls are playing with each other's hair. All the other girls reading. One boy has walked around with book in hand for at least 5 minutes. The teacher has Alfred put his head down. She tells Alex to "Mind your own business." She goes back to Alfred and says, "This is your time to practice your reading. Now is not the time for chit chat and sharing." A girl plays with a book on rug like it's a car. Then she goes to the bookshelf. She just stares at the bookshelf. The teacher straightens up a bit. The teacher asks a boy about the story he's reading. Three boys are separately wandering around room. Most of the other students are back in their own seats, still reading. (18 min) Everyone reading! Except Anna who is looking through the bookshelf. Some students are reading louder than others.

The timer goes off. The students quietly put their books away. The teacher gives most of them a "link." She has them sit quietly and then return their anthologies if they have them out.

Overall, the majority of second and third grade teachers had their students engage in one or more Preparing to Read activities on at least two days. Most teachers had their students do a blending activity while almost no teachers had their students focus on the Developing Oral Language component of blending. Teachers also did not regularly use decodables or other texts for supervised fluency practice. Instead, observations revealed that teachers conducted timed readings on a regular basis with their students. Timed reading does not, in and of itself, promote reading fluency. The decodable and other easy to read texts provide an important opportunity for students struggling with language to practice and continue to build fluency. Teachers also continued to spend time reading to their students and having their students engage in sustained silent reading instead of having them practice fluency.

### Reading and Responding

We examined the frequency with which teachers engaged their students in Reading and Responding activities over the three days of observation. We examined the observations to determine whether the teacher was having students read the anthology story for the first time or whether they had read the story at least once before the observation. We used that data to gauge whether it would be reasonable to see two or more days of reading for comprehension taking

place in a given classroom. If students were on their first or second reading we would have expected to see the teacher engaging the students in the use of reading comprehension strategies and skills. If the teacher had read the story all the way through with the students, we might expect to see the teacher only have the students reading for fluency or not reading at all. In general, we observed teachers who were beginning stories, were in the middle of stories and were transitioning from one anthology selection to the next. Given the pacing of the lessons present in our data we did expect to see reading for comprehension take place in the vast majority of classes on all three days of our observations. Similarly, when asked, 79% of second and 76% of third grade teachers stated that they taught a lesson from the Reading and Responding component on a daily basis. Yet observations revealed that only 48% of second grade and 50% of third grade teachers were teaching a lesson from the Reading and Responding component on a daily basis (see Table 7).

Table 7. Frequency of Instruction of Reading and Responding Activities

Grade	Days Observed			
	0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days
Second Grade	2 (5%)	4 (9%)	17 (39%)	21 (48%)
Third Grade	1 (2%)	5 (11%)	16 (36%)	22 (50%)

When we looked at how second grade teachers were spending their time during Reading and Responding instruction (see Table 8) we found that 35% did not engage their students in pre-reading activities (activating prior knowledge, building background, reviewing the selection vocabulary using context clues, setting a purpose for reading). In fact, 19% of teachers did not engage their students in any reading, for fluency or for comprehension, of the anthology selection. Additionally, 60% of teachers did not engage their students in any discussion following the reading. Similarly, the vast majority of second grade teachers did not have their students engage in the Reading and Writing Workbook or Inquiry Journal activities associated with the Reading and Responding component.

Table 8. Distribution of Reading and Responding Activities

Activity	Observed during:			
	0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days
<b>Pre-Reading</b>				
Second Grade	15 (35%)	16 (37%)	9 (21%)	3 (7%)
Third Grade	13 (30%)	15 (34%)	12 (27%)	4 (9%)
<b>Reading</b>				
Second Grade	8 (19 %)	10 (23%)	13 (30%)	12 (28%)
Third Grade	3 (7%)	11 (25%)	18 (41%)	12 (27%)
<b>Discussion</b>				
Second Grade	26 (60%)	13 (30%)	3 (7%)	1 (2%)
Third Grade	27 (61%)	12 (27%)	5 (11%)	0 (0%)
<b>Reading and Writing Workbook</b>				
Second Grade	38 (88%)	4 (9%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
Third Grade	36 (82%)	6 (14%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
<b>Inquiry Journal</b>				
Second Grade	36 (84%)	7 (16%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Third Grade	29 (66%)	13 (30%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)

A similar pattern of practice held true for third grade teachers. For instance, 30% of teachers did not have their students engage in the pre-reading activities. On the other hand, only 7% of third grade teachers were observed teaching without ever having their students read from the anthology. Consistent with the pattern we saw in second grade, 61% of third grade teachers did not have their students discuss the anthology reading, 82% of teachers did not use the Reading and Writing Workbook activities associated with Reading and Responding, and 66% of teachers did not use the Inquiry Journal activities related to Reading and Responding.

For both second and third grade a significant amount of time spent on the reading of the anthology was for fluency or for listening to the story on compact disc or tape. Teachers also tended to focus the reading on defining vocabulary and less on reading for comprehension. Teachers spent as little as one minute on pre-reading activities to as much as 37 minutes on these activities. There were only three instances of teachers clearly setting a purpose for reading with their students. There were also teachers who spent as much as 67 minutes having their students read the anthology. While there was some evidence of discussion after the reading at both grade

levels, there were only three instances where the teacher attempted to hand-off the discussion to the students and no teachers were observed discussing strategy use with their students at any time following the reading of a selection.

### Integrating the Curriculum

We examined the classroom observation data to determine how often teachers taught lessons from the Integrating the Curriculum component of the program. We observed 95% of second grade teachers teaching a lesson from this component every day, while only 67% of these teachers stated that they did so (Table 9).

Table 9. Frequency of Instruction of Integrating the Curriculum Activities

Grade	Days Observed			
	0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days
Second Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)	42 (95%)
Third Grade	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (12%)	39 (89%)

Similarly, we observed 89% of third grade teachers teaching something from the Integrating the Curriculum section and only 68% of these teachers indicated that it was their practice to teach something from this section on a daily basis. This discrepancy in teacher perception and observations may be due to the inclusion in the definition of Integrating the Curriculum any activity that was language arts related. For coding purposes, teachers’ use of morning activities such as “Daily Bites,” “Daily Language Review,” or “Daily Oral Language,” and *Bell Works*, and the review of homework involving language arts were included as Integrating the Curriculum activities.

We then examined the activities in which they had their students engage during the Integrating the Curriculum instructional time (Table 10). Most second grade teachers (79%) believe that they have their students work on the writing process every day. This is a very different picture than the one that emerged from the three days of observations. During the observations students engaged in the writing process on all three days in only one classroom. In fact, observations revealed that 30% of teachers did not have their students engage in the writing process at all over the three days. There are a variety of possible explanations for this discrepancy between teachers’ reports and the observations that come through in the teacher

interviews. Two possible reasons for the absence of writing process instruction are that the teachers do not like to teach it or they do not believe they have enough time. One second grade teacher stated, “Not the writing process, I skip the writing process and do spelling, whatever else they have I do. But the writing process I skip . . . I don’t like the writing process, the one that Open Court provides, I don’t like it.” Another teacher said, “Sometimes I forget, to be honest. I’ll forget or there isn’t enough time. But I’ll try to do – it’s a week long – so I’ll try to do at least three days a week. But I’ll do the comprehension and language arts fields, that I won’t miss. But the writing part, that’s where I’m lacking, where I’ll skip one or two days.” Another possible explanation is that teachers do not understand the difference between having their students write and having their students engage in the writing process. This may be supported by the number of teachers who have their students write in their journals at some point during the day.

Table 10. Distribution of Integrating the Curriculum Activities

Activity	Observed during:			
	0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days
<b>Writing in Response to Literature</b>				
Second Grade	30 (70%)	11 (26%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
Third Grade	18 (40%)	15 (34%)	8 (18%)	3 (7%)
<b>Writing Process</b>				
Second Grade	13 (30%)	17 (40%)	11 (26%)	1 (2%)
Third Grade	11 (25%)	17 (39%)	11 (25%)	5 (11%)
<b>Journal/Free Writing</b>				
Second Grade	23 (53%)	14 (33%)	5 (12%)	1 (2%)
Third Grade	36 (82%)	3 (7%)	2 (5%)	3 (7%)
<b>Language Arts Lesson</b>				
Second Grade	12 (28%)	13 (30%)	14 (33%)	4 (9%)
Third Grade	2 (5%)	12 (27%)	9 (20%)	21 (48%)
<b>Dictation and Spelling</b>				
Second Grade	14 (32%)	17 (39%)	8 (18%)	5 (11%)
Third Grade	11 (25%)	19 (43%)	11 (25%)	3 (7%)
<b>Reading and Writing Workbook</b>				
Second Grade	17 (40%)	17 (40%)	7 (16%)	2 (5%)

Third Grade	13 (30%)	20 (47%)	9 (20%)	2 (5%)
Inquiry Journal				
Second Grade	35 (81%)	7 (16%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
Third Grade	40 (91%)	4 (9%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)

For third grade classrooms, students did not engage in the writing process at all over the course of our three-day observations in 25% of the classrooms. Whereas 68% of third grade teachers indicated during their interviews that they have their students work on the writing process on a daily basis, in only five (11%) classrooms were students working on the writing process daily. We also saw students write in response to literature or write a structured paragraph on three days in only three classrooms. As many teachers had their students write in a non-structured way in response to a prompt every day as had their students write a structured writing every day. Five (11%) teachers had their students work on one or more days on a research project related to the writing activity in which they were supposed to be engaged. On the other hand, 21 (48%) teachers had their students either work on an activity involving grammar, mechanics usage, vocabulary, or a lesson in which the students were to learn something about how to write (i.e., literary elements, characterization) but were not given an opportunity to apply this lesson.

On the whole, second and third grade teachers spent significantly more time on general grammar, usage, and mechanics activities than they did on the writing process. Worksheets provided by the teacher were used extensively and to a lesser degree, the Reading and Writing Workbook activities were used for students to practice these lessons. Teachers did not usually provide their students with mini-lessons but instead had them work through the directions on the worksheet or in the Reading and Writing Workbook and then engage in the activities by themselves. Teachers frequently had their students do dictation and vocabulary lessons. All of these comprised the language arts category identified in Table 10 above. Almost two-thirds of third grade (60%) and 55% of second grade teachers had their students engage in at least one of these activities during every day of our observations. This emphasis was most likely consistent with teacher practice prior to Open Court implementation. The four problems which emerge from this over-emphasis on general language arts activities are that 1) these activities took place instead of writing; 2) students did not have sufficient opportunities to carry the strategies they were practicing during this time into writing time; 3) in general, these activities focused on

vocabulary, dictation, grammar, and spelling; and 4) most of these activities involved students working alone on worksheets instead of in conjunction with the teacher. As a result, students often spent time off-task or did not complete the activities because they did not fully comprehend what they were supposed to be doing. More importantly, many of these tasks should have been done in conjunction with the teacher as guided activities. They did not include listening, speaking, viewing, research and study, and literary elements.

Writing usually took the form of writing in a student journal in response to a prompt on the board, writing sentences for vocabulary definitions, writing a paragraph, writing in response to questions posed by the teacher regarding the reading, or writing about the anthology reading. As one second grade teacher said, “It’s a big headache to do the writing process for everything we want to write. But everyday they write in their journals. Everyday they write a lot of things. . . . Whenever we do formal writing, yeah, when we do our formal writing, yeah, we do it that way. When we write stories. And for all the big assignments that we have to do.” Sometimes teachers would have their students work on the general writing suggested in the teacher’s manual. For example, in each unit the teacher’s manual has two writing activities. There may be an activity in which the students write a persuasive letter using information from the anthology reading. The same unit would also have a writing process component. The students should engage in both of these activities over the course of the lesson. The writing process is something that should happen throughout each unit whereas the more discrete writing activity happens in the particular lesson. Thus, students can be working on two writings at any one time.

One of the possible explanations for the lack of writing process during language arts instruction may be the structure of the Open Court 2000 teacher’s manual itself. While the Open Court 2000 teacher’s manual is very specific and clearly laid out when it comes to Reading and Responding and Preparing to Read activities, it is less clear and more ambiguous when it comes to the writing component. To begin with, there is an underlying expectation that students will learn the mechanics of writing through the writing process. Therefore, there is an unwritten expectation that students will work on their writing four to five days a week. This writing should take place in both mini-lesson activities and writing process activities. Students should be learning each lesson about grammar, usage, mechanics, literary elements, and genre through their own writing. Yet, when one looks at the lesson planner, which precedes each lesson, writing process writing is not always indicated as a daily activity. Taking *The Boy Who Didn’t Believe in*

*Spring* as an example, the writing process is identified once on the second day of the lesson. Moreover, when the teacher turns to the appropriate text within the lesson, there is nothing that informs the teacher that the proofreading and publishing activity should take place throughout the lesson. The only indirect way this information is communicated is through the expectation that students will first proofread their own expository article and then make a clean, corrected copy of their article adding illustrations and photographs and bind it. A teacher might glean that these are too many activities to attempt in one sitting and the teacher might choose to break these up onto different days. Consequently, it is not surprising that where teachers did attempt to implement the component correctly they were less than successful. The 2002 version of Open Court provides a complete overhaul to the Integrating the Curriculum section. In addition to calling the component Language Arts, the manual presents an overview of what will be covered in the lesson and then a daily guide for each of three newly defined categories: Word Analysis, Writing Process Strategies, and English Language Conventions. Although the section is more clearly laid out for the teacher, we did not see any noticeable differences in the quality of pedagogy provided by teachers in our sample who used the 2002 version versus those who used the 2000 version of the program.

### Length of Lessons

During the three training and five day Governor's Institute Open Court training, it is recommended that teachers allocate approximately 25 minutes to Preparing to Read, 45 minutes to Reading and Responding, 45 minutes to Integrating the Curriculum, and 30 minutes to Independent Workshop activities. Overall, our observations revealed that teachers did not follow this recommendation. Again, as reflected in Tables 5, 7, and 9, above, teachers spent time on activities from one or more components each day but not on activities from all components each day. For example, a teacher might have spent 84 minutes on a Reading and Responding activity and not had the students do any activities from Integrating the Curriculum or Preparing to Read. It may be that the teacher felt the time was better spent on Reading and Responding for that day and therefore had decided only to focus on that activity or that the teacher found himself spending an extended period of time on the activity and therefore decided not to teach any activities from either of the two sections. In fact, this belief came through in our interview data. Yet, we found that where teachers made decisions to extend activities they did not necessarily

translate into higher quality lessons. The extra time was not spent on either accommodating their students or on enriching the lessons. As the below example demonstrates, instead these lessons were simply more time spent on the activity of choice for the day. For example, this teacher spent 77 minutes on a Reading and Responding lesson (30 minutes talking to the students about birds to activate their prior knowledge and build background knowledge and 47 minutes on the reading).

T: We will focus on three strategies: summarizing, clarifying, and asking questions. Top of 158. We will read paragraph for paragraph, do popcorn read. I can pick anyone, so follow along. I will start, read fluently.

The teacher reads the title and the author.

T: Eyes on your book. What are urban roosts – what does it mean? Clarify this.

S: Apartments.

The teacher picks Michael to read. He reads. Other students are picked to read. Eric is looking around. The teacher calls on him to give the definition for flourishing. He cannot answer. Karen reads. Another student reads.

T: Louder mija.

S: Continues to read.

T: Very good, thank you. What does roosts mean? Just read it.

S: A place to rest.

S: Some roosts are ledges on a roof.

S: Apartments.

The teacher picks another student to read. Students continue to read.

T: Do we need to clarify anything there?

S: Clutch, I'm confused, did she stay there or find another home.

T: Right here, after 18 days, she has baby chicks.

S: Clutch is maybe her eggs.

S: Clutch is eggs, a group of eggs.

Students are called on to read.

T: Does migrate mean to move or stay?

S: Move.

T: Did this bird migrate?

S: No.

Who can sum up what we have read so far? Give us the main ideas?

S: Students do not migrate.

S: If you follow a bird it may lead you to its nest.

T: Good. Hundreds of birds can live in places in the city.

S: They can nest in many places, bridges, freeways, buildings.

The students go to recess, return and begin reading again.

T: What is an urban roost?

S: Shelter.

T: What does urban mean?

S: City or town.

T: Why do birds like the traffic lights?

S: It is warm. Moms can leave their eggs.

Students are asked to read.

T: What does the mom bird always look for when she builds her nest?

S: A place to protect her eggs.

T: Now it is a good time to ask questions. How does the house wren live in the city? Adapt?

S: Find a home in a glove, teapot, shoe, like insects, goes thru out trash.

T: How can a barn owl find food?

S: His eyes work better at night.

S: He goes to places where there are mice and rats.

T: Why do house wrens live in old shoes?

S: They can make their own nests.

T: Look where we left off. We will finish tomorrow.

In this lesson, this teacher should have modeled the strategies she was using during the lesson and prompted the students to use them after seeing her use them. For example, at the beginning of the story, the teacher asks “what are urban roosts?” Instead, she should have helped the students understand that they could use the strategy of clarifying to understand the word. She should have modeled first by saying something like

I’m a little confused about the meaning of urban roosts. I think I’ll look for clues in the selection and in the illustrations to help me figure out the meaning of these words. I can

see that the birds are resting on an arch in the city. This gives me some clues to the meaning of the words. I bet I'll find out more clues as I continue to read. What do you think urban roosts means? What information on these two pages can you use to figure out the meaning?

She should have gone on to prompt students to clarify as they read by asking,

Does anyone want to clarify something in the selection so far that confuses them?

Clarifying helps us to figure out unknown words and phrases. There are a lot of words in this story that may be unfamiliar. Would anyone like to begin to clarify a confusing word or phrase?

She should have modeled summarizing for her students by saying,

This will be a good place to stop and sum up the main ideas of the selection so far. . .

Keeping the summary short will help me organize my thoughts and help me focus on the most important ideas and facts. . .

Instead, the teacher asked the students to “sum up what we have read so far” and for the “main ideas.” The teacher also should have modeled asking questions by asking a question of the text and then finding the answer herself in the text. She could have asked,

How do the house wren and the barn owl live in the city? I know from information in this selection that there are lots of places in the city and the suburbs where the house wren can live and build its nest. . . Does anyone else have any ideas about how the barn owl adapts? Are there other questions you would like to ask? Let's keep reading to see if our questions are answered.

Instead, the teacher says, “Now it is a good time to ask questions. How does the house wren live in the city? Adapt?” The students answer her questions, never once being drawn back into the text they are reading. They never use the strategy of asking questions during this lesson. Thus, while the teacher spent 77 minutes on this Reading and Responding activity, her efforts did not translate into a high quality implementation or a high quality pedagogy for her students.

Similarly, we examined the data to determine if the time spent on one component was likely to be offsetting time spent on other components. Again, no clear pattern emerged. A teacher might have spent 106 minutes on Reading and Responding activities and then 140 minutes on Integrating the Curriculum activities on the same day. On the other hand, a teacher might have spent 80 minutes on the writing process, 35 minutes on blending and developing oral

language, and then no time on the anthology. Some teachers stated that they had to spend more time on different sections than was called for in the manual. For instance, 16% of second grade teacher and 19% of third grade teachers stated that they changed the length of time they spent on the Preparing to Read section because they had to slow down for their students. Similarly, 17% of third grade teachers said that they slowed down the Reading and Responding component for their students. Another 19% of third grade teachers stated that they slowed down the Integrating the Curriculum section for their students and 16% of second grade teachers stated that they took more time on the writing process than was called for in the teacher's manual. Additionally, over one third of third grade teachers (39%) said that they took more time than the teacher's manual called for in order to meet the needs of their English Learners.

Each year we have asked teachers whether they teach from the Preparing to Read, Reading and Responding, and Integrating the Curriculum components on a daily basis. Each year some portion of teachers has indicated that they do not teach from each component on a daily basis. When asked why, among other responses, teachers have expressed the lack of time as a reason for this deviation from the Open Court Lesson Planner. Yet observations from the 2002-2003 school year provide two possible alternative explanations. The first explanation is that teachers do not intend to teach from each section on a daily basis. Our pre-interviews with teachers on the days we arrived to observe classrooms reflected that teachers did not always intend to cover material from all three components on a given day. We asked each teacher the following questions before every observation: "What should I expect to see during the observation? What are your goals or objectives for the lesson I will be observing? What skills, concepts or facts do you want the students to learn as a result of this lesson?" A teacher response might be something like, "identify nouns, verbs, adjectives; read and enrich vocabulary; better reading comprehension" or "reading and review of sentences that have been incorrectly punctuated and are grammatically incorrect; science experiment and discussion of prediction and result; handwriting exercise; oral reading," or "capitalization, proper grammar, paragraph writing – using topic sentence; cursive writing practice; reading for fluency – Open Court anthology." Thus, she might not have intended to cover activities from all three components at all or she might have chosen to include activities from all three components. These goals were then supported by the activity choices the teacher made for that day. Thus, one reason the teacher did not cover all three components of the program on a given day might have been more related to

the fact that the teacher did not include all three in her goals for that day or week and not because of time constraints.

A second possible explanation is that the teacher chose to use materials from outside of the Open Court program and this left little time for Open Court specific materials or activities. The observations revealed that many teachers used non-Open Court worksheets for language arts activities including writing process, grammar, usage, and mechanics, and teachers also had their students engage in certain activities like Daily Oral Language or handwriting exercises for extended periods of time on a daily basis. Almost 20% of teachers in both grades mentioned that they supplemented the Open Court materials with additional activities including worksheets for more practice. Our observations were consistent with this teacher perspective.

### Independent Work Time

According to Open Court, students are supposed to have time on a daily basis to engage in Independent Work Time. We examined our data in an effort to determine the extent to which students were given opportunities to work independently, in self-directed small groups, or with the teacher in small groups. Our observations revealed that second grade teachers do not have their students work independently or in small groups on a regular basis. As reflected in Table 11, 45% of second grade teachers did not have their students work independently or in small groups, with or without the teacher, during any of the three days of observation. Similarly, third grade teachers spent the vast majority of time having their students work in large groups. Less than half of the third grade teachers had their students spend time on any of the three days working either independently or in small groups.

Table 11. Frequency of Independent or Small Group Work

Grade	Days Observed			
	0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days
Second Grade	20 (45%)	12 (27%)	9 (20%)	3 (7%)
Third Grade	24 (55%)	7 (16%)	8 (18%)	5 (11%)

We then examined those instances where teachers either indicated that they did teach IWT or where we saw evidence that students were given the opportunity to work independently or in small groups to determine the extent to which these activities could be considered IWT.

While 27 teachers told us during their spring interviews that they did IWT everyday, during our fall observations we found that only 25% (n=11) of second grade classrooms met the criteria for IWT. It is possible that by spring many more teachers were conducting IWT in their classrooms. As reflected in Table 12, seven of these teachers were observed using IWT on one day and four were observed using IWT on two days. Interestingly, of the 11 classrooms where IWT was observed, eight said they did it everyday, two said they did not, and one was not interviewed. Of the two that said they did not have their students do IWT on a daily basis, one indicated that her students did it 3 to 4 times a week and one responded that IWT was the section that got pushed aside even though it was the students' favorite time. Five also indicated that they would like professional development on IWT. It is possible that by spring these teachers were using IWT with greater frequency than our fall observations revealed.

Table 12. Frequency of IWT in Second and Third Grade Classrooms

Grade	Days Observed			
	0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days
Second Grade	33 (75%)	7 (16%)	4 (9%)	0 (0%)
Third Grade	34 (77%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	6 (14%)

The frequency of IWT in third grade classrooms paralleled that of the second grade. While 22% of the third grade teachers we interviewed said they did IWT every day, we only observed 10 (23%) third grade classrooms where IWT took place. Six teachers had their students engage in IWT on all three days, two classrooms were observed using IWT on two days, and two classrooms had IWT activities underway on one day. Five of these teachers mentioned in their fall pre-interview that the observer should expect to see IWT/Workshop. Five additional teachers indicated that we should see IWT/ Workshop but the independent and/or small group work we observed did not meet the criteria for IWT. Although the interviews did not take place until spring, there was consistency between the interview data and the fall observations for those teachers who did use IWT on a daily basis. All of the teachers who we observed using IWT on all three days said they did it everyday. Two teachers said they did it everyday but based on the observation they did it on only two days. Upon closer examination, one teacher was doing Open Court testing that week and therefore may not have had enough time on the third day and the other teacher had Halloween activities on one of the days. Of those teachers who indicated that

they did not teach IWT on a daily basis, eight reported, when asked to elaborate, that it was due to time constraints.

According to Open Court we should also have seen IWT rules posted. Our observations revealed that IWT rules were posted in at least some of the second and third grade classrooms. In a third grade classroom the teacher began by reviewing the rules as follows:

- T: One. Be polite. Why do we have to be polite?  
S: You are sharing.  
T: What else?  
S: Two. Use inside voices – whispering. Do not interrupt the teacher and other students when working.  
T: Another rule?  
S: Four. Put everything away that you have used. Five. Share with others.  
T: If you have a question, ask your neighbor.

The rules were also charted and posted in the front of this classroom.

The “Must Do’s” and “May Do’s” may have been written on the board, written on a chart, or given to the students verbally. For both the second and third grade classrooms where IWT was observed, the number of activities on the “Must Do” and “May Do” lists varied from teacher to teacher. As the following second grade classroom reflects, some teachers only listed a few items such as:

- Must Do’s: 1. Vocabulary in ABC order  
2. Pick three words (vocabulary) and put them in a sentence.  
May Do’s: 1. Whale cover for your whale description  
Must Do’s: 1. Fluency - “Hard Top’s Day”  
2. Complete activity sheet on phonics  
May Do’s: 1. Choose a book from the library, read it aloud, and share  
2. Copy vocabulary and write your own sentence.

Whereas other teachers offered many choices such as:

- Must Do’s: 1. Copy spelling  
2. Find contractions  
3. Use spelling words in a sentence, underline the spelling words, and write a paragraph using spelling  
May Do’s: 1. Fluency  
2. Flashcards  
3. Reading

4. Computers.

- Must Do's:
1. Ant paragraph
  2. Inquiry journal
  3. Vocabulary pictures
  4. Worksheets
  5. Partner read to practice for the comprehension test tomorrow, practice fluency
- May Do's:
1. More vocabulary pictures
  2. Library center
  3. Decodable practice
  4. Synonym worksheet

Where the teacher had her or his students engage in IWT on more than one day, there was often consistency between one day and the next. For example, in one third grade classroom, students were observed working on different aspects of their persuasive letter across the three days.

Again, the "May Do's" are the same on all three days.

Day 1

Must Do

1. Complete the web for your persuasive letter
2. Put vocabulary words in ABC order
3. Look up the words #1-7 in dictionary

May Do

1. Writing center
2. Listening center
3. Read your decodable
4. Practice reading the "high frequency" flash cards

Day 2

Must Do

1. Drafting (persuasive letter)
2. Reteach sheets pp. 47-48
3. Look up words in the dictionary (#8-13)

May Do

1. Writing center
2. Listening center
3. Read your decodable
4. Practice reading the "high frequency" flash cards

Day 3

Must Do

1. Drafting or revising (persuasive letter)
2. Reteach sheets pp. 49-50
3. Alphabetical order sheet p. 8
4. Read "Dave the Brave"

May Do

1. Writing center
2. Listening center
3. Read your decodable
4. Practice reading the "high frequency" flash cards

In all of these classrooms the teacher was seen working with individual students, small groups of students, circulating around the classroom, and/or rotating reading groups. If there was a teacher aide, that person also did these activities.

IWT varied in length from under fifteen minutes to one hour and twenty minutes. Teachers were observed conducting IWT in different ways. Sometimes IWT was used in non-typical ways. For instance, one teacher used IWT as part of his/her beginning morning routine, another had students start IWT after they finished a test, and one did it in conjunction with the Resource Specialist working in the classroom.

Though IWT was rarely observed, when we did see it, it was typically part of the class's daily routine, as demonstrated in the following example.

Day 1

T: OK, I want everyone to stop writing. We're on to Workshop. If you did not bring your research, you need to bring everything you have to the front of the room. If you have your research, you can go to the back of the room. OK, #1, if you did not finish your commas in dialogue rules, you can finish those. You can also, and this is a must do, you can finish your syllables.

The class had been working on these assignments just prior to IWT.

T: If you get done with those, you can also do spelling practice on the computers, practice your cursive, or do reading with timers (May Do's). I'm going to be working with the back group and I don't want to be disturbed. Teacher goes to research group and rest of students start working on their own. Some work in pairs or groups.

Day 2

The teacher hands out ditto on synonyms and explains.

T: Only use the thesaurus if you're really stuck because this will take up a lot of time. My people who are doing research can do this tomorrow. My people who are not doing research, you will do your synonyms worksheet. You will also speed read for one minute, timing yourself. Those are "Must Do's." May Do's: This computer back here has the story on it (Story #3). You can get your books and sit there and read it. You may use Magna Doodles to practice

writing your spelling words. There will also be two computers open for typing your spelling works or you may read quietly. OK, if you're doing research go to the back. If you're not doing research, move to the front. Oh, and you may always write me a story. Students move to other desks if they are not sitting in the correct area already. Students get started. Teacher goes over to research group.

### Day 3

All start by working on finding sentences with different grammar marks. Teacher works with a student one-on-one and with a small group. When the students are done they check the "Must Do" and "May Do" lists to see what else they should do. Students work on different activities including research, writing a story, and spelling.

During the initial phases of IWT implementation, Open Court also calls for teachers to debrief with their students after they had completed IWT. Only one teacher had her students debrief after they finished IWT activities. On the first day, their discussion focused on how well the students had followed the rules.

- T: Let's debrief. How was IWT? What did we do well?  
S: We whispered.  
S: No one wandered.  
T: Do you know teachers have eyes everywhere and I saw students get dictionaries and getting up with a purpose? Janna and David, what were you looking for in the dictionary?  
S: Crows.  
T: Good, did you find it?  
S: Yes.  
T: Boys and girls, what can we do better tomorrow?  
S: We interrupted you.  
T: Yes, I need to not be interrupted so I can do writer's workshop.

On the second day, the teacher did not engage the students in a debriefing but did review the rule with them.

- T: I would like us to go straight to what I want for next time. “I” stands for Independent. I cannot answer your questions. It’s work you know how to do. If you still have a question, whom do you ask?
- S: A person next to you.
- T: I can’t get through as many students as I like because some students I need to baby-sit.

On the third day, the teacher once again engaged the students in a discussion to debrief the Independent Work Time activities.

- T: Let’s debrief. What is one thing we did well?
- S: No disturbing.
- S: We were quiet.
- S: We blended with C and J.
- T: I was very impressed and it was quiet. Good news, I was able to meet with all our writers and finish my conferences. Good Job. Bill, you met your challenge. That gives the class 50 points. I want to thank our most improved IWT student, Monique. Good job.

Thus, although one would expect to see IWT daily, it occurred daily in only six of the 88 classrooms. Overall it was present at least once in 21 of the 88 classrooms. Third grade teachers were more likely to conduct IWT over the three days than were the second grade teachers. Many of the teachers who indicated that they did not conduct IWT daily indicated it was due to time constraints. Yet, observations demonstrate that there were many more classes in which students engaged in multiple activities for extended periods of time.

### Quality of Teacher Pedagogy

An examination the classrooms revealed that, overall, teachers did not provide their students with a high quality of pedagogy during reading/language arts time. In fact, an analysis of the activities in which teachers engaged during the Reading and Responding and the Integrating the Curriculum portions of Open Court instruction revealed that the majority of teachers provided low to medium quality pedagogy to their students. Table 13 provides a breakdown of the classrooms by grade and by Open Court component.

Table 13. Quality of Pedagogy During Reading and Responding and Integrating the Curriculum

Component	Second Grade	Third Grade
<b>Reading and Responding</b>		
Low	4 (9%)	2 (5%)
Medium-Low	20 (45%)	26 (59%)
Medium	19 (43%)	16 (36%)
Medium-High	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
High	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Integrating the Curriculum</b>		
Low	11 (25%)	11 (25%)
Medium-Low	26 (59%)	18 (41%)
Medium	5 (11%)	12 (27%)
Medium-High	2 (5%)	3 (7%)
High	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

As indicated in Table 13, the vast majority of second (88%) and third (95%) grade teachers fall into the medium and medium-low categories in Reading and Responding. Very few of the second grade (9%) and third grade (5%) teachers were observed providing low quality of pedagogy to their students. For a teacher to receive a rating of low, she/he had to engage in practice exemplified by the following features: 1) reading of the anthology on one, two, or three days for fluency only; 2) reading the anthology to her students on one or more days with the students listening to a CD or tape of the story on one of the days and the students reading the anthology for fluency; or 3) no reading of the anthology over the three days. Teachers who received a rating of low did not engage their students in any reading comprehension instruction on any of the three days of observation. Instead, they had their students read from the anthology for fluency practice or did not have their students read from the anthology at all. As one of the teachers who provided this level of pedagogy said when asked if he made changes to the red (Reading and Responding) section, “You know what? I can’t remember what color goes with what. No, I don’t go over every single one. Every single skill or strategy. But we do reading and responding, yeah. You know what? I’ve been a teacher for a long time.” Another of these

teachers said “I pretty much know all the strategies by now so I don’t really need to read the script so I’m so familiar with the story . . .”

The largest percentage of second grade (45%) and third grade teachers (59%) were observed providing a medium-low quality of pedagogy to their students. For a teacher to receive a rating of medium-low, she had to engage in practice exemplified by the following features: 1) reading of the anthology on one or two days with partial implementation of the strategies and/or skills provided in the teacher’s manual or questions reflecting reading comprehension skills and/or strategies; or 2) reading the anthology on one day focusing on reading for fluency and a second day reading with partial implementation of the strategies and/or skills provided in the teacher’s manual or questions reflecting reading comprehension skills and/or strategies. Partial implementation means that no modeling takes place, not all, and possibly none, of the questions presented in the section are asked, non-Open Court questions may be asked by the teacher, and/or the teacher may cover other strategies and skills not presented in the teacher’s manual. Partial implementation can result when a teacher substantially implements the lesson but the students spend a significant amount of time off-task, or the teacher’s behavior towards the students undermines their learning (i.e., the teacher engages in derogatory behavior during instruction or feedback). These teachers did not consistently engage their students in the activities outlined by the Open Court teacher’s manual over the three days of observation and/or did so with a low level of fidelity with the teacher’s manual. For example, one third grade teacher was observed providing the following lessons over the three days of observation. She divided her students into two groups. On the first day of observation she worked with one group where the students read from the anthology for fluency. The only interruptions by the teacher during the 19 minutes of reading were to give direction on pronunciation. For example, she “stops Alanzo on the word ‘mallard’ and has the students all put their fingers on the word and say the word.” She says, “You’re all going to hear this word a lot. The word is mallard. Everybody say it. The students say mallard.” With the second group, she also asked one question about vocabulary during the reading. What the teacher should have done during this lesson was to focus on the strategies of asking questions and predicting. The teacher should have modeled asking and answering for the students and prompted the students to ask questions. She also should have prompted the students to use the strategy of predicting and confirming predictions.

On the second day, the teacher again divided her students into two groups. With the first group, the teacher first reviewed the vocabulary from the story prior to reading and then spent 18 minutes reading the anthology for fluency. Again, the only question she asks is related to vocabulary. She says, "Vocabulary word. Do you remember what all in a dither means?" A student responds with "confused." The teacher says "Yes, mad, confused. All in a dither, Connie." Connie reads. The teacher then asks, "What's happening if the wings are beginning to molt?" A student responds. The teacher should have had her students focus on the comprehension skill of fantasy versus reality during this second reading of the story. With her second group, the teacher does ask a few questions prior to reading. She activates the students' prior knowledge of the story by asking "who are the characters" and "what is the problem." She also says, "Ok, now I'm going to do some reading and then you'll do some reading. I really want you to focus on what this story is about. We're going to start over from the beginning." The teacher begins to read and then asks, "Why do you think they didn't want to live anywhere there might be foxes or turtles?" The students answer. In this way, the teacher does ask the students some questions about what happened in the text but did nothing to provide them with instruction related to either the comprehension strategies or the comprehension skills they were supposed to be focusing on during this selection.

On the third day of observation the students again review the selection vocabulary. After they review the vocabulary the teacher asks, "How many of you read this story at least twice all the way to the end?" She then plays the story for them on a computer while all students are supposed to follow along in their texts. While the teacher follows along in the teacher's manual, some students listen and follow along. Other students look around the room and look at each other's books. After this activity, the students spend 50 minutes writing what the teacher calls "intelligent questions." The students are each assigned a different page of the story and are instructed to create their own questions on blank index cards. The questions are supposed to be "where, when, why, and how" questions and they are supposed to be questions to which the students know the answers so that they can ask their classmates later. While this particularly activity is not in and of itself a bad one, it does not directly support students' development of reading comprehension strategies and skills while they read. As Samuels (1996) states, "When students are asked simply to read a text for later recall, the assignment is essentially a rote memory task, which frequently leads to poor comprehension. But when students take the text

information and relate it to other information they have, or when they go beyond the literal interpretation of the text and try to interact with the text in a meaningful manner, the students are creating additional meaning and employing a depth-of-processing strategy.”

Here, instead of helping students learn how to use the strategies and skills the teacher was supposed to model and prompt while the students read, the teacher has separated them into completely independent, discrete tasks. First the students are to read for fluency and then, they are to go back to the text and identify information in the text that they can turn into questions for each other. This process will not help students to internalize strategies and skills that they can carry forward as they read new and different texts for comprehension. As one teacher stated, “I really don’t use the guide in a scripted way. I use the guide for information as far as what’s there and what the goals are. And then I pull that into all of this because it isn’t spelled out there and it should be but it isn’t. Actually, you know what they need? They really need a different teacher’s guide for the ELD learner, the English only child. That’s fun. It’s not fun for the ELD student the way it is.” Another teacher said, “Again, I add. I look and see what they’re to target, and if there’s a more beneficial way or intriguing way or fun way to incorporate some of the comprehension skills, things they’re trying to get from the kids, you know, I’ll change where I see fit. Most of the program is pretty self direct, and I just find that some of the skills, especially for – I find it hard enough for the EL kids when some of the skills – its hard for me to elaborate and explain to them exactly what we’re trying to get from them, so I’ll do with examples . . .” Another teacher who said she does not make a great deal of changes except that she tries to “rewrite the questions in my own words too, ‘cause I know what the students need and I’ll reword things for them. So if there’s any changes it’s on that kind of level.”

A medium quality of pedagogy was found for 43% (n=19) of second and 36% (n=16) of third grade teachers. Medium quality pedagogy was characterized by instructional practice that included reading of the anthology reading with 1) partial implementation on three days of the pre-reading and/or strategies and skills portion of the lesson, asking questions based on the strategies presented in the teacher’s manual or other comprehension related questions in the absence of any modeling by the teacher of those strategies or 2) reading on one or two days of the anthology reading with substantial implementation of the strategies and/or skills portion of the lesson or other reading comprehension related questions. For example, one third grade teacher spent time on all three days having her students focus on the anthology reading, *Urban*

*Roosts: Where Birds Nest in the City.* On the first day the teacher activates prior knowledge by revisiting the Concept/Question Board. Yet instead of refreshing their memories about what they learned about city wildlife from the previous reading, the teacher spends 34 minutes having her students focus on the winter animals by asking “When does winter start?” and by telling students, “We have to think about what animals would be like in the winter for our mural.” She wants her students to “think of some ways we can draw animals in the winter.” The teacher then moves back to the substance of the lesson by asking her students to select five questions they had generated for the Concept/Question Board to be answered by them. The first is “Why does wildlife exist.” As they answer these questions, the students move them from the question side of the board to the concept side. Then, instead of having the students read the story, she passes out a poem for the students to memorize.

On the second day the teacher begins the reading and responding time by activating the students’ prior knowledge of the story. She asks, “What do we remember from the story so far?” Students answer. She continues to ask a few more questions about what they already read. After about 10 minutes of this conversation, the students begin reading. The teacher asks the students questions about the vocabulary – “do you remember what a crevice is?” – and specific information from the text – “Why does the bird have to get one piece at a time?” After 18 minutes of reading and these simple questions the students end their anthology reading. The teacher does not engage the students in any of the comprehension strategies (e.g., clarifying, summarizing or asking questions) or many of the comprehension skill (e.g., cause and effect). It is possible that the teacher believed she was working on having her students summarize when she began the lesson by asking them what they remembered from the previous reading but she did not help them to know that they were summarizing, why that activity was important, or how to go about doing it successfully. Had she wanted to work on that strategy specifically, she should have modeled the strategy for them while they were reading and then asked them to engage in it during the reading. Otherwise, the students understand the activity as one that is teacher directed and specific and takes place outside of the context of reading. As a result, it is not likely to become a strategy that the students understand how to use on their own.

On the third day the teacher has the students read the anthology selection again. This time she asks them general questions about what they read. For example, she asks, “Why does it [the bird] like to live in the suburbs, rather than in the urban areas?” The students answer the

questions. The teacher goes on to ask, “Why can’t we see the barn owl?” and “Why does the owl do well in the city?” but she never engages them in either the comprehension strategies or skills set forth in the teacher’s manual for this selection. Because the teacher did have her students read the selection, activate prior knowledge through the Concept/Question Board, ask them questions about their reading, and ask them questions while they read on each day of observation she demonstrated a medium or average quality of pedagogy.

The activities described above and the approach taken by this teacher was similar to those of other teachers who were considered to provide a medium quality of pedagogy to their students. In other cases, a teacher might provide a higher quality of pedagogy by drawing more clearly and closely from the teacher’s manual on one of the days in which they used the anthology. In that case, the teacher might also be considered to be providing a medium quality pedagogy to her students because although she does a better job of implementing the program and providing students with the strategies and skills, she does so infrequently.

Only one second grade teacher was observed providing her students with a medium-high quality of pedagogy and no teachers were observed providing their students with a high quality pedagogy during Reading and Responding instruction. In the one classroom where we observed medium-high quality pedagogy, on the first day of the observation the teacher had her students activate prior knowledge and browse. She had her students use context clues to understand vocabulary in the selection, she partially modeled reading comprehension strategies, and she asked questions. For example, she begins the lesson as follows:

T: Ok – Take out your Open Court Materials. Go ahead and open up to page 120.

Class noisily gets out books, opens to page 120. T puts on board:

Clues	Problems	Wonderings
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T: What is a quick summary of the story?

S: I might give away the ending.

S: These little elves help a shoemaker.

S: It’s a sad story about some shoemaker who needs help and gets it from some magic elves.

T: Nowadays we make shoes in factories. What else is made in factories?

- S: Bananas are packed in factories.
- T: What else?
- Ss: Tortillas.
- T: Good example! This story is about a time when shoes were not made in big factories. One person made 1 shoe at a time. Shoemaker had material, like a big blanket and cut the shapes of shoes from this big piece of leather. Who wants to add more? Genesis? Yes?
- S: I forgot.
- T: Ok, go ahead and browse through the story and think about some clues, problems, or wonderings you are finding. Ok, any problems?
- S: Too many little baby words.
- S: Why do elves make shoes and give them away?
- S: Why were the elves making clothes?
- S: I have a clue.
- T: What?
- S: It's an easy story to read.
- T: How many think it's easy?
- 10 raise hands – yes.
- S: I can't get *polished*.
- The teacher puts *polished* down as a problem.
- S: Why is the elves working for the shoemaker?
- S: That's really kind of them.
- T: Joni – any problems? Do you need more time? Jacqueline?
- S: I think its fiction! But I think it's realistic fiction.
- T: Yes, hmmm, the genre is realistic fiction. Remember that in a realistic fiction story, the elements must be real, but are elves real?
- S: They are make believe.
- T: So, this is really a folk tale. A fantasy. The folk tale was written down, only much later than when the story was first told. I want you to compare the pictures in the Mushroom in the Rain story to the pictures in this story.

S: The pictures in today's story look darker and older than the Mushroom story, so it must be a very old story, really old.

T: Here's a new word: *hammered*.

The teacher writes it in the Problems column.

T: What does it mean?

S: It means that it is in the past, someone has hit..."

S: I think this is a fun to read story.

S: I have a problem with *scissors*! Oh, it's scissors! Oops!

S: I have a problem with *clickety-clack*. What is this?

T: Let's look at *clickety*. Let's think about this one.

S: Like the clicking of shoes. Like when you click a mouse for the computer – a little noise-like sound.

T: Let's see if we can figure it out by reading from page 129. Let's all read.

Class reads paragraph containing clickety clack to understand sound.

S: On page 12, I have a wondering. I think that the shoemaker has painted the leather. Why did he paint his material?

S: Why are the elves so kind to this man? Also, is it a clue that they're kind to each other?

The teacher jots this down as a clue.

S: I have a wondering: at the beginning the shoemaker and his wife are sad, but then they are really happy when they saw people...why?

The teacher writes this under wonderings.

S: Why such baby sentences?

T: Ok – that's all for pre-reading! Open your Reading Writing Journals

Later in the same lesson, the teacher goes on to have the students read the selection:

T: Let's go to page 120. Let's consider the focus questions. Is it better to give or to receive kindness?

S: It's better to give it, because it makes you feel nice to help others."

T: Ok, let's read the story!

The teacher and the class read title and name of author. The teacher has the Teacher's Edition in her hands and stands in front of class as she asks students to read. Students take turns reading. The teacher leads a discussion with questions:

T: Why was the shoemaker so happy in the morning?

S: He found new shoes already made

Students are asked to read again.

T: Isn't it true when you walk in new shoes they sound clickety clack?

Students answer.

T: Ahhh, so it's the shoes that made the sound!

Students read.

T: Very Good!

S: Begins to read.

T: Who's making the shoes? We'll stop here! Close your books for right now.

This teacher provides a medium-high quality pedagogy to her students during this lesson. She activates prior knowledge about the story and invites students who are familiar with it to tell a little about it without giving away the ending. She talks to them about how shoes were made a long time ago, she talks to them about the fact that this is a folktale, and she has her students identify clues, problems and wonderings before they read. Her students are responsive to each prompt and engage with her in discussion. On the other hand, during the actual reading of the story, the teacher reads mostly for fluency. She does not model a strategy or work on a comprehension skill. She probably should have spent less time (this initial activity lasted 40 minutes) on these pre-reading activities and moved into the reading for the day. It was apparent from the students' responses that they had the background knowledge necessary to begin to read the selection well before she made the decision to begin reading. As a result, by the time she did start to read she only spent 16 minutes on reading the story and that time was dedicated to fluency.

On the second day, she again does a substantial job of helping the students with the reading comprehension strategies of clarifying, asking questions, and predicting, and she engages her students in a discussion. After reviewing the selection vocabulary, the teacher revisits the clues, problems, and wonderings from the day before. On the board she has put up the chart:

<u>CLUES</u>	<u>PROBLEMS</u>	<u>WONDERINGS</u>
1. Easy to read	1. Uses baby words	Why did elves make shoes and cobbler gives them to others?
2. Long story	2. Polished – pg. 121	Why are elves helping to make clothes?
3. Folk tale	3. Hammered – pg. 129	Why are the elves wearing clothes made by cobbler’s wife?
4. Fun	4. Scissors – pg. 129	Why did cobbler paint the leather?
	5. Clickety clack – pg. 126	Why did the cobbler become happy?

T: So let’s review, looking at this chart.

She reads the wonderings to see if the class has any answers.

S: Why do the elves make the shoes for the shoemaker? I think it was to help him have more shoes for people to have, to be with shoes.

T: Do you predict the shoemaker will get rich?

Ss: No, not rich!

T: Who can give us a brief summary of what the story is about?

S: The shoemaker cut the leather to make shoes and did it very slow.

T: Alex – any more?

No response from Alex.

T: Kent?

S: Yes – customers would pay money for the shoes.

S: These elves made shoes at night for the shoemaker and he thought his wife made them.

T: Jonathan?

S: Two more pairs were made, and the shoemaker had 2 more pairs and the shoemaker and his wife decided to see who was making these shoes.

T: On page 127 – what season is the story?

Ss: It’s winter and Christmas

T: How do you know?

Ss: Pictures of snow, and cold...

- T: Ok, I will only call on those who did not read yet. Jonathan! Page 128.  
Loud and Clear!
- T: When was it?
- S: It was midnight.
- T: Jonathan – continue!
- T: Why was the shoemaker shocked to see the elves working?
- S: Because they worked so well, and so fast, and he was old, and slow, so he was glad they were helping him.
- T: What do you think the elves will do when they see the new clothes the wife is making?
- S: They'll be shocked!
- T: Let's confirm our prediction – Joanna, you read on.
- S: Reads to class.
- T: So, were the elves sad?
- Ss: No! Happy!
- The teacher has Alex read.
- T: Let's sing the song at the end of the story.  
Class goes ahead and sings loudly.
- T: But, what does this mean for the shoemaker?
- S: They won't have the help of the elves anymore.
- T: Why did things turn out well for the shoemaker?
- S: The shoemaker now has enough money to live better.
- T: How did kindness play a part in this story?
- S: The elves were so helpful that the shoemaker and his wife made them new clothes – they were all kind to each other.
- T: Why do you think the elves helped in the first place?
- S: They were walking by, and wanted to be helpful...
- T: Do you think the elves always knew that the cobbler was sad? Do you think the elves just had nothing to do and just helped because they were bored?
- OK. We'll now talk about dialogue.

Here again, the teacher does a very good job of providing her students with a relatively high quality of pedagogy. Yet, instead of modeling any of the reading comprehension strategies identified in the teacher's manual, the teacher asks the students questions. For example, on the second day of reading the teacher asks the students "when was it?" Here, according to the teacher's manual, she should have modeled the comprehension strategy of monitoring and clarifying. She should have said something like:

I'm not sure what it means when it says "the clock struck twelve." How can I figure this out? If I reread, perhaps I'll understand a little better. When I reread the sentences it says that the shoemaker and his wife had to 'stay up and see who it is.' That probably means that it was late at night because that's when someone was making the shoes. Midnight is late at night. The "twelve" is probably twelve midnight. Have you been able to figure out things you didn't understand?

Instead of modeling or monitoring her students' understanding, the teacher asked a directed question that did not draw their attention back to the text but sought out someone in the class who probably already understood the material. She also missed the opportunity to show herself as someone who learns from the text. There were a number of times throughout this lesson where the teacher missed the opportunity to model or to fully engage the students in the use of a comprehension strategy.

On the third day, she has her students use the text to work on the comprehension skill of sequencing. They listen to the story on a CD and the students follow along in their books. Once they are reading, the teacher asks:

T: Can anyone tell me what *sequence* means?

S: When things go in order.

T: Good! We will look at sequence, today, to look at events in order. Words like...?

Ss: First, Next, Then, After that...

T: Ok, How did the story start? There was once. What else? What other time and order words are there?

Ss: Morning, tonight...

T: So it tells us when these happened.

T: Now, class, open your Journals now. Write today's date, on a new blank sheet of paper, write sequence for a title. With the help of your partner, you will look for the words that help to show time and order to help sequence the story in proper order. Start on page 121 and look for seven time and order words, please. You can have the same seven words as your partner.  
Ok. It's 9:45 am. BEGIN!

The group starts to work. Most are working independently The teacher circulates and talks briefly to Jonathan. The teacher sees what Kelly is doing, says (loudly), "That's really excellent!" Jorge and Liza are working together. They have found 5 words at 9:50 am. Alex and Olivia have found three words, Kenneth works independently and has found 4 words. Monica has six words. The teacher circulates to help. She tells Alex to check again for additional words.

T: Ok, now, select one word for sharing with the class.

On blackboard, the teacher writes:

Class says:	Time	Order
Gina: Every night	Every Night	At that moment
Alan: The next morning	The Next Morning	Next
Antonio: On Xmas eve	On Xmas eve	At once
Roger: At that moment	Just before Xmas	At last
Kris: Just before Xmas	In the morning	At that very moment
Miguel: In the morning	When the clock struck 12	Next
Carlos: Next	Every day	
Kate: When clock struck 12	At night	
Jonathan: At once	There was once	
Marco: Every day	So it went	
Alice: (No response)	Every morning	
Alex: At night	Just before	
Kenneth: At last		
Melissa: There was once		
Kenneth: So it went		
Jackie: Every AM		
Veronica: (None)		
Oscar: Just before		
Liz: At that very moment		
Jill: Next		
Jeff: They were the best?		

The teacher asks for more input as to time and order words.

S: Later that morning is used a lot in unit 2.

T: Good. Any others like that?

S: Later that day, later that year

T: “What about last week, last month, last year?”

S: Before that. Also, just before eating, and just before daylight.

T: Just before Halloween you will go on vacation!

Class cheers!

T: Ok, Ok, Ok! Let’s have more.

S: When this month is over, it will be October.

T: Ok – Every night I go to a restaurant to eat dinner. What do I need that can be used to help sequence?

S: A comma?

T: Yes! Very Good!

The teacher writes: Every night, I go to a restaurant to eat dinner.

S: At Halloween I got candy, and I was glad afterwards.

T: Ok, that’s enough now! Put Open Court materials away.

Here the teacher did not teach the comprehension skill designated for this story during any of the readings of the anthology. She should have used one of the readings to reintroduce the skill. She should have explained what sequencing is and how it is used in the context of the story. On the other hand, she did teach the skill. She adapted one of the suggestions made in the manual to teach the skill after the students had already read the material. There is nothing inherently wrong with the activity as she implemented it. The students were given the opportunity to work on the skill of sequencing. Yet the teacher missed an opportunity to use the text while they were reading it in order to confirm the students’ understanding of how to use the skill. When asked about her use of the program and whether she modifies the Reading and Responding section in order to teach her students, this teacher simply said “well exactly what I just mentioned right now. We do

a lot of class discussion, so that really helps.” Unlike other teachers, she did not suggest that her students could not handle the vocabulary or the pace of the program.<sup>11</sup>

Similar to the Reading and Responding data, the pedagogy provided by both second and third grade teachers was primarily of a low to a medium quality for Integrating the Curriculum. One quarter of both second and third grade teachers provided low quality pedagogy. This meant that over the three days of observation they were not seen providing their students with *any* opportunities to work on the five-step writing process or to write in any structured way. Instead, these teachers frequently had their students work on a mix of activities in isolation without ever bringing them together in a writing activity. For example, in one classroom, the second grade teacher had her students spend the first day doing a morning Daily Language Review, put words in ABC order, doing dictation, and doing a Reading and Writing Workbook activity on contractions. On the second day, the teacher had the students doing their “Daily Bites” activity, doing a Reading and Writing Workbook subject and verb agreement activity, and writing sentences. On the third day, the students did contractions, a predicate sheet, vocabulary definitions, and a Reading Writing Workbook activity. This was the extent of her presentation of the Integrating the Curriculum or Language Arts component of Open Court.

Another 59% of second and 41% of third grade teachers provided their students with a medium-low quality of pedagogy. A teacher who provided this quality of pedagogy might have her/his students write in response to a prompt on the board such as “tell about what you did this weekend,” work on an Inquiry Journal activity or a Reading and Writing Workbook activity, or do dictation on one day. On the second day, the students might be asked to summarize a story in writing, work on an activity involving alphabetizing words, or work on a pronouns, adjectives or verbs activity. On the third day, the teacher might have had the students writing directions and doing spelling and dictation.

Only 11% of second and 27% of third grade teachers were observed providing their students with a medium quality of pedagogy. Medium quality pedagogy was characterized by instructional practice that included having students engage in some aspect of the writing process on all three days or that there was evidence over the three days that the students were regularly engaged in the writing process and that they were also engaged in activities involving grammar,

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<sup>11</sup> One very important point that must be made about this example is that the students in this class did not have significantly different ELD levels than the students in the prior examples. In fact, there were six students with an ELD level of 3 and nine students with an ELD level of 2 in this class.

usage. For a teacher to be characterized as providing a medium quality pedagogy, it was not expected that she or he would have her or his students explicitly working on the writing process every day. It could occur during Independent Work Time, in the directed mini-lessons, or in time set aside for writing of any kind. A teacher providing medium quality pedagogy did not necessarily have to use the language of the writing process to describe the activities. However, it did have to be a structured writing assignment like a letter or a book report. These activities were considered to be opportunities for the students to practice elements of the writing process. One third grade teacher engaged his students in the following activities for three days.

Students return from recess. The teacher signs the Reading Logs for students who read during recess. The teacher is talking to the TA. He has TA work on reading decodables to students. The teacher asks the TA to put an emphasis on high frequency words. The TA reads with Joanne, Daniel, Doris, Jackie and Brad. Students take turns reading.

T: (To the rest of class) If you have published your City Critters, I want to see it. The teacher gives students oil pastels to color animal pictures. He has Omar look through a story and find out what animals in the city do to survive. Students not working with the TA are writing now about their city creatures. Anita is finished and helps Omar to get started. The teacher checks Jennifer's work and sends her back to add adjectives to her sentence.

T: I want everyone to try to add three adjectives.

Peter rewrites his story with a title, and indents. The TA is reading *The Lives of Sea Turtles* with students.

T: If I say turkey, what are some adjectives to describe a turkey?

Students answer.

T: Go back through your story and find a place you can add a few adjectives.

Students are all engaged.

T: You all need to be on the first draft. We have been working on this since November 13. You can't stay on the story map.

Jessica A., Marlene, and Mario get paper for the first draft.

T: I don't know why we've been slow to finish this paragraph. Usually you're so fast.

The teacher checks Jose's papers. Students reading with the TA now return to their desks. Now Genesis, Michael, Jamie, Jessica, and Omar read with the TA. Students who were reading now get started on their first draft. The teacher check's Brad's work for adjectives.

T: I want three or four adjectives to make it more interesting.

The teacher puts students' work that is published on the cabinet doors. Anita's is on the door. The students are all engaged. Brad is writing adjectives. Jamie is checking for adjectives, adding.

T: You can look in your wordbook.

He hurries students to finish their work. Peter rewrites his story because it's messy. Jessica is looking at the story map and is not writing the first draft. Angel is adding adjectives to his story. The teacher reminds students to check their stories for the correct grammar.

T: A title is a one, two, or three word title?

He checks Peter's work for title.

T: It's the name of your story. You're getting confused with the title and the main idea.

The teacher checks student's work for adjectives. Students bring their first draft to the teacher to check. Jose is having the teacher check his work. The TA uses a piece of paper to show Omar individual letters to sound out in the decodable. Other students at reading group are waiting for Omar to read. The teacher is checking Joanna's first draft. Jessica started writing her first draft. Jose is reading over his story. The teacher rechecks Peter's work. He cleans up some words before publishing. Rachel shows the teacher the adjectives she's added. He helps her add an 's' to make the words plural. He sends her back to proofread. Mary is done, and is looking through a book.

T: Can you say – the balloon are red?

Students answer.

T: You have to say balloons.

Brad rewrites his published story. Jessica is looking for adjectives in the word book. The teacher checks Jennifer's story. The teacher shows Jennifer where she needs to rewrite and reminds her not to repeat within the story.

T: Put the adjective in front of the noun, not after. I don't want 'is' – don't say 'the bird is green' – 'say the green bird.'

The TA finishes reading with students. Now the TA leaves the room. Darrel is not working. Omar does not have his work out.

T: You can put adjectives after the noun, but I'm trying to get you used to using them before.

The teacher has Amanda read her story out loud.

T: Where could she have added her adjectives?

Students answer.

T: What adjectives can describe butterflies?

Students answer.

T: Adjectives make your story more richer and interesting.

Students continue writing. Jennifer is copying her draft to publish it. Joanne is finishing her first draft. Jamie is erasing and rewriting. Darrel is not writing. The teacher has the students put their writing away, and take out math.

On the second day of observation the teacher conducts the writing time as follows.

Students enter the class and sit at desks. They take out homework.

T: I'm going to write 5 sentences on the board. I want you to copy them, then skip a line. The teacher writes: 1. The wind blew the tree down. 2. The girl ate her lunch today. 3. The dog ran down the street. 4. The park had a lot of rides. 5. The caterpillar crawled on a leaf.

Students now copy the sentences. The teacher tells Rachel to skip a line. Rachel corrects her work. The students are all engaged. The teacher has students put their pencils down.

T: In every sentence you are going to circle the noun, and underline the verb. For every noun, in front, put a caret, and add an adjective. Let's review. Who can tell me what a noun is?

Joanne answers.

T: What is a verb?

Students answer.

T: What are some things that people do?

Brad answers. Mario Jennifer answers.

T: Give me some things a thing does. What does a pencil do?

Students answer.

T: Can it break? Can it fall?

Ss answer.

T: We're not thinking. Every sentence needs a verb, an action, to make it a complete sentence. Every complete sentence needs a noun and a verb. It needs a predicate, which we'll talk about later, in Open Court. What's an adjective?

Students answer.

T: I don't want boring adjectives like colors, or big and small, and little. Challenge yourself to come up with interesting adjectives.

Students are listening. The teacher gives examples, using slimy, spiny, hairy. He tells the students they are not allowed to use those adjectives.

T: If you finish, work on publishing your story from yesterday.

Students start working. Omar is not working, but is looking at Genesis's paper. Debbie is looking around the room. The teacher is standing at the teacher's desk, looking through a magazine. Amanda is copying sentences from the board. The teacher tells the students to hurry and finish writing. Joanne is adding adjectives. Jessica is erasing part of a sentence. Amanda is helping Trisha come up with an adjective. Darrel is not writing. Genesis is helping Omar. Brad is now not working. Omar tells the teacher that he's done. The teacher has Omar check his work to make sure. Joanne is finished. Twenty minutes have passed since the beginning of this activity. The teacher is checking homework at the teacher's desk. Jackie is looking at the wordlist to find adjectives. Amanda is finished. Jose is finished. Jennifer is finished. Genesis is finished. The teacher has Joanne redo her homework because it is out of ABC order. The teacher tells Joanne she will have to go to Summer School, Intervention and possibly repeat the third grade. Joanne is crying. Students are finishing and waiting for the teacher. Paula and Amanda are talking. Jessica uses the wordbook to find adjectives.

T: This is not hard. You read the sentence, and ask yourself, is it a person, place, or thing, or animal? What are we talking about...what subject, in number one?

The students answer. The teacher circles nouns on number one to show students. Students put their papers away and move to the carpet.

After recess, the teacher conducts the following activity.

Students return from recess and enter the classroom. The teacher asks the students if they have finished the sentences (from the previous activity). Half of the students are finished. The teacher gives the students an additional seven minutes to finish. Other students work on their writing. The teacher checks the students' work. Students are missing nouns.

T: I am disappointed. This is so easy! Look at number three. Is there a person? Place? Thing? An animal? Did you circle those?

Students answer.

T: Ask yourself the question, Donna and Joanne...

The teacher is speaking to the TA now. Joanne is looking at Jamie's paper. The teacher tells Joanne to put adjectives in front of the noun.

T: Ask yourself on each one, the question, and circle it.

The teacher checks students' work. Michael needs to identify a few more nouns. Amanda uses her wordbook to spell adjectives. The teacher tells students they are going to stay in at lunch because they have slow brains and are not working fast enough.

T: Look at number four. What are rides?

Students answer.

T: It's a noun. Nouns are things. You can touch them.

Monica has not written number five. Jennifer is finished with the nouns. The teacher calls students to board to circle nouns, underline verbs, and add adjectives from the morning sentences. Jackie does number one.

T: Is there a problem with this sentence?

Students answer.

T: I didn't want colors and big and small or large as adjectives. They are boring. That is what first graders use. Who has something better?

Omar answers, as does Donna, Amanda, and Joanne

T: I am trying to get you to think about richer words to use.

The teacher picks three students to answer number two – one to do the nouns, one for the verbs, and one for the adjectives.

T: Is there anyone who's really having a hard time with this?

Darrel works with the TA. Jose, Peter and Donna come up to do number two.

T: Lunch is a thing, can you touch it?

Students answer.

T: Adjectives make the sentence exciting.

Joanne, Aaron and Rachel do number three.

T: Is there a person? Place? Thing? An animal?

Students answer.

T: Who was the subject?

Students answer.

T: Very good adjectives.

Michael and Maria do number four.

T: What other adjectives could we also have used for park?

Students answer. Omar works with the TA to get extra help. Jennifer, Michael, and Genesis do number five. Genesis uses “fat” to describe the caterpillar.

T: Can you come up with something better?

Genesis uses “ten-footed” for caterpillar.

T: Who can use another adjective?

Students answer.

T: I’ll give you five more sentences for homework to follow up.

Ss put papers away.

Students spent a total of one hour of instructional time on this activity. The activity was not presented in the context of a mini-lesson, students worked independently with very little supportive teacher feedback.

On day three, the teacher engaged the students in another adjective activity, had them do an activity in their Reading and Writing Workbooks, and had them work on their writing.

Students enter the class, get homework out and pick out a silent reading book.

T: Keep your homework so we can correct the five sentences we did last night.

Homework sentences: 1. The rose smells like berries, 2. The apple fell from the tree, 3. The rat ran into the sewer, 4. The raccoon knocked the trash can, 5. Spunky is a doggy. Joanne does number one, (up at the board, working together, in front of class) Jennifer does verbs, and Jackie adds adjectives. Students read the sentences together.

T: Can anyone give me other adjectives?

Joanne answers.

T: What are good adjectives for smell?

Amanda answers, Donna answers.

T: What is the subject? What are we talking about?

Students answer.

T: Did anyone use 'fragrant'? What does that mean?

Genesis answers.

T: When you learn a word and use it, you sound more interesting.

Joanne, Peter, and Jennifer do number two. Students read the sentence together.

T: Why are apple and tree a noun?

Miguel answers. Students help Miguel.

T: Can anyone think of different adjectives?

Peter answers, and Amanda answers. Jessica answers, and Omar answers, also.

T: Did everyone circle both nouns?

Students their raise hands.

T: Can you say apple tree as an adjective?

Students answer.

T: You guys are getting smart.

Rachel, Peter, and Amanda do number three. The students are all engaged. The teacher is sitting at his desk. The teacher has Amanda rewrite adjectives, so everyone can see them.

Students read together.

T: Why is rat and sewer circled?

Donna answers.

T: Who can think of other adjectives?

Joanne answers. Rachel answers.

T: It makes it very interesting, and I am able to visualize the sentence.

Peter and Jennifer share other adjectives.

T: When would you use 'spotted' as an adjective?

Paula answers.

T: What other meaning of 'spotted' can we use?

Students answer.

T: What things have spots?

Jackie answers. Omar answers. Donna answers. Joanne answers. Brad, Omar, Miguel answer number four on the board. The students are all engaged. The students read the sentence together.

T: What is the subject? What are we talking about?

The students answer.

T: Excellent. We are talking about the raccoon.

Jessica, Genesis and Jose answer number five.

T: Did you remember to circle “Spunky”?

The students answer.

T: Does anyone else have a different adjective?

Amanda answers.

T: The reason I am doing this is to make adding adjectives to your City Critters paper easier.

Rachel shares. Students share some stories about their dogs. Students helpers now collect all homework, activity ends.

This activity lasts for 26 minutes before the teacher moves into a Reading and Writing Workbook activity.

Students take out their Reading and Writing Workbooks and open them to page 65.

T: Today we are working with the present, past, and future of a verb. What is the past tense of catch?

Amanda answers.

T: What is the past tense of eat?

Students answer.

T: What is the present?

Genesis answers.

T: Where are you right now?

Michael answers, Rachel answers.

T: The near future means very close to now. What about the far away future? Where will you be?

Joanne answers. Genesis answers. Paula answers.

T: Let's think about your past. Where were you in the past?

Jose answers. Amanda answers. Joanne answers. All students are engaged.

T: You need to study if you want to have a wonderful future.

Students share about their future. Students get out highlighters. Michael reads the "focus."

T: The tense of the verb tells you when something happens.

Darrel reads the first bullet.

T: What should we highlight in the sentence?

Brad answers. Peter answers. Students highlight *present tense happening right now*. Students read sample sentences.

T: What do you notice about the two verbs underlined?

Students answer. Jessica reads bullet number three. All students are engaged. Students underline *future tense will happen in the future*. Students read sample sentences. Students read sample sentences.

T: There's the clue – will go. If she already did, what would you say?

Students answer. Students read aloud together. The teacher writes: The dogs run fast.

T: It's plural, but the verb has an 's.' You guys know how to say it automatically, you have to remember when to write it.

Miguel and Jose leave for their Resource class. Students read the bullets together.

T: Do I say, "I be here?"

Students answer.

T: What do I say?

Ss: I am here.

T: Irregular means they're weird, they're not regular."

Students read some irregular words. Students read the bullet. Miguel reads the directions for *The Practice*.

T: What tense is the verb in right now, for number one?

Students don't answer.

T: Ok, what are the three tenses?

Joanne answers.

T: What tense is the word flapped in?

Donna answers.

T: We need to put it in the present.

Students answer.

The teacher stops to talk to the TA. Jennifer reads number two. The students put it in present tense. All students are engaged.

The final Integrating the Curriculum activity for the day is working on the students' writing assignment.

Students begin writing/finishing City Critters writing assignment. Amanda and Michael are finished and have published their papers. Jennifer is adding more ideas to the story map. Monica and Jackie are at Amanda's desk talking about a pencil sharpener. The teacher talks to the TA about color-coding the high frequency words that the students don't know. Students are in a line waiting for the teacher to correct their work (so they can publish them). He tells students, "I'm tired." Brad is ready to publish his article. Students draw a picture to go with their sentence. Monica is using her wordbook to find adjectives, and Joanne is on her first draft. The teacher sends her to correct sentences. Amanda is not doing anything. Jill is walking around class sharpening her pencil. The teacher asks Monica to turn around. Miguel is writing his conclusion.

T: Your paragraph is very simple, neat and interesting.

Genesis is finished. Darrel is looking at the board and playing with his chalk. The teacher is sitting at the teacher's desk, correcting student's work.

T: How do you spell 'their' when you are showing ownership?

Jackie answers. Genesis is drawing a picture to go through her story. The teacher tells students, "No more correcting because I am tired of seeing the same paragraph." Amanda helps Miguel with his conclusion. Students get ready for recess. The teacher has Jennifer reread her conclusion, to make sure that it makes sense. The teacher is now checking Miguel's conclusion. Genesis shows her drawing to Joanne and Jill. Jessica starts writing a paragraph. The teacher has students put their pencils down.

T: After you write, you need to end it. You start with a main idea, you write, and then you need to close it. Just give me your opinion – what do you think? Give me something that closes the paragraph.

Students are listening and looking at the teacher.

T: Write what you like, or how you feel. Anything that closes your paragraph. Jessica has to stay in at recess and write. The teacher asks to check Peter's and Darrel's writing. Donna copied from the book, and has to rewrite. Darrel and Peter stay in and write during the recess. The whole class stays in at recess, to give the teacher time they owed for not doing the homework.

There are a number of things that this teacher is doing well. He does have his students engage in the writing process on three consecutive days. He is clear that they are engaging in a writing process that contains different steps and that they should be moving through each step as they work on their writing. Yet, there are also a number of reasons why his practice was considered of a medium quality. First, he does not seem to be moving his students through the writing process. As he states in the first day's activity, these students have been working on this activity since November 13th. The observations took place in his class during the first week in December. Eleven instructional days (excluding Thanksgiving) have passed since the beginning of this activity and he still has students who have not moved past the first stage of brainstorming. It appears that students are writing paragraphs. There is no clear relationship between the writing students are doing and any of the lessons in the Open Court unit in which they are working. The teacher makes reference to their writing as the City Critters writing but the writing for the *City Critters* lesson should have been brainstorming an expository or informational writing. There is nothing in the work they are doing that suggests they are all in that phase of developing an expository or informational piece. Especially since he suggests concluding the piece with students' opinions. Had the students been working on the writing activity associated with the story right before the one they were reading in their anthologies, *The Boy Who Didn't Believe in Spring*, they would have been publishing their expository or informational piece. Some students in this class were at the publishing phase but he referred to the work they were doing as paragraphs. For the *Urban Roosts* lesson, the one they were working on in their anthology, the students were supposed to brainstorm and draft descriptive paragraphs. It is possible that the teacher was having them write these paragraphs but that would not explain why they had begun the exercise 14 days before they began the lesson in which this activity is set forth. Additionally, this teacher has the students consult him for corrections to their work before they can go on to the next phase. Students are not encouraged to peer tutor, to conduct a writer's seminar, or to use any other resources to ensure that their work is ready to be advanced. Moreover, the teacher

spends an inordinate amount of time on having the students work on adjectives instead of almost any of the other activities within the Integrating the Curriculum materials. Much of the time spent on the adjectives activity appeared to be wasted as students worked without enough direction and spent 60 minutes on the second day and 54 minutes on the third day on this activity. He could have had the students work on building vocabulary through the use of context clues or he could have had them engage in the study and research part of the materials. Thus, while it appears this teacher is providing his students with some exposure to the writing process on a regular basis, he does not provide sufficient structure or instruction to help them become self-sufficient writers.

Only 7% of second and 5% of third grade teachers provided their students with a medium-high quality of pedagogy. Medium-high quality pedagogy was characterized by instructional practice that included having the students engage in the writing process on all three days with instances of direct instruction by the teacher. This direct instruction might take the form of a mini-lesson related to the writing process activities or the teacher circulating or conferencing with students to provide students with individualized instruction related specifically to the writing process. The feedback must be connected to writing at some stage of the writing process and not only to grammar, usage, and mechanics. The teacher must also have the students engage in activities that support their understanding of grammar, usage, and mechanics. The teacher's purpose is clearly for students to learn writing in the context of the five-stage writing process. Overall, only 5 of the 88 teachers (6%) were seen providing a medium-high quality of pedagogy during the observations. One of these teachers conducted a lesson based on the anthology selection *The Tree House* over three days. The following excerpts from each of the three days are provided to illustrate how this teacher's instruction is of a medium-high quality.

On the first day the teacher begins with a mini-lesson on homonyms. She starts by reviewing with her students their own understanding of the vocabulary concept of a homonym. She then draws them into their anthology selection to look for homonyms. She follows this with a writing seminar with her students.

T: All right, let's move on. The next thing I wanna talk about today is homonyms.

Who remembers what they are?

S: Words that sound the same?

T: Who can help Samantha out?

S: Words that mean the same.

T: Who can give me an example?

Students give various examples.

T: What's an antonym?

S: Words that have different meanings.

Students give various examples. Students are engaged and interested.

T: So what are homonyms?

S: Instead of different words that mean the same, it's the same word but mean different.

T: Not quite.

The student mumbles an alternative answer. The students go to recess and return. The teacher writes on the board: see, sea; board, bored; hair, hare, whole, hole; wait, weight.

T: Who can use sea in a sentence? And the next person will use see, S-E-E, in a sentence.

S: I see the ocean.

S: We swim in the sea.

Students continue giving examples for all the words. No one speaks out of turn. They are really engaged with open eyes and raised hands. The teacher is such an effective communicator they have no trouble following along. Dara is the only one who stands out, making faces and resting his head down a few times.

T: Let's take out our anthology and turn to *The Tree House*.

Ss: Anthology?

This seems like a new word they have never heard.

T: As I would normally say, your reading book. Anthology is a synonym for reading book. Turn to page 90 and look at the third paragraph, first line: It had taken a week for grandpa to.... The word I am looking for is week. What does the word week mean in this sentence?

S: It took days.

T: What about W-E-A-K. What does that mean? Can someone make a sentence with this word?

S: This [illegible] is weak. It means less strong.

T: I want you to find examples of homonyms in your story. Words that are spelled the same, but have different meanings. Work with your neighbors. Let's give everyone some time to find some words. And then if you can think of some off the top of your head we can use those too.

Students work in pairs for about 3 minutes, and then they begin to give the teacher some examples.)

S: Shutters and windows.

T: Well shutters are part of the window but they don't sound the same.

S: Red & read.

S: Three & tree.

T: No, remember they have to sound exactly the same.

S: Bored and board.

T: Right.

S: Through and threw.

T: How do you spell the first through?

S: T-H-R-O-U-G-H.

T: Can you use it in a sentence?

The student does the same with threw.

S: Page 89, wheelbarrow.

T: No that's not a homonym. Greg.

S: Page 94. Bananas. People eat bananas, and people can go bananas.

T: No, not quite.

S: Ball and ball.

T: Is that spelled differently? Oh, she bounced the ball, or Cinderella went to the ball. But oh no, they are spelled the same.

S: Mine and mine.

T: Spell it.

S: M-I-E-N. (pauses to think)

T: Think about it, we'll come back to you.

S: People dig mines to search for gold.

T: Oh, I see. Can we think of any more?

S: Two and to.

T: Right. The number two, and I wanna go to the mall.

Eventually, students seem to lose engagement. Not many students raise their hands now, as they run out of ideas. Students are looking around as if tired of this activity. The teacher notices.

T: I'm gonna take two more. Jamie?

S: Page 89.

T: Page 89? Where exactly?

S: N-A-L-E.

T: Maybe you're thinking about male and mail. The last one Ernesto.

S: See and sea.

T: Yes, we have that one. OK. Let's do some hands-on practice. Take out your reading and writing workbook. Open to page 35. Let's practice. Who can read where it says 'Focus.' Nice and loudly so we can hear. Ted? Let's wait for everyone to get settled. Ok, go ahead Ted.

Ted reads.

T: Good, who can read in the blue box? Dara?

Daniel reads.

T: Very good. Who can read next? Danny?

Danny reads.

T: Very good. Who can read next? Jeremy?

Jeremy reads.

T: Super job.

Students read sentences, then Sara read the practice prompt.

T: We have to read the sentence and crossed out the word spelled incorrectly. Who can read number 1? Marta?

Marta reads number one.

T: It sounds correct but that's not the correct way to spell it. What would you cross out? Danny?"

S: Eight.

T: Right. Draw a line through the word. How would you spell it correctly?

S: A-T-E.

T: Super job.

S: Write, right.

T: Ok, now I want you to work independently. I'm gonna give you a few minutes to go up to number 5, and when you get to number 5 just stop and we'll go over it. Close attention to what we're working on now because your reading assignment will be homonyms.

Some students gasp, some say YES! Loudly. Everyone remains focused and don't talk.

T: Remember, always when you're finished, check your work. Let's see how you did.

Teacher calls on students to correct the questions. They all get the answers correct.

Everyone pays attention and seems highly interested.

T: Next page, who can read for me where it says 'Apply,' on the next page. Karli?" Karli reads. The teacher guides them through more exercises. She calls on Jamie to help.

T: I want you to think of a sentence using F-O-R, and then F-O-U-R. I'm going to give everyone a few moments to do that.

Students work with focus and determination. No talking whatsoever. The teacher walks around and monitors students' progress. Dara raises his hand and asks for help. The teacher assists Dara and advises students to stop at number one. She calls on Nora, Eric twice, Greg, Karen twice, Samantha, Rosa, Jamie, Donaldo. They all make great sentences.

T: Now you have an idea of how to do it. For 2 through 4, you'll do during Independent Work Time. Everyone put your books away please.

Next, the teacher has the students transition into Writer's Workshop.

T: Excellent. Paper passers, can you pass out our writing folders, please. I need a couple of people for writer's seminar.

Students pass out materials.

T: Someone who has not been up for a while, and can share their story and get suggestions on their story. You should have your stories out now. Who would like to be the first? Let's go over it again. What do we do when they come up to the front?

S: We will tell them what we like.

T: Then what will we say. Jeremy?

S: Um...

S: After a positive comment, we give a suggestion.

T: Right. The first student for writer's seminar. Jamie.

Jamie gets her story and walks to the front of the class.

T: Jamie, let's wait until we have good listeners. Okay, nice and loud.

Jamie reads a descriptive story about Disneyland. After she's done, students begin to raise their hands.

S: I like your story because it's a fun place.

T: What is Nora holding up? Let me see everyone hold them up. On the count of three, everyone tell Jamie tell her where you get suggestions.

Ss: Criteria!

T: Give her a suggestion from the criteria list.

S: I like your story because it's a fun place. You need to talk more about Disneyland.

S: You should talk about what you did and how you did it.

S: I like it because it's about Disneyland.

T: Where did it take place?

Jamie: DISNEYLAND!

More students give their suggestions. Others follow along on their criteria list. One student asks about the topic sentence. Jamie repeats her topic sentence: "Disneyland was a blast!"

T: Super job. Let's give her a hand and a cheer. Next student for writer's seminar.

Dara.

Dara goes to the front and reads her story, which is about Raging Waters. She reads for about 5 minutes, much longer than Jamie. When she is done, she calls on students.

T: Super. Let's get some suggestions.

Students ask about the topic sentence, the existence of supporting details, who the main characters were, punctuation, and capitalization at the beginning of sentences.

T: Super. I need one more writer. Remember to read loudly. What kind of word is loudly?

Ss: Adverb.

T: Right. How about Rosa?

Rosa reads a story about a trip to the pet store. Students ask her about punctuation, setting, capitalization, proper nouns, use of adjectives.

T: My last writer please come up, because you know we always do four. Jeremy.

Justin reads a nice story about Arthur, a boy who looks like a mouse.

T: What did he do to his story, where he used the actual words of the people in the story? We just talked about it on Friday and here it is again. What is it called?

Ss: Dialogue.

T: Put your story back. Remember put your story in the right section, so that when I open your folder, I can find out exactly where you are. If you are still fixing your story, it should be in the editing section, etc, etc. When you are ready, the paper passers will come around and get your folder.

The teacher spent approximately 35 minutes on this exercise. Her approach closely mirrors the directions for a mini-lesson set out in the teacher's manual. Thus, she spent close to the recommended amount of time of anywhere from 20 to 30 minutes. For this example, the manual recommends that the teacher ask students what they know about homonyms. If necessary, the teacher is to tell the students that homonyms are words that sound alike but are spelled differently. The teacher should also have told the students that to become proficient in the spelling of homonyms, they must think about the meaning of the word in the sentence before deciding how to spell it. She then could have written a set of suggested homonyms on the board. These words were see, sea, board, bored, wait, weight, hair, hare, whole, and hole. The teacher can then have the students use each of these words in a sentence and explain their meanings. As demonstrated above, the teacher engaged the students in each of these steps. She then followed the next part of the exercise by having the students practice using the text of the anthology story they were reading, *The Tree House*. Finally, she had the students practice using the Reading and Writing Workbook. The one, very important step that she did not do during this lesson was to have the students check *their own* writing to see whether they have spelled the homonyms correctly. This step is one that is missing from all of the classrooms we observed. Yet, in spite of this missing component, this teacher carried out this exercise in a substantial way, ensuring that

her students first had an understanding, through a directed mini-lesson, of the topic, and then had some guided practice and some independent practice to complete the activity.

The writer's workshop activity parallels the writing seminar described in the Open Court Program Appendix. The writing seminar is for students to discuss their work in progress or a completed piece and share ideas for improving it. The teacher should have one student writer read his or her revised draft as other students listen carefully. When the student has finished, other students are invited to recount the story in their own words. This process helps the writer know if he or she must make some ideas clearer. The teacher should guide the students to listen quietly, think carefully before commenting on another person's work, make specific comments, and comment on something that they like about the piece before commenting on something that needs to be improved. This teacher had her students engage in almost all of these steps. She had them begin by reviewing the procedure for giving feedback. Then the students listened quietly to the writer as he or she read their work. The students began by stating something they liked about the writers' stories. The students knew to use their criteria chart to provide specific feedback to the student authors. Finally, the writer is supposed to take notes on the feedback he or she is given so that he or she might integrate those suggestions into the writing. There were a few pieces missing from this activity. First, writing seminar should be done during Independent Work Time. Instead this teacher appears to hold this as a whole class activity. Second, the students did not recount the stories in their own words to ensure that the authors had been clear in communicating their ideas. And third, the students did not take notes on the feedback. While each of these additional aspects of writer's seminar would have made this a more complete activity for the students, this teacher engaged in the vast majority of steps and her students appeared to both benefit as authors and clearly understood the criteria being used to evaluate their work. They made suggestions about topic sentences, supporting details, main characters, punctuation, and capitalization. This was one of the very few instances we observed in the 88 second and third grade classrooms of a teacher fully engaging her students in the process of a writer's seminar.

On the second day of our observations the teacher begins with a grammar, usage, and mechanics activity on adverbs. Here again, she begins by reviewing the students' understanding of the concept and then leads them through the activity. Once again she follows this activity with a writer's workshop during which students work on their stories.

The teacher writes Adverbs on the board. She works out of Open Court teacher manual.

T: Who knows what an adverb is?

Students raise their hands.

T: Ted.

S: An adverb describes a verb.

The teacher repeats what he has said.

T: Give me a verb. Anita.

S: Run.

T: How can she run? (speaking to entire class.)

S: Fast.

T: An adverb always has an LY ending. How could we describe this with an adverb?

Ss: Fastly.

T: No, that's not a word.

S: Tired.

T: You might feel tired, but that's not an adverb. Think of another verb, an action word. Ernesto.

S: Write.

T: How can you write? Josue.

Josue doesn't answer.

T: Samantha.

S: Slowly.

T: Who else has an adverb?

Students are engaged as everyone raises their hand to get involved. As the teacher calls on students in groups of 2, the first student gives the teacher a verb, and the second student gives the teacher an adverb with which to describe that verb. The teacher writes 'describes verb' and 'describes adjectives' under 'Adverbs' on the board.

T: Give me an adjective.

S: Old.

T: Give me a sentence with old.

S: My skates are old.

T: Another adjective.

S: Young.

The teacher asks more students for examples of adjectives, and then has them make sentences. Some that they give are sparkling, skinny, red. The teacher writes 'describe other adverbs' under 'Adverbs' on the board.

T: The boy ran very slowly. What's the adverb in that sentence? Nora.

S: Slowly.

T: Now I can ask you how slowly did he run? Greg.

S: Very.

T: Very is an adverb. Good. (She reads from the Open Court book) The baby cried awfully loudly. What are the adverbs?

S: Awfully, and loudly.

Teacher writes on the board: 1) The bridge is not very high. 2) Lea and Crissy sat together 3) The girls talked happily 4) She laughed aloud.

T: Who thinks they can come to the board and identify the adverb in sentence #1.

The teacher reads the sentence, while everyone's hands shoot up in the air so that they can be selected to go answer the question. Greg.

Greg walks to the board and finds chalk. He underlines 'very high.' The next is Jamie. She underlines 'sat together.'

T: Is she right?

Ss: No.

T: What is the verb students?

Ss: Sat.

T: Ok, now we wanna know, how did they sit. Samantha can you go up?

(Samantha goes up and says "I think its 'sat together' too.

T: Josue do you know?

Josue goes up to the board and underlines 'sat.'

T: This must be a tricky one. We said sat is a verb, so we won't even touch that. How did they sit?

Ss: Together.

T: Right so 'together' is the adverb.

Ss: I knew it.

T: Darren, number three.

Daniel goes to the board and underlines 'happily.'

T: Good job, Darren. Number four? Ernesto.

Ernesto underlines 'laughed aloud.'

T: Raise your hand if you think you can fix it. First of all, tell me the verb in the sentence.

Student fixes the sentence.

T: Take out your reading and writing workbook and turn to page 37. Who can read the focus for me? How do you think I would like you to read?

Ss: Loudly.

T: What's the adverb in my sentence?

Ss: Loudly.

T: Very good.

Students take turns reading workbook out loud for about 1 or 2 minutes, and then the teacher speaks.

T: Now take out your storybook, and the first person to find five adverbs, stand up. Students race through book to find adverbs. The teacher walks around the room to monitor students. Students take longer than expected. Students help each other out but are have trouble finding five.

T: Let's do this together. Look on the first page (of the Open Court reading book), and when you see a verb, raise your hand. Now read that sentence when you find a verb. Table four we're waiting for you...to get in your seats. Jamie you have a sentence, read it for me.

Jamie reads from page 86, the last sentence in paragraph one.

T: Is 'dangling' a verb? Is it describing anything?

Ss: Legs.

T: But adverbs can't describe nouns. You have to look and see what the word is describing. Someone find me another verb. You have to read or you wont find one. Darren I need for you to sit down. Karla.

S: It was a terrific tree house.....

The teacher skips her and moves to another student.

T: Ernesto.

Ernesto reads page 86, the first paragraph. The teacher skips Ernesto, and then goes back to him as he reads the last paragraph on page 86. Ernesto still doesn't find an adverb.

S: Page 86, first paragraph, third sentence. 'Painted, and bright.'

T: What verb do you see?

Ss: Painted.

T: Did they tell how they painted it? Are they describing how they painted it, or the color? Let's continue working on this in your group. Who can read the direction for practice? Ana.

Ana reads the first two as practice and the whole class follows along. Then students work in small groups. Every student seems engaged as the teacher walks around and ensures everyone is on task. They seem to be catching on and getting the gist of the adverb idea now.

Next the teacher had the students spend time in writer's workshop.

T: Let's put our books away. Paper passers, can you pass out our writing folders? If you're working on your story, what do you know you can do? Jeremy.

S: Revise.

T: You can do editing, review the revising checklist, you can peer conference with one another. You are working on your personal narrative. If I already met with you, I want you to continue writing wherever you are. Everyone get started please.

Students spend a few minutes gathering all their materials. There is a little talking going on, but not much.

T: You know not to skip lines, you know to put your rubric behind your final draft. I will give you paper to draw an illustration of your story. Then you will have your final draft, illustration, rubric. After that, you may staple it, and in your writing folder, put it in the spot that says Publishing. When I see those three things together, then I know you're ready for a break. Always check your final draft with the rubric to make sure you've done everything to get a 4. When I call your name, bring your folder and your project so that we may have a conference to discuss your progress. Darren.

Darren is the first to enter conference. Some students who have already met with the teacher and who are done revising their story go to the teacher's desk to get blank paper with which to draw illustrations. The teacher asks those who have already conferenced to raise their hands. About 16-17 students out of 20 raise their hands. Darren returns to his seat, then the teacher calls Rosa over for a conference. When Darren gets back to his desk, he stares at me. He has done this a few times today. He is off task and seems restless as he rolls around on his desk and makes odd faces. The rest of the class is on task, writing. Karla happily gets a box of crayons and starts to begin her artwork. After a few minutes, Ernesto gets to drawing as well. They are the only ones drawing. Then Jamie and Ted start drawing as well. Greg leaves his table to come help Ernesto draw, and then returns.

T: Finish up your last sentence, put your papers in your folders neatly. Once you have done that, I am looking for people who are ready to move on.

As with the previous day, the teacher's activities are aligned with the recommendations set out in the teacher's manual. According to the manual she should have explained to students what adverbs are and given them examples demonstrating that they "can describe verbs by telling *when, where, or how* action happens." Each example would have provided the students with a model of how the adverb can be used as it describes the verb. Next she should have had her students identify adverbs in a set of sentences (the ones she does use in her lesson) and finally, she should have worked with her students through the Reading and Writing Workbook activity to apply what they learned. Again, there are many aspects of this lesson that are done well by this teacher. She draws on the students' prior knowledge of the concept. She asks them to provide examples that show her they can apply the concept. She has the students look through their anthology selection for examples of adverbs and she monitors their activity closely to ensure they are engaged in it. There are also several aspects of this lesson that prevent it from being of the highest quality. First, this lesson lasts a little too long (37 minutes). She may have chosen to extend the lesson because she believed that her students were confused and that they would benefit from more time spent. By the end of the activity it appears that the students did benefit from this additional time as the students appear to move from a place of confusion to a place of greater clarity regarding the concept of adverbs. Yet, she may have needed to spend this extra time because she moved quickly from the general concept of adverbs into having her students

provide examples, skipping the recommended step of giving the students examples of adverbs in action. Had she directed the activity more closely at the outset she might not have needed to spend so much time in the middle building their understanding before she could move on to her next activity.

On the third day, the teacher began the Integrating the Curriculum portion of the morning with a dictation and spelling activity. She follows this activity with a study and research activity on following directions and then moves to an Inquiry Journal activity. She ends the day with a writing process activity on sentence lifting.

T: Raise your hand and tell me one spelling we've been working on, Rosa.

Ss: Z, s, gi, ce, ci.

T: Now we will focus on the spelling, er, ir and ur.

Paper passers pass out handout.

T: You will work with your table group. You will read the sentence, and finish it by putting the correct word on the line. And then, turn to the back. On the back you see more sentences. You have to pick the word that makes the most sense.

She repeats directions again.

T: Start on page 23, this is more practice for this particular spelling.

Students begin working together as one table group. The teacher walks around and ensures engagement by listening to students speak, watching what is written, and stopping to ask a students questions. Students are very attentive and working quietly. Jamie, Darla, and Terry are finished so they go to the library center to pick a book to read. They linger and begin to talk, until the teacher politely tells them to return to their seats. They then take their books back to their seats and begin reading silently.

T: You have about one more minute. Make sure your name is on your paper.

The teacher instructs people to return books to the library center, she tells students to put their worksheets in the bin.

Next, the teacher has the students work on an activity that comes from the Study and Research part of the Integrating the Curriculum lesson.

T: Everyone stand up quietly.

Students stand up, wiggle around.

T: We're gonna talk about the importance of following directions. You listen to what I say, and let's see if you can follow directions. We are going to play Simon Says.

Kids scream with excitement.

T: Why is it important to follow directions, and what will happen when you don't follow them? Karla.

S: You don't have to face the consequences.

T: What could the consequences be? Jamie.

S: If you don't listen you might get hurt.

The teacher calls on students to give more answers to why is it good to follow directions. Students give several good answers.

T: I will give you all a piece of paper, no one look at the paper. Only turn it over when I tell you to.

As the teacher passes out papers, students look anxious and amazed.

T: What I want you to do is turn it over so your partner can't see it. One person in your group has a design on their paper. That person will give someone else directions on how to make the exact same design on their paper.

Students begin to work, attentively directing their partners on what to draw. Most students finish within 1-2 minutes.

T: Ok. Those who were giving directions, show the picture to the drawer and see if it looks anything like yours. Raise your hand if you think you gave good directions.

Half of the students raise their hands high.

T: Raise your hand if you know of a game.

Students say Simon Says, Four Corners, Mother May I, Hide and Go Seek, etc.

T: I am going to come around with a piece of paper. I want you all to write directions on how to play that game.

The teacher walks around with blank paper.

T: At the top of your paper, write the title of your game, then I want you to write step by step, directions on how to play your game.

Students begin working. The teacher walks around to monitor students. Darren asks Ernesto to show his game, but he refuses. Darren then punches Ernesto softly in the arm.

Darren continues to work on his own game. Rosa raises her hand for help, then Greg does as well. The teacher helps them both.

T: I'm gonna take a couple of volunteers and see what you came up with. Raise your hand to give us directions and then we're gonna play it. Rosa? And Terrie, can you come up and try to follow her.

Rosa's game is Hide and Go Seek, Tonie follows her directions well and they play a short game. Rosa faces the board and counts to 10 while Terrie hides under a desk. The teacher calls Ana as a director next, and Ana requests five students. Ana directs the five to line up in a single file line. She then tells someone has to go up to be mother. She gives various directions, which they all follow. We learn that the game is Mother May I.

Next, the teacher has the students do an Inquiry Journal activity.

T: Take out your inquiry journal, and turn to page 23. This is where we will apply what we've done so far. On page 23, who can read where it says 'Following Directions.'

Student reads.

T: See the box at the bottom? You have to create a picture with the steps you see, all the way until step 10. When you're done, you will see a picture. So go ahead and get started.

Students begin to work, everyone is busy drawing and erasing. Some scratch their heads to think. Others seem to go through with it like a breeze. No one is off task. The teacher walks around and monitors students. Darren and Ernesto finish and raise their hands. The teacher goes over to review them.

T: "Paper passers collect the white papers, and the other start passing out the writing folders. I love the way Terrie is sitting and waiting. That's a table point for them. I can tell Rosa is ready, fantastic."

The teacher then has the students engage in a sentence lifting exercise.

The teacher writes 'Sentence Lifting' on the board, with '1. my dog is brown?' under it. She continues to write: 2. I love to read bookes 3. I said I'm going to school today 4. None of my friends went to the park?

T: When I conference with you all, I do this on the board. I take sentences from your stories, and write them on the board. Some of the sentences I write are correct,

and some are not correct. We are going to review each one, and if it is not correct, see if we can correct it. These are some of the sentences I remember from yesterday.

She reads number one.

T: Is anything wrong with this sentence. Let's look at the first thing you see wrong?  
Jeremy.

S: My' should be capitalized.

He goes to the board to fix it. Tim raises his hand so the teacher calls on him.

S: There needs to be a period. It's not a question.

He goes to the board.

S: It's a statement.

T: Very good, Karla

The teacher reads number two.

T: What's the first thing you see?

Rosa raises her hand and the teacher calls on her.

S: It doesn't have a period.

She goes to the board to fix the sentence.

T: Anything else wrong? Darren.

Darren goes to the board and removes the 'e' from 'bookes.' The teacher continues same pattern. She reads sentence, asks what's wrong, then as students' hands shoot up in the air, she calls a student and then they go to the board to repair the sentence.

T: Everyone get their papers and continue writing. I am going to continue to conference with people so when I call your name, you may come forward.

She conferences with several students. Terrie comes over to Darren's table to peer conference his paper. After two minutes they both go to the teacher to ask her questions. T: If you just finished the publishing stage, you are going to get your Writer's Notebook, and write a story. Has anyone ever argued with a friend?

All students raise their hands.

T: You are going to write a story about an argument you had with a friend, and how you solved it.

Many students get their Writer's Notebooks and begin. About five to seven students are talking too loudly and playing around. The teacher stands up from conference area and reminds them that in order to write effectively, they need to concentrate. She mentioned it is difficult to concentrate with a lot of noise and said that they must use their 'Inside Voice.' Student voices began to lower significantly.

T: Alright good, gimme five. Go ahead and put your work in your writing folder. If you are writing for your writers notebook, please 3-hole punch it now and return your folder to the shelf.

Once again the teacher's instruction is aligned with the recommendations made in the teacher's manual. She modifies the dictation and spelling activity into one where the students work together to identify the correct word with the correct spelling. She also circulates through the classroom to ensure that her students are on-task during the activity. She again modifies the following directions activity for her students after discussing with them the importance of following directions and then she has them practice what they learned in their Inquiry Journal. Finally, she works on an aspect of writing, linking a sentence lifting activity directly to the editing that she does when she reads her students' work and that they should be using when they edit their own work.

What is obvious from these three days of observation is that while this teacher is not perfect, she is providing a quality of pedagogy that is very close to the one set forth in the Open Court curriculum and that must be considered of a relatively high quality. Over the course of the three days she repeatedly engaged the students in the activities recommended in the teacher's manual. Moreover, she did so by comprehensively implementing each activity in which she engaged: she worked with the students providing them with mini-lessons before having them do the Reading and Writing Workbook activities, she had them complete the Study and Research component of the unit (following directions) using the Inquiry Journal, and she had her students engage in the writing process, having her students revise and edit, peer conference, and continue writing. They had a rubric with which they could gauge their work and then they had to publish their work. For this unit, the students were supposed to be proofreading and publishing their stories. Thus, she received a rating of medium high for her instruction during the Integrating the Curriculum portion of her lessons. It is also worth noting that this classroom was not a unique environment. These students ranged in ELD level from 2 to 3.

## Principal Support

As the instructional leaders of their schools, principals play an important role in ensuring the quality of practice provided by their teachers. Under the District Reading Plan, principals and other key administrators are able to attend Open Court training in order to support their teachers as they improve their practice. As we have done in previous years, we asked teachers what their experience with their principal was in terms of principal support. Teachers were specifically asked to indicate how often their principal observed their classroom to watch them teaching reading/language arts and how often they offered feedback. They were also asked how often the principal discussed issues related to reading/language arts instruction and assessment. During Year 1 (2000-01) the teachers indicated that principals were not always observing the teachers and discussing areas related to the program and reading/language arts instruction. However, during Year 2 (2001-02) the teachers reported that there was an increase in principal support in these areas. Unfortunately, the numbers were still low and some principals were found to not be offering any support in key areas.

This year's evaluation is slightly different than the last two in that the questions were asked during an interview instead of on a mailed questionnaire and the focus was only on second and third grade instead of kindergarten through third grade. Therefore, to increase comparability, last year's data was recalculated by grade level to offer a better comparison to this year's data.

For second grade teachers, between 5% and 34% indicated some activities never happened. This finding represents an increase in principal support from 2001-02 when teachers indicated 11% to 56% of some activities never happened. Principals are expected to observe teachers teaching and provide them with feedback. Over three-fourths of the teachers (77%) indicated that the principal visited their classroom at least once a semester. This was similar to last year. Only 5% of the teachers indicated that the principal never discussed the Open Court program at meetings. In fact, 77% indicated that the principal discussed the reading program monthly or more frequently. This was an improvement from last year. In both years, discussing individual student progress was the item least likely to occur.

For third grade teachers, in 2001-002 between 4% and 64% indicated some activities did not happen. This year there was an improvement in that between 3% and 48% said some activities never happened. However, there was a decrease in the number of principals who visited

the classroom at least once a semester (78% versus 63%). Over half of the teachers (58%) indicated that the principal discussed Open Court at the meetings at least monthly. Only 3% said the principal never discussed Open Court. Similar to second grade as well as last year's third grade data, the principal was least likely to discuss individual student progress out of the activities listed.

Table 14. Support Provided by Principals to Teachers

	Never	Once	Once per Semester	Bi-monthly	Monthly	Bi-weekly	Weekly	Daily
Observing you teaching a reading/language arts lesson								
Second Grade	5%	18%	26%	15%	13%	5%	15%	3%
Third Grade	18%	18%	21%	6%	24%	0%	9%	3%
Providing you with feedback based on the observation of the reading/language arts lesson								
Second Grade	13%	15%	28%	8%	18%	3%	15%	0%
Third Grade	24%	15%	21%	12%	21%	3%	6%	0%
Discussing reading/language arts assessment results								
Second Grade	22%	6%	22%	11%	33%	0%	6%	0%
Third Grade	19%	3%	26%	13%	29%	3%	6%	0%
Discussing individual student progress in reading/language arts								
Second Grade	34%	16%	13%	16%	13%	0%	8%	0%
Third Grade	48%	17%	7%	10%	14%	0%	3%	0%
Discussing the reading program at meetings								
Second Grade	5%	0%	5%	13%	33%	13%	31%	0%
Third Grade	3%	3%	22%	14%	33%	39%	19%	0%
Discussing how to make accommodations in the program for your students reading								
Second Grade	21%	15%	5%	15%	21%	10%	10%	3%
Third Grade	37%	7%	15%	11%	15%	4%	11%	0%
Discussing teaching strategies in reading/language arts								
Second Grade	18%	8%	8%	13%	15%	20%	18%	0%
Third Grade	29%	10%	10%	23%	16%	0%	13%	0%
Discussing theory or research on reading/language arts								
Second Grade	16%	16%	14%	16%	27%	5%	3%	3%
Third Grade	21%	14%	12%	7%	34%	0%	3%	0%

Discussing classroom management strategies									
Second Grade	19%	11%	19%	8%	25%	8%	8%	0%	
Third Grade	20%	20%	17%	7%	27%	0%	10%	0%	

In almost all areas both second and third grade teachers continue to receive support and feedback from their principals less than once a month. One area where there does seem to be a significant amount of interaction between principals and teachers is in discussing the reading program at meetings. Here, more than 77% of second grade and 91% of third grade teachers indicated that they engage in a discussion about the reading program at meetings on a monthly to weekly basis.

### Student Online Assessment Reports

In the spring of the 2002-03 school year, we asked teachers whether they used the SOAR data to help guide their instruction. Table 15 reflects their responses. Of the 35 second grade teachers who responded to the question, 29% said they were not familiar with SOAR. For the 34 third grade teachers who responded, the exact same percentage of teachers, (29%) indicated they were not familiar with SOAR. Given the high percentage of teachers at both grade levels, it is possible that these teachers did not make the connection between the Open Court end of unit assessments and the SOAR data. On the other hand, another 17% of second grade and 21% of third grade teachers said they did not use the data to guide their instruction. Only 34% of second grade and 35% of third grade teachers said that they used SOAR data to improve their teaching and/or to plan their instruction. A small percentage of teachers (3% of second grade and 7% of third grade teachers) indicated that their coaches use the data but they do not. Overall, these responses suggest that SOAR data is not yet being used with the frequency or in the manner expected by the district reading plan.

Table 15. Second and Third Grade Teacher Use of SOAR Data

Response Categories	Second Grade	Third Grade
Not familiar with SOAR	29%	29%
Do not use it	17%	21%
Technologically challenged or do not have access to it	6%	7%
Coach gives printout	40%	25%

Will use it in the future	3%	N/A
Use it to improve teaching and/or planning	34%	35%

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### Student achievement

In the 2002-2003 school year the state underwent two major testing changes. The first was the move from the SAT/9 to the CAT/6. The second major change was the shift in emphasis from the norm-referenced test (the CAT/6 in this case) to the California Standards Test (CST) as a central component of the Academic Performance Index (API). Thus, as we sought to examine student achievement in our 44 second and 44 third grade classrooms, we faced two obstacles related to examining student achievement gains. The first difficulty was that the SAT/9 and CAT/6 are not equivalent tests. Consequently, we were unable to directly examine growth in student achievement from the SAT/9 to the CAT/6 for the 2002-2003 school year. The second difficulty impacted only the second grade student achievement analysis. Because first grade students do not take the California Standards Test, we could not look at the second grade CST scores in terms of student growth. In light of these inherent limitations, we can only analyze student achievement growth for third grade classrooms (using the CST) and assess current student performance using CAT/6 scores for second and third grade and CST scores for second grade.

### District Third Grade Matched Student Performance

Overall, in the spring of 2003, 16% of students scored Far Below Basic, 26% of students scored Below Basic, 33% scored at the Basic level, 19% scored at the Proficient level, and 6% scored at the Advanced level. As reflected in Table 16, the majority of third graders receiving Open Court instruction districtwide maintained the English Language Arts CST proficiency level they had achieved during the 2001-02 school year. In other words, the majority of students did not move from one performance category (Far Below Basic, Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, Advanced) to another. Similarly, whereas 24% of students did move from one performance category to a higher performance category, 23% of third grade students moved from one performance category to a lower performance category. The group of students who made the greatest improvement were those who had scored at the Far Below Basic level in 2002. Thirty five percent of those students who scored at the Far Below Basic level in 2002 scored at the

Below Basic level in 2003. Moreover, 7% moved from Far Below Basic to Basic in 2003. Additionally, 28% of those students who scored at the Below Basic level in 2002 moved to the Basic level in 2003. Twenty three percent of those students who scored at the Below Basic level in 2002 moved to the Far Below Basic level in 2003.

Table 16. Numbers of Matched Third Grade Students Whose California Standards Test English Language Proficiency Levels Increased, Decreased, or Did Not Change from 2002 to 2003<sup>12</sup>

Grade 3, Open Court Schools		ELA Proficiency 2003					Total	Increase	Decrease
		1	2	3	4	5			
ELA Proficiency 2002	1	4,422	2,670	554	32	3	7,681	3,259	0
		57.6%	34.8%	7.2%	0.4%	0.0%	15.2%	42.4%	0.0
	2	2,938	6,152	3,590	349	13	13,042	3,952	2,938
		22.5%	47.2%	27.5%	2.7%	0.1%	25.7%	30.3%	22.5%
	3	554	3,927	9,614	3,138	195	17,428	3,333	4,481
3.2%		22.5%	55.2	18.0%	1.1%	34.4%	19.1%	25.7%	
4	36	300	2,915	5,137	1,462	9,850	1,462	3,251	
	0.4%	3.0%	29.6%	52.2%	14.8%	19.4%	14.8%	33.0%	
5	0	5	103	980	1,595	2,683	0	1,088	
	0.0%	0.2%	3.8%	36.5%	59.4%	5.3%	0.0%	40.6%	
		7,950	13,054	16,776	9,636	3,268	50,684	12,006	11,758
		15.7%	25.8%	33.1	19.0%	6.4%	100.0%	23.7%	23.2%

### Second and Third Grade Student Achievement

In addition to examining the extent to which third grade students using Open Court experienced gains on the CST, we examined both the second and third grade student data from our sample classrooms with the following question in mind: was there a relationship between the quality of pedagogy and student scores?

Table 17 displays the relationship between teacher pedagogical ratings and student achievement scores for second grade classrooms. We found a slight, but significant positive relationship between quality of teacher pedagogy for Reading and Responding and second grade students' scores on the CAT/6 reading ( $r = 0.164, p < .01$ ) and language ( $r = 0.110, p < .01$ ) and the CST in English language arts ( $r = 0.165, p < .01$ ). As the teacher's ranking improved, so did students' scores on all tests. Although we did find a significant positive relationship between the

<sup>12</sup> The levels of proficiency are as follows: 1 = Far Below Basic, 2 = Below Basic, 3 = Basic, 4 = Proficient, 5 = Advanced.

quality of pedagogy for the Integrating the Curriculum component and all tests, the effect of this relationship is too small to be considered educationally significant. These relationships were maintained by and large when we controlled for ethnicity, language, credential status, teacher years of experience, and participation in free/reduced meal program.

Table 17 also displays the intercorrelation between teacher pedagogical ratings and student achievement scores for third grade classrooms. Again, we found a slight, but significant positive relationship between quality of teacher pedagogy for Reading and Responding and third grade students' scores on the CAT/6 reading ( $r = 0.156, p < .01$ ) and language ( $r = 0.125, < .01$ ) scores, and the CST English language arts ( $r = 0.134, p < .01$ ). As the teacher's ranking improved, so did students' scores on all tests.

**Table 17. Correlations Among Student Achievement and Quality of Pedagogy**

<b>Grade 2 (n = 778)</b>	1	2	3	4	5
1. Reading and Responding	--	0.338**	0.164**	0.110**	0.165**
2. Integrating the Curriculum		--	0.082*	0.047*	0.074*
3. 2003 CAT/6 Reading Percentile			--	0.712**	0.793**
4. 2003 CAT/6 Language Percentile				--	0.730**
5. 2003 CST ELA Proficiency					--
<b>Grade 3 (n = 775)</b>	1	2	3	4	5
1. Reading and Responding	--	-0.126**	0.156**	0.125**	0.134**
2. Integrating the Curriculum		--	0.040	0.037	0.034
3. 2003 CAT/6 Reading Percentile			--	0.718**	0.764**
4. 2003 CAT/6 Language Percentile				--	0.760**
5. 2003 CST ELA Proficiency					--

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

When we controlled for a variety of factors, there were several instances in third grade where the relationship between the quality of teacher pedagogy in Reading and Responding instruction and student achievement was even stronger. Whereas the overall relationship between quality of pedagogy and student achievement for the CAT/6 reading was  $r = 0.156, p < .01$ , the relationship between quality of pedagogy and student achievement in relation to African American students was stronger,  $r = 0.172, p < .05$ . Similarly, for the quality of pedagogy and the CAT/6 language scores the strength of the overall relationship was  $r = 0.125, p < .01$ , and for African American students the strength of the relationship increased to  $r = 0.279, p < .01$ . The relationship was stronger for African American students between the CST English language arts scores and quality of pedagogy ( $r = 0.329, p < .01$ ) than for the overall population ( $r = 0.134, p <$

.01). Thus, we found that for those third grade teachers teaching African American students, the quality of pedagogy was even more important for student achievement than for those teaching students of other ethnicities. The higher the quality of pedagogy provided to African American students, the higher their student achievement.

When we controlled for language program we found a stronger relationship between the quality of teacher pedagogy and student achievement on all tests for English Only students than for all students. Whereas the strength of the overall relationship between quality of pedagogy and student achievement for the CAT/6 language scores was  $r = 0.125, p < .01$ , for English Only students the strength of the relationship increased to  $r = 0.182, p < .01$ . The relationship was stronger for English Only students between the CST English language arts scores and quality of pedagogy ( $r = 0.226, p < .01$ ) than for the overall population ( $r = 0.134, p < .01$ ). We found that for those third grade teachers teaching English Only students, the quality of pedagogy was even more important for student achievement than for those teaching students in other language programs. In practice, this meant that while high quality of pedagogy was positively related to increased student achievement for all students, for English Only students, high quality of pedagogy was even more strongly associated with higher students' scores. This finding is consistent with the previous finding that the quality of pedagogy is more strongly related to African American student achievement than for the overall student population.

When we controlled for teachers' years of experience, we found that the overall relationship between quality of pedagogy and student achievement was stronger for teachers with less than four years and those with more than 17 years of experience than for teachers overall. For all teachers, the relationship between the CAT/6 reading scores and the quality of pedagogy was  $r = 0.156, p < .01$ . For teachers with less than four years of experience, the relationship between quality of pedagogy and student achievement was stronger,  $r = 0.332, p < .01$ . For teachers with 17 years or more of experience, the strength of the relationship was even greater ( $r = .427, p < .01$ ). Similarly, for the quality of pedagogy and the CAT/6 language scores the strength of the overall relationship was  $r = 0.125, p < .01$ , and for teachers with less than four years of experience, the strength of the relationship increased to  $r = 0.346, p < .01$ . Again, for teachers with 17 or more years of experience, the relationship was even stronger ( $r = 0.429, p < .01$ ). The relationship was stronger for teachers with less than four years of experience between the CST English language arts and quality of pedagogy ( $r = 0.335, p < .01$ ) than for the overall

population ( $r = 0.134, p < .01$ ) and again for teachers with 17 or more years of experience ( $r = 0.462, p < .01$ ). Thus, we found that for those third grade teachers with less than four and more than 17 years of experience, the quality of pedagogy was even more important for student achievement than for those with four to six years of experience. The higher the quality of pedagogy provided by teachers with less than four and more than 17 years of experience, the higher their student achievement.

Finally, when we controlled for teacher credentialing, we found that the relationship between quality of pedagogy and student achievement for the CAT/6 reading was stronger for teachers without a credential ( $r = 0.346, p < .01$ ) than for teachers overall ( $r = 0.156, p < .01$ ). Similarly, for the quality of pedagogy and the CAT/6 language scores the strength of the overall relationship was  $r = 0.125, p < .01$ , and for non-credentialed teachers the strength of the relationship increased to  $r = 0.301, p < .01$ . The relationship between CST English language arts and quality of pedagogy was stronger for non-credentialed teachers ( $r = 0.337, p < .01$ ) than for the overall population ( $r = 0.134, p < .01$ ). Thus, we found that for those third grade teachers teaching without credentials, the quality of pedagogy was even more important for student achievement than for those teaching with credentials. The higher the quality of pedagogy provided by non-credentialed teachers, the higher their students' achievement.

Although we did find a significant positive relationship between the quality of pedagogy for the Integrating the Curriculum component and all tests, the effect of this relationship is too small to be considered educationally significant. These relationships were maintained by and large when we controlled for ethnicity, language, credentialing status, teacher years of experience, and participation in free/reduced meal program.

That we did not find stronger relationships overall between the quality of pedagogy and student achievement might easily be explained by the fact that the quality of teacher practice did not range very widely. While we used a five-level scale to determine the quality of practice, we had no teachers who demonstrated practice at the highest level and only six teachers whose practice fell into the medium-high categories. The vast majority of teachers fell into the low to medium range. This restricted range in teacher practice made it less likely that we would be able to see an effect of teacher practice on student achievement. The fact that we saw any effect of teacher practice on student achievement at all strongly supports the assertion that improving the

quality of teacher pedagogy and increasing program implementation in that effort will translate into increased student achievement.

## CONCLUSIONS

In 1999, the district took on the ambitious task of attempting large-scale K-3 literacy instruction reform to better meet the needs of its lowest performing and most needy students. It created and adopted a coherent reading initiative designed to provide teachers and students with a research-based reading program aligned to the state standards. The district also began a shift from off-site professional development opportunities for teachers to a combination of off-site and school-based, continuous professional development opportunities through the creation of the literacy coach for each school, the literacy coach coordinator and content expert positions in each local district, and Banked Time Professional Development Tuesdays. These efforts, grounded in a significant literature on effective professional development (Elmore, 2002; Fullan, 2001) provide teachers with the opportunity to “work collectively on problems of practice, within their own schools and with practitioners in other settings, as much as to support the knowledge and skill development of individual educators” (Elmore, 2002, p. 8). Thousands of teachers, administrators and coaches have been trained to use Open Court at the beginning, advanced, and mastery levels. Yet, in spite of these efforts, program implementation has been slow and uneven (Oliver, 2003; Slayton & Llosa, 2002; Slayton, 2001). So, the question remains, why has so little change in classroom practice occurred over the last three years? The answer is that large-scale program implementation of any kind is very difficult to accomplish in any field. According to Erickson & Gutierrez (2002), “high fidelity implementation is rare in education – for reasons of local exigency – and despite the accountability pressures and the wishes of experimenters to avoid this major threat to internal validity, there are real world limits on how ‘faithful’ the implementation will be of even the most structured of instructional programs.” More specifically, the research of others including Durkin (1979, 1984), Barr & Sadow (1989) and Hoffman, McCarthy, Elliot, Bayles, Price, Ferree, & Abbott (1998) suggests that basal reading programs over the last 30 years have been largely unsuccessful in substantially changing teacher practice. It is within this broader context that the findings from the District Reading Plan implementation must be interpreted.

This report contains the findings from the fourth year of the districtwide evaluation of the District Reading Plan. The first year of this four-year evaluation provided baseline information on the implementation of Open Court and Success for All. The second and third years of the evaluation provided information on the implementation of Open Court and Success for All and their impact on student achievement. The focus of this report is on the quality of pedagogy provided to students during Open Court instruction and the impact of that pedagogy on student achievement. The findings address four research questions:

1. To what extent is the Open Court Reading program being implemented?
2. What is the quality of pedagogy provided to students during the Reading and Responding portion of the reading/language arts instructional period?
3. What is the quality of pedagogy provided to students during the Integrating the Curriculum/Language Arts portion of the reading/language arts instructional period?
4. To what extent was Open Court effective in improving student achievement? What was the impact of teacher pedagogy during Open Court instructional time on student achievement?

With respect to the first question, overall, teachers prominently display or make available to their students most of the items identified by Open Court as being necessary for teachers to conduct program activities. Over 95% of second and third grade teachers had classroom libraries available for student use. All of the teachers had the Open Court Sound/Spelling cards visible in the classroom and over 80% of teachers had the Concept/Question Board prominently displayed. The only program item that was not regularly seen in classrooms was the Inquiry Area. Similarly, very few teachers were observed using the Concept/Question Board with students and only one teacher was observed actively using it to either introduce a unit or anthology story, or to revisit after completing a unit or anthology selection.

On average, second grade teachers spent less time on reading/language arts than the 150 minutes they were required to spend. During the three days of observation, teachers spent an average of 146 minutes on reading/language arts activities. This amount was a decline from the previous two years. On the other hand, third grade teachers continued to spend more time on reading/language arts than the 120 minutes they were required to spend. We found that, the average amount of time spent by third grade teachers was 141 minutes a day on reading/language

arts. In both cases, these activities were not limited to Open Court instructional time but included other non-Open Court reading/language arts activities.

The majority of second and third grade teachers (84% and 77% respectively) spent time teaching activities from the Preparing to Read component on at least two days of observation. Similarly, second and third grade teachers taught activities from the Reading and Responding component on at least two days with great reliability (87% and 86% respectively). Finally, all teachers were observed teaching activities from the Integrating the Curriculum/Language Arts component on at least two days of observation.

While teachers conducted activities from each of the three components on a daily basis, there was a great deal of variability as to the frequency with which and the extent to which teachers implemented the activities presented within each component with their students. Teachers executed certain activities, such as blending, in most classrooms on at least one day of observation but less than half of the teachers (25% for second grade and 45% for third grade) engaged their students in Developing Oral Language activities. Similarly, 50% of the second grade and 30% of the third grade teachers did not use the decodables at any time over the three days of observation. The same pattern emerged during the Reading and Responding instructional time. While 81% of second grade and 93% of third grade teachers had their students read from the anthology on at least one day, 60% of second and 61% of third grade teachers did not engage their students in any post-reading discussion. For Integrating the Curriculum, 30% of second and 25% of third grade teachers did not have their students engage in any activities directly related to the writing process over the three days. On the other hand, students did engage in a wide range of language arts activities on every day of observation.

Although it is generally assumed that a match will exist between the Open Court recommendations and teacher behavior, the findings in this report reveal that teachers do not strictly adhere to the manual. This finding is supported by the teachers' own statements. Seventy one percent of second and 68% of third grade teachers stated that they make changes to the Preparing to Read section. Similarly, 74% of second and 79% of third grade teachers make changes to the Reading and Responding section. And finally, 79% of second and 87% of third grade teachers make changes to the Integrating the Curriculum or Language Arts components of the program.

Observations also revealed that teachers often spent more time than recommended on a wide range of activities within each of the different program components. The spending of more time did not seem to be the reason that teachers did not always cover activities from each of the three components on a given day. Instead, there were some teachers who spent extended periods of time on one activity and still covered activities from the other two components. This might translate into a teacher spending upwards of 200 minutes on a given day. On the other hand, there were days that the teachers spent long periods of time on one activity, for example, 84 minutes on Reading and Responding, and then did not cover any Integrating the Curriculum activities. This extra time did not translate into higher quality lessons. Instead, in general it seemed to translate simply into more time being spent on that lesson.

The observations also revealed that while 55% of second grade and 45% of third grade teachers had their student work independently or in small groups over the course of the observations, most teachers did not have their students engage in Independent Work Time as Open Court defines it. Additionally, none of the second grade and only 14% of the third grade teachers had their students do Independent Work Time on all three days of observation.

In response to the second question, what was the quality of pedagogy during Reading and Responding instructional time, an examination of the classroom observations revealed that most teachers provide their students with a medium-low to medium quality of pedagogy on a regular basis. Only 2% of second grade and no third grade teachers provided their students with a medium-high quality of pedagogy and no teacher was observed demonstrating high quality pedagogy. Most teacher practice reflected teachers following portions of the Reading and Responding component but not providing the direct and explicit instruction called for by both the Open Court teacher's manual and a wide array of research literature on effective strategies to be used with students who are struggling to learn to comprehend.

In response to the third question, what was the quality of pedagogy during Integrating the Curriculum instructional time, an examination of the classroom observations revealed that most teachers provide their students with a medium-low quality of pedagogy on a regular basis. Only 5% of second grade and 7% third grade teachers provided their students with a medium-high quality of pedagogy and no teacher was observed demonstrating high quality pedagogy. One quarter of teachers provided their students with a low quality of pedagogy. Most teacher practice reflected teachers providing discrete language arts tasks independent of the writing process, thus

denying students the benefit of learning grammar, usage, and mechanics in the context of the writing process. These practices also did not provide the direct and explicit instruction called for by both the Open Court teacher's manual and a wide array of research literature on effective strategies to be used with students who are struggling to learn to write.

In regard to the fourth question, the majority of third graders district wide maintained the English Language Arts Proficiency score they had achieved during the 2001-02 school year. In other words, the majority of students did not move from one performance category (Far Below Basic, Below Basic, Proficient, Advanced) to another category. However, 24% of the third grade students did move to a higher performance category and 23% of the third grade students moved from one performance category to a lower performance category. Thus, as a whole the district maintained its performance levels at those of the 2001-02 school year.

In addition to examining student growth, we found that when we examined student achievement in relation to the quality of teacher pedagogy, as the quality of teacher pedagogy improved, so did students' scores on both the CAT/6 (reading and language) and the CST. This finding held true when we controlled for ethnicity, language program, meal program, teacher credential, and teachers' years of experience. For third grade students we found instances where these factors actually translated into increased strength in the relationship between high quality pedagogy and student achievement. Specifically, for African American students and English Only students, the presence of high quality pedagogy was more strongly associated with increased student achievement than for students overall. Similarly, there was a stronger relationship between high quality of pedagogy and student performance for teachers with less than four or more than 17 years of experience and for non-credentialed teachers than for teachers with four to six years of experience or with credentials. In each case, the higher the quality of pedagogy provided by these teachers to their students, the higher the student achievement on all tests.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the findings from the final year of the District Reading Plan Evaluation, a variety of steps should be taken to improve the quality of instruction:

1. Teachers should continue to work towards providing their students with high quality pedagogy by fully implementing the Open Court curriculum and using the instructional techniques appropriate to support their students' learning.
2. The central and local districts should continue to provide coaches and administrators with the professional development they need to be able to support the teachers with whom they work.
3. Central and local district and school site administrators and teachers should continue the work already underway in changing the culture, structure, norms, and processes necessary to support quality on-site professional development in the service of increasing student learning (Elmore, 2002) in reading/language arts. Changing the culture means moving away from conceptualizing practice as being invented in the classroom in isolation from other practitioners towards a community of learners where instructional practice is challenged by ideas about how to do the work of teaching better. Changing the structure involves acknowledging and supporting teachers and administrators who have developed strong expertise in particular domains to lead improvement of instruction in those domains. Changing the norms means moving away from the belief that all teachers are equal in their skill and knowledge and that all teaching practice is the same towards a belief that teachers can learn from each other in powerful ways and from experts who are not part of their immediate circle of colleagues. Changing the processes means moving professional development into the classroom and out of the large meeting room.
4. Consistent with the research literature on teacher professional development, the majority of time dedicated to teacher professional development should be *on-site* in teachers' classrooms. In addition to formal professional development opportunities, informal social networks of teachers to share concrete ideas, values, and norms about their work, or "communities of practice," should be encouraged by administrators and developed by teachers and administrators working together.
5. In the context of on-site professional development opportunities, teachers should continue to increase their knowledge and understanding of the direct and explicit instructional strategies recommended for use with low performing students. As a

part of these efforts, teachers should continue to work with coaches in the classroom to learn how to model, prompt, and support students as they struggle to become readers and writers.

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