

UNIVERSIDAD SAN FRANCISCO DE QUITO

Colegio de Postgrados

**Reading Aloud in Classroom
Implementing Fountas and Pinnell's
Literacy Program in a Low Income School**

Paola Kathalina Ortiz Barriga

Tesis de grado presentada como requisito para la obtención
del título de Magister en Educación

Quito, Noviembre de 2010

**Universidad San Francisco de Quito
Colegio de Postgrados**

HOJA DE APROBACION DE TESIS

Mejoramiento de Actividades de Clase para el Trabajo con
Adolescentes desde la Perspectiva de las Mejores Prácticas Pedagógicas y
de la Ciencia del Cerebro, Mente Y Educación

Paola Kathalina Ortiz Barriga

Nascira Ramia, Ed.D.
Directora de la Maestría en Educación y
.....
Miembro del Comité de Tesis

Andrea Castelnovo M.A.
Miembro del Comité de Tesis
.....

Montserrat Creamer M.A.
Miembro del Comité de Tesis
.....

Víctor Viteri Breedy, Ph.D.
Decano del Colegio de Postgrados
.....

Carmen Fernandez-Salvador M.A
Decana del Colegio de Artes Liberales
.....

Quito, Noviembre de 2010

The pleasure of all reading

Is doubled when one lives with

Another who shares the same books

— Katherine Mansfield

II. Table of Contents

I. Abstract	4
II. Sinópsis en Español	5
III. Introduction – An invitation to Reading	6
IV. A Classroom without Reading	7
V. Significance of the Study	10
XI. Literature Revision	11
XII. Methodology	30
- Case Study	31
- Participants	31
- Investigation Site	32
- Role of Investigator	33
- Procedures	34
- Data Collection Strategies	35
XIII. Findings	35
IX. Analysis	44
1X. Personal Views	52
XI. Discussion	60
XII. Reflection	76
XII. Conclusion	80
XIII. Recommendations	79
IVX. Limitations	80
XV. Appendices	81-93

XVI. References

94

I. Abstract

There are many reasons for reading aloud to students. It can serve a number of purposes. Reading aloud gets children thinking and talking about real-world issues; connects literature to children's lives; brings powerful stories to students that may be too challenging for them to read on their own; broadens their understanding of a topic, character (s), or plot; may connect to content in a curriculum area; and, is sometimes done for pleasure because it's just plain fun. The prime objective of this research was to train teachers from a low -income school in Spanish to read aloud to their students. This school is located outside of Quito, in the rural areas of the city. Its student body is made up of boys and girls from kindergarten to sixth grade who come from low income families. In order to encourage teachers to read aloud to their students, a mini library was created with a great number of children's literature in the different genres. Teachers received a three-day training, a binder that included a list of the books available to them, and different reading strategies that could be used to help students understand what they were reading. The study concluded that this particular school did not apply reading techniques, strategies, or reading aloud to their student body due to different circumstances. They were not able to apply the readily accessible and practical information to significantly impact implementation of reading aloud in the education of their students.

II. Sinópsis

Existen muchas razones para leer en voz alta a los estudiantes entre otras razones o propósitos está el lograr que los estudiantes piensen y conversen sobre eventos que suceden en el mundo que los rodea; que conecten su vida con la literatura y los elementos literarios que cualquier cuento nos pueda ofrecer, que puedan entender y conectarse con el curriculum; y muchas veces se realiza la lectura en voz alta porque simplemente es divertida. El principal objetivo de este estudio es entrenar a maestras de una escuela de escasos recursos a leer a sus estudiantes en voz alta. Esta escuela está ubicada en las afueras de la ciudad de Quito, en una zona rural. El cuerpo de estudiantes está compuesto por niños y niñas desde Kindergarten hasta sexto grado que vienen de familias de bajas condiciones económicas. Para motivar a las maestras a que lean a sus estudiantes en voz alta, se creó una mini-biblioteca con una gran variedad de libros de textos, diccionarios, revistas e inclusive enciclopedias con diferentes contenidos y géneros literarios. Las maestras recibieron un entrenamiento de tres días, y se les entregó una carpeta que incluía una lista de todos los libros que están en la mini-biblioteca. En el taller se les impartió información sobre las diferentes estrategias que benefician el entendimiento de los estudiantes con la lectura. El estudio concluye que esta escuela en particular, no utilizó las técnicas ni las estrategias de la lectura en voz alta con sus estudiantes debido a diferentes circunstancias. Las observaciones también concluyen que las maestras no aplicaron el material dado, lo cual me parece que habría impactado a los estudiantes si hubiesen ejercido diariamente la lectura en voz alta.

III. Introduction

An invitation to Reading

An image: a child leans forward, head cupped in hands, eyes wide with anticipation, concentrating on hearing a story. The child is mesmerized by the characters decisions and forwardness with which the teacher speaks. She is transported to the scene – fall you have to love it. Bright sunshine warms her body, a light breeze swings her hair, and the sight of colorful leaves gives an earthly type of rainbow. The light in the classroom is bright, the ambiance peaceful and quiet as everyone around her listens to the teacher read aloud. The teacher reads with excitement and intonation in her voice, allowing suspense, thrill and happiness spread throughout all her listeners, the students.

The latter scene confirms the statement made by many teachers who love to read and who love to read to their students. Teachers who know that the magic of a good story can engage readers, keep them reading, and help them discover the joy they experience from reading themselves. That is/was the ultimate goal.

Regardless of what time or place the image is the same: children love to hear and read a good story. I myself am a strong advocate and lover of reading. I believe reading entices the student into a magical world of words and descriptions. I can spend long hours reading. I as a teacher love to read to my students. I like to see their faces of excitement, uncertainty, bewilderment and intrigue as I read. The students might cry, other times we laugh, and many times we just wonder what if? Reading has a strong power of hooking readers to a world of fantasy. The child enters

a world of dreams, and a world of incredible events. Therefore, I sought to extend my love of reading to others who may not know or see the value in it. This study is about helping children, families, teachers, and administrators see the significance of literature in the learning process.

A classroom without reading

There are however, not very pleasant moments associated with reading and school. The learning experience can be tedious or boring, threatening, and without meaning. The students sitting at their desk with a notebook open copying phrases and words from the blackboard. There are endless hours of worksheets, hours of intensive phonics instruction, public performance that risk embarrassment (round-robin reading in front of class), and hours of unconnected test questions. If a child never or seldom experiences pleasure in reading and meets only the unpleasant moments, then the natural reaction is withdrawal (Trelease, 1995, p 9). The danger is that, with nothing to compare it to, the child begins to think this is what reading is all about: skill sheets, workbooks, flashcards, and test scores.

Trelease (1995) said that, “if a nation doesn’t read much, it doesn’t know much” (p 15). He is then reminded by a phrase spoken by Thomas Jefferson in a letter dated 1816 “if a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will” (Trelease, p 15).

I believe that for culturally deprived children, the problem of connecting their lives to any reading done or what they hear in a story is much more acute. Such children have few positive experiences in the larger world; their lives are often impoverished not just economically, but in terms of activities and adventures as well.

As time went by in my research and reading I wondered and developed several questions that I am still not sure of their answers. For starters, how can the value of

reading be assessed? Is it really necessary for students to become literate and knowledgeable about the world? From a pedagogical point of view, is reading aloud the best use of a teacher's time? Is a reading program too expensive? How can teachers be properly trained to teach reading? How can a school keep its books both used and also not stolen? If reading aloud is an effective and efficient way to teach literacy and convey ideas (knowledge, comprehension and analysis), then how can a reading program be properly assessed?

These concerns are reasons for a review of current literature and an extension of the scholarly work on this pedagogical technique. Therefore, this study is designed to assist children, families, teachers, and administrators in the use of the strategy of reading aloud in the classroom by public school teachers.

1. Significance of Study:

The significance of this literacy program was to involve children and books together so that they can become successful readers, and why not even writers. Harwayne (1992) said, "it's nearly impossible to help students become life-long readers and writers if they don't have access to literature...If literature is to make lasting impressions on young students we need to keep surrounding them with the literature" (p 338). Therefore, the design of this literacy program offered two main elements: (1) a reading workshop applicable to any grade level, and (2) a mini-library to share books, authors, characters, and plots. These two elements were essential to form a literate school.

If I want a literacy program to be successful it needs to work hand-in-hand with a library that provides vast samples of literature accessible to all children, teachers, parents, and the community. Therefore, I sought the need for the creation of

the library, I named, “Descubriendo un Mundo” as eminent. Additionally, the library and the classrooms were supplied with the necessary tools to become successful.

Reading aloud is a key element to a literacy program. Therefore reading aloud becomes highly important to our daily routines in a classroom. Read aloud has no risk for the listener. It does not discriminate. Proficient readers and struggling readers alike have equal access to the text. While there is a great deal of research from well known authors (Cambourne, 1988, Hindley, 1992, and Trelease, 1995) supporting the importance of this strategy in early childhood development, I have come to believe that even older students must go back and capture that magic in order to develop self-motivated readers. Fountas and Pinnell (2001, p 34) state that reading aloud for struggling readers, provides the opportunity for students to give their full attention to enjoyment of language and the visual images that language creates for them while someone else does the processing of the text (decoding). For fluent readers, their worlds grow larger with each new word, character, situation, or event.

IV. Literature revision

In order for the reader to fully understand what this case study involved, it is necessary to introduce several terms

Fountas and Pinell's (2002) prime objective of building a literacy program that could be applied to any school was to (1) to teach students how to read and (2) to make them want to read (p 16). I personally think most schools have succeeded in the first objective. Yet in the latter, teachers and schools require a lot more work. The school, Fray Jodoco Ricke, has been reasonably successful with the first goal, and less so with the second. I believe good literature in a reading program can help us make students want to read.

Definition of literacy and literature

Literature: According to Tomlinson and Brown (1996), children's literature is defined as "good quality trade books for children from birth to adolescence, covering topics of relevance and interest to children of those ages, through prose and poetry, fiction and nonfiction" (p 2). Holdaway (1979) states that through literature "children experience all the rich and special powers of the written word (p 191). Trelease (1995) said, "Nothing trains the mind as quickly and as thoroughly as reading. Reading is our life preserver (p 4). Graves (1990) said that, teachers needed to take charge of the change they need to urge students to learn from trade books, poetry, fiction, non-fiction, newspapers, and friends in order to learn about the world around us (p 1). Hindley (1996) states that,

books are unique in that they use words and pictures in combination to tell a story, the two working closely together, with neither taking precedence. Stories also create a visual story that supports and extends the text (p 60).

Literacy: Fountas and Pinnell (2001) say that “students absorb the language of literature – language is one of the primary instruments we use to interpret and organize our experiences; it helps us understand our world and our place in it; we use language to build a picture of the world” (p 32). Cambourne (1988) explains that

“literacy is a word which describes a whole collection of behaviors, skills knowledge, processes and attitudes. It has something to do with our ability to use language in our negotiations with the world. Often these negotiations are motivated by our desires to manipulate the world for own benefit. Reading and writing are two linguistic ways of conducting these regulations. So are talking, listening, thinking, reflecting, and a host of other behaviors related to cognition and critical thinking” (p 3).

How does literature and literacy relate to each other?

According to Cambourne (1995) literature and literacy relate to each other in two areas: language awareness and language production.

Language Awareness – many students who have difficulty with reading have had limited experiences with print. Others have been surrounded by books in their environment, but find the reading process too labored to be willing to read frequently. As a result, they are unfamiliar with the syntactic and semantic variations commonly found in writing language (Cambourne, 1995, p 14).

Language Production – children’s literature helps clarify concepts and shows that language represents meaning. If a student understands the reading, then this understanding helps oral and written language production (Cambourne, 1995, p 14).

Fostering children’s interest in Literacy

Most children are introduced to written language before they come to school. Parents read to young children, and the children observe adults reading. “They learn to read signs and other environmental print in their community. Children experiment

with writing and have adults write for them, and they also observe adults writing” (Tompkins, 2005, p 141). When young children come to school, their knowledge about written language expands quickly as they participate in meaningful, functional, and genuine experiences with reading and writing. “Their literacy development depends on an enthusiastic and knowledgeable teacher who shares a love for reading and writing” (Tompkins, 2005, p 141). Therefore, the importance of developing language and literacy through reading aloud becomes eminent. It is the perfect tool to broaden children’s language, expose them to different genres, show them different cultures, and enrich their lives with diverse reading aloud chosen by the teacher.

What is Reading Aloud?

Sharing stories, poems, and informational books orally with students is a wonderful way to develop an appreciation of literature, model fluent reading, encourage interest in reading, and create a community of learners in the classroom. Additionally, listening skills can be taught and emphasized. According to Tompkins (2005, p 187) “reading stories to children in different grades is an important component in all classrooms. Reading aloud and sharing the excitement of books, language, and reading should remain a key element to the learning process at all grades”. An educator Jim Trelease (1995, p 45) points out the necessity of finding time to read aloud so as to take advantage of its many benefits:

- Stimulating children’s interest in books and in reading
- Broadening children’s reading interests and developing their taste for quality literature
- Introducing children to the sounds of written language and expanding their vocabulary and sentence patterns

- Allowing children to listen to books that would be too difficult for them to read on their own
- Expanding children's background of experiences
- Introducing children to concepts about written language, different genres of literature, poetry, and elements of story structure
- Providing a pleasurable, shared experience
- Modeling to children that adults read and enjoy reading, to increase the likelihood that children will become lifelong readers

Other authors have created a list of reasons for reading aloud (authors)

- Expose students to a wide variety of literature
- Build content area background knowledge as well as general word knowledge
- Help students develop interests for later self-selection or reading materials
- Provide opportunities for assessing story development and characterization
- Facilitate students' abilities to compare and contrast
- Fine tune students' observational and listening skills
- Create an atmosphere for developing good discussion skills
- Develop higher level thinking skills
- Allow you to assess students' growth as listeners and thinkers
- Allow students to anticipate or predict
- Model effective reading behaviors
- Allow you to assess attention span and its increase over time
- Provide opportunities to share a love of books
- Create a community of learners and reader

I think this list gives us sufficient justification if we need it. For me the justification came from seeing the significant changes in my students' reading and writing

attitudes and competencies, which I could tie directly to the reading aloud we did together. “Reading aloud formed the foundation for future writing craft-lessons, for discussion, for rethinking our choices and for making us laugh, cry, listen and think”(Trelease, 1995, p 48).

Step by step: Reading Aloud (Tompkins, 2005, p189-192)

1. Prepare to share the story: the teacher activates background knowledge or provides necessary concepts so that students can understand the story. Listening purpose may also take place.
2. Read loud to students: a common approach used is the Directed Listening-Thinking Approach (DLTA), in which the teacher asks students to make predictions about the story and then listen to confirm predictions formed.
3. Capture an initial response: after reading, students reflect on the story by talking or writing about it in a reading log. They can voice personal feelings, make connections, articulate questions, and identify favorite characters or events.
4. Explore the story: examine vocabulary, collect language samples, learn about story structure, and participate in other word-study activities.
5. Extend the response: by reading, writing, speaking, drama, research, and other projects to interpret book.

Teacher Preparation for Read-Aloud Choices

According to Graves (1990), Camborune (1988), Holdaway (1979), and Trelease (1995), teacher preparation for read aloud involves several steps. The first is choosing what to read. What texts you choose will depend on the interests, age, and needs of your students, as well as their reading and life experiences. Once the

teacher chooses the text, there are several points of preparation that will make the read-aloud experience richer for both the teacher and the students. The following list comes from Holdaway (1979, p 56):

- Practice reading the text prior to reading with students
- Choose texts the teacher enjoys
- Choose places where the teacher would like to stop- in order to build suspense, clarify words, or help listeners who might be lost.
- Highlight words or situations that may need some explanations
- Check for background information about the author, time period, illustrator, or text in case students' questions veer in that direction.
- Choose a consistent time for read aloud. Read aloud is an effective transitions into and out of a class period. It is also effective for transitioning from one activity to another.
- Choose a time for read aloud that is as free from distractions as possible.
- Read the text with passion. Laugh and cry, wonder and questions, so that students see an authentic response from the teacher, the reader.
- If the read aloud is part of a larger unit or inquire, be prepared to help students make the connection a conscious one
- Provide time and opportunity for students to make connections to their lives

The stages of Read-Aloud

There are different stages of read-aloud that range from infancy to adult hood. The act of listening, talking, observing, and interacting are essential to read-aloud moments. Cambourne (1988) stated that there are books with just words that allow toddlers to name objects, interactive books (touch and feel), favorite books, books to reread, wordless and predictable books, pop-up books, joke books, and fairy tales.

Preparing students for read aloud is more difficult the first few times a teacher does it that once students come to expect and demand read aloud sessions. Taking a proactive approach in this area of preparation will save a lot of class time and gain a lot in terms of students' comprehension and response (Cambourne, 1988, p 34).

Establishing clear expectations of student behavior during read aloud is very important. If a teacher wants students to do nothing other than listen that needs to be established with the first read aloud. If, however, the teacher allows students to doodle, create images, or take notes, the teacher needs to establish parameters for those activities (Cambourne, 1988, p 35).

Sometimes, the teacher needs to be prepared to extend the read aloud session. Tools that can help are chart paper, overhead transparencies, and markers available in case student discussion leads to memorable talk (Cambourne, 1988, p 35.36).

Reading facts for life – connection between literacy and reading aloud

We read to children for all the same reasons we talk with children: to reassure, to entertain, to inform, to explain, to arouse curiosity, and to inspire. But in reading aloud Trelease (1995, p 8) states:

1. Condition the child to associate reading with pleasure
2. Create background knowledge
3. And provide a reading role model

Condition the child to associate reading with pleasure: When a teacher reads to her students she sends a message of pleasure to the brain. Reading is an accrued skill, that means reading is like riding a bike, driving a car, or sewing: in order to get between at if you must do it and the more you read, the better you get at it, and the better you get at it, the more you like it. It is a fact, that students' who read the most, read the best, achieve the most, and stay in school the longest (Trelease 1995, p 11).

Create background knowledge: Is the tool we use to make sense of what we see, hear, and read. It is based on three main activities: (1) decoding the words you are reading: (2) recalling your background knowledge: and (3) comparing the new knowledge with the background knowledge. I believe that children who have been read to come to books with a large inventory of sounds, words, and experiences, therefore having a greater advantage. “Reading and background knowledge feed off each other. The larger your vocabulary, the easier it is to understand what you are reading, and the more you read, the larger your vocabulary grows” (p 12).

Getting Beyond “I liked the book:” How lucky many teachers are to spend every day with students who love and enjoy reading books. Opportunities constantly arise for talking about reading with one another. Reading, which I once considered a quiet, isolated activity, now takes on a much more social feel in many classrooms. “Teachers and students respond to literature all the time and in many ways – through talk, through writing, and through art and performance. We talk together as a whole class, or in small groups or pairs” (Trelease, 1995, p 13).

Reading Aloud by the Teacher: Each time a teacher reads to her students, she or he is a role model. One of the early and primary abilities of children is imitation. Therefore, the role model an adult may exercise on a child is even more important. Those children who grow up in environments where reading is a daily occurrence, have a desire for reading for pleasure. However, those children whose home environments are based on no books, illiteracy and little communication, reading becomes an unpleasant task.

According to Trelease (1995), the importance and uniqueness in read aloud is in the teacher. He states that, “research shows that reading aloud to children improves their reading, writing, speaking, listening and best of all, their attitudes about reading”

(p 12). I believe that reading is the heart of education, the knowledge of almost every subject in school flows from reading. “One must first be able to read the word problem in math in order to understand it. If you cannot read the science or social studies chapter, you cannot answer the questions at the end of the chapter. One can arguably state: reading is the single most important social factor in life today” (Trelease, 1995, p 18). Trelease further presents a study about *Who Reads Best and Why?* (1995, p. 19). Two main factors were produced as evidence of higher achievement around the world:

- The frequency of teachers reading aloud to students
- The frequency of SSR (sustained silent reading). Children who had daily SSR periods scored much higher than those who experienced SSR only once a week.

Several times each day the teacher reads aloud for entertainment of the students. It is amazing how many adults remember a teacher who read aloud to them, I certainly do. An activity that has such a lasting impact must be worth a great deal. While reading aloud, the teacher models reading behavior. Reading aloud also “whets the appetite for good stories. It exposes children to literature they would not be able to read themselves. It shows them what real readers do. It gives students a goal for learning to read” (Cambourne 1995, p. 43).

Reading Aloud and Writing connections

Reading and writing skills are taught in many schools. However, evaluating reading can be hard to do because the criterion has to follow directly the language arts values important to the educational institution. Cambourne (1995, p 38) developed the following questions to guide a teachers reading evaluation:

- Do the children enjoy reading?

- Do they choose appropriate books?
- Do they use multiple strategies for figuring out new words?
- Do they proofread work?
- Do they choose to read at home?

To teach writing is also to teach reading they are both connected and intertwined. They work best when they go together. According to Tompkins (2005, p 142) teachers can demonstrate the purposes of written language and provide opportunities for students to experiment with reading and writing by:

- Posting signs in the classroom
- Making a list of classroom rules
- Using literacy materials in dramatic play centers
- Writing notes to students in the class
- Exchanging messages with classmates
- Reading and writing stories
- Making posters about favorite books
- Labeling classroom items
- Drawing and writing in journals
- Writing morning messages
- Recording questions and information on charts
- Writing notes to parents
- Reading and writing letters to pen pals
- Reading and writing charts and maps

The roles literature can play in the classroom

According to Kathy Short, (1997) author of the book *Literature as a way of Knowing*, she divided literature into three ways to: learn language; explore content area; and know the world.

Literature as a way to learn language: As students read, they naturally learn about written language. “As we invite students to read and enjoy a range of children’s authors, they naturally discover different writing styles and begin to develop their own writing strategies” (Short, 1997, p 20).

Literature as a way to explore content: This can be done when the teacher organizes literature experiences around themes and topics in the curriculum (science, mathematics, social studies, and the arts), (Short, 1997, p 22).

Literature as a way to know the world: “Literature in itself is a content area and a way to know the world” (Short, 1997, p 25). Literature enables students to live inside the world of the story in ways that transform their thinking about their lives and their world. Although we read for enjoyment, we also read because it helps us find answers to the questions that matter to us in our lives. These three ways offer different potentials for influencing children’s lives and for encouraging children to make connections as they read.

Don Holdaway (1979) stated that, “good literature contains well crafted elements which create a coherent picture and which support logical inferences. Good stories provide reading teachers with the right materials to teach reading comprehension” (p 12). Cambourne (1988) stated that students absorb the language of literature, broaden their horizons, and learn about the world and its people through literature (p 4). Language is one of the primary instruments we use to interpret and organize our experiences; it helps us understand our world and our place in it. Children learn from the language they hear; it makes sense that the richer the

language and the environment, the richer the language learning will be (Cambourne, 1988, p 24). Since the process of language learning continues throughout several school years, those years need to be filled with exciting words found in diverse types of literature.

Literature in a literacy program does more than merely attract interested to readers. According to Graves (1990) literature educates the imagination, provides language models, and molds the intellect. “The heritage of humankind lies in books; we endow students with the key to their legacy when we teach them how to read” (p 43). She adds that teachers have a greater responsibility towards students of all ages, because it is in their hands to help them discover the joy of reading as well as learn how reading can change their lives and help them expand their point of views.

The teacher who reads aloud is doing what Jim Trelease, author of *The Read-Aloud Handbook* (1995) calls advertising. The oral reader is saying, “Listen to this! There’s great stuff in these books, and you can have it just by reading!” (p 65). Reading to children achieved what Trelease (1995) calls six laudable goals (p 78):

1. The children see their teacher as an active participant in reading many books from the library.
2. The books themselves appear ageless.
3. A great deal of sharing takes place among students’ as they perceive themselves to be experts on authors, themes, types of poetry, and folktale.
4. The entire library becomes a potential reading source; children select materials according to their own interests and at their on reading levels.
5. Students and teachers develop a respect for a writer or illustrator.
6. Teachers and students begin to see connections among different writers and recognize the universality of their themes.

Reading instruction consists of a balance of reading experiences: reading **to** students, reading **with** students, and reading **by** students (Mooney, 1990).

Responding to Read Aloud

According to Trelease (1995) “student response to read aloud vary in much the same way that students’ responses vary to any other classroom activity.

Responses depend on a range of circumstances and interests” (p 56). However, there are typical response patterns during and after the read alouds that he notes (p 58-61):

- Sharing opinions about characters and motivations
- Noting language and mimicking, unique words, phrases or sounds
- Stating pleasure/displeasure with situations or endings
- Making non-verbal responses (body language, intake of breath)
- Comparing to other works of literature
- Commenting on physical characteristics of book (cover, illustrations, etc)
- Asking questions and making judgments as texts critics
- Offering alternative versions of the text

Responses to read aloud increase when the teacher chooses selections mindfully and reads in ways that engage students as listeners, thinkers and responders. It is my belief that read alouds lead the teacher and students to many other read alouds – and therefore, each day those read alouds will further connect the bonds that forms the literate community in a classroom.

Reading to Students

Reading aloud is a worthwhile use of instruction time and can provide the context for focus lessons in language arts as well as math, science, and social studies. This is “important as this provides a daily common learning experience where the whole class hears the same information” (p 33). Students hear challenging texts and are given opportunities to discuss, reflect upon, and enjoy the book.

Reading with Students

Students are supported by reading with the teacher as they continue to develop reading strategies, understanding various genres, and reading to learn. “Teachers help students make connections between what they already know and what they will be

reading” (p 38). Discussions before, during and after reading can further the students’ learning, use of reading strategies, and personal interest in topics of study.

According to Hindley (1996, 122) when we read, sometimes we:

- Recall favorite parts of the text
- See ahead in the text and make predictions about what will happen next
- Record parts where the reader’s response is strong
- Comment on how the writer writes
- Record information we learned in the text
- Think about how the world acts
- Express our opinion about what the writer is saying
- Think about other books and compare them with what we are reading
- Think about who else might like the book
- Comment on the format of the text
- Take notes on the characters

Reading by Students

According to Cambourne (1988), Graves (1990), Trelease (1995), and Wilhelm (2001), and all school libraries and teachers is to develop good readers who:

- Read for meaning
- Read to gain information
- Monitor their own reading behaviors
- Use strategies to solve reading problems and understand a text
- Approach different genre with appropriate strategies
- Use background knowledge to predict and confirm the text’s meaning
- Set goals for their reading
- Evaluate what they have read

- Enjoy and appreciate literature

How can we make students willing readers?

Literature in a reading program does more than merely attract willing readers. Literature educates the imagination, provides language models, and molds the intellect. Cambourne (1995) said “the heritage of humankind lies in books; we endow students with the key to their legacy when we teach them to read” (p 46).

What strategies can I use?

Shared Reading – is an approach for beginning reading that builds on the model of the bedtime story, in which an adult shares a book with a child by reading it aloud and pointing to the words (Cambourne, 1995, p 48). However, when the bedtime story situation is transferred to the classroom, an adjustment must be made. In the shared reading experience the students gather around a big book. The teacher leads them through the book, encouraging them to make predictions about the story based on what they see in the illustrations and asking lots of questions, such as: What do you think is happening? What might happen next? Then the teacher reads the story aloud and points to the words. Next, the group reads the story through several times in unison. “When students read aloud as a group, success is guaranteed for everyone, with no child humiliated by lack of ability” (Cambourne, 1995, p 48).

Helping Students use Reading Strategies (before, during, and after)

Strategies are in-the-head plans that help students read fluently, accurately, and independently. Students need strategies for planning, problem solving, detecting and correcting errors, and creating understanding. The following is a list of some of the most common strategies used by good readers (McCormick 1991) and Fountas and Pinnell (2001):

READING STRATEGIES		
Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading
Set a purpose	Cross-Check	Retell and summarize
Review the text	Reread	Use graphic organizers
Activate Background knowledge	Predict and Confirm	Draw conclusions
Predict	Connect background knowledge to information in text	Reread
	Think aloud explicit and implied information	Discuss and respond
		Write to support understanding

Before Reading

According to Fountas and Pinnell (2001), good readers think about the text before they read by:

- **Set a Purpose for Reading**

Good readers know why they are reading a text. They may want to find out what happens in the story or learn specific information about a topic. They ask themselves questions that they think will be answered by the text.

- **Preview the Text**

Good readers consider the organization of the text. They think about the title, look at the pictures, identify techniques authors may use, point to important vocabulary, scan the features of the text, ask questions, and think about the information to be read.

- **Activate Background Knowledge**

Good readers think about what they already know about the text by using a K-W-L chart, record keeping logs, or discussion within the group.

- **Predict**

Good readers anticipate what will happen in the story. Predictions are based on prior experiences and background knowledge.

During Reading

Good readers monitor their reading by checking their own personal understanding of the text, recognizing when problem develop, and deliberately choosing alternative strategies to help themselves solve problems.

- **Cross Check**

Good readers check on phonics, language structure and meaning.

- **Reread**

When problems occur, good readers often return to the beginning of a line or text and read it again.

- **Predict and Confirm**

Good readers know that predicting and confirming helps them read more effectively. They ask questions and confirm their first thoughts

- **Connect Background Knowledge to Information on Text**

Using prior knowledge and relating it to the text is an essential ingredient in comprehension. It helps students understand the text more thoroughly.

- **Think about Explicit and Implied Information**

Readers think about the content of their reading. They note interesting facts and ask themselves how the information is similar to the knowledge they already have.

After Reading

- **Retell and Summarize**

Readers paraphrase the text, recalling characters and plot, sequencing events, incorporating text vocabulary, and organizing information.

- **Use Graphic Organizers**

Good readers synthesize information from the text. They may organize their thoughts in a visual reference in order to aid comprehension.

- **Draw Conclusions**

Students reconsider predictions made before and during reading, look back or reflect upon what was read, and make generalizations about the story. They may also consider relationships between what they already knew and questions they had.

- **Reread**

Good readers often reread the text as an aid to understanding.

- **Discuss and Respond**

Students discuss what has been read. They may do some of the following: question, clarify understanding, justify their thinking, retell, decide on important information, summarize, draw conclusions, answer questions, or make connections.

- **Write to Support Understanding**

Good readers use graphic organizers, reading logs, journals, or other sources to state their understanding of the text read.

Additionally to the above, Fountas and Pinnell (2001) provide examples of questions for each stage of reading (p 450 -55).

Questions I ask myself before Reading

- What is the purpose for reading this material?
- What do I already know about his topic?
- What do I want to know?
- What special vocabulary might I expect to see?
- Can the pictures helping understand the text?
- What will I do if I have a problem

Questions I ask myself during Reading

- Does it make sense? How do I know it makes sense?
- Does the word sound right or look right?
- How does what I am reading relate to what I know?
- Why am I reading this text?
- What questions do I have?
- What is the important information?
- Should I stop and think about what I read before I go on?
- What do I think about what I am reading?

Questions I ask myself after Reading

- Did what I read make sense?
- What do I remember?
- What did I learn?
- Can I discuss it with someone?
- What is the important information? How do I know?
- Do I need more information?

Extending multicultural understanding through children's books

According to Cambourne (1995, p 60-61) literature can develop and extend at least three major understandings important to living in a multicultural society. First, literature can show how we are connected to one another through our emotions, our needs, our desires, in other words experiences common to all. Second, books can help us understand, appreciate, and celebrate the differences among us. Third, literature can be used to develop an understanding of the effects of social issues and forces on the lives of ordinary individuals.

Children's literature is also one of the ways we transmit our values to young people. It lets them know what adults consider appropriate ways of behaving,

believing, and valuing, as well as who and what we consider important. “Children who find their own life experiences mirrored in books receive an affirmation of themselves and their culture. Children who find that people like themselves are excluded or denigrated receive another message altogether” (Cambourne, 1995, p 61). They learn that they are not valued members of society and that reading can be a negative or hurtful experience.

In my opinion, reading is an active experience. Each time we read we are changed by the experiences; we see the world in a new way. “It is this capacity to change us, to change our perspective on the world that makes literature a vehicle of understanding cultures and experiences different from our own. Teachers, who incorporate literature from various cultures in the classroom can contribute to making tomorrow’s world more humane and considerate” (Cambourne, 1995, p 61).

V. Methodology

A part of this case study was the creation of a mini-library with funds and donations gathered from June 2005 to February 2006. A 350-volume mini-library was finally established on February 2006. This mini-library has a rug in the center, thirty small pillows, two tables, and big different colored paper posters explaining the different literary genres (folktale, fiction, non-fiction, biography, references, dictionaries, and poetry). Additionally, charts were designed that explained what a title is, what a setting is, what a character is, what a theme is, and what an ending is. Above a shelf that contains big books was a sign that said “Vamos todos a leer!” which means (Lets all go to read!). The door to the library had a welcoming sign that reads “Descubre el Mundo A travez de la lectura,” which means (Discover the world through literature). I worked hard during nine months to make the mini-library a welcoming learning and reading space.

Besides creating the mini library, I also wanted to establish a reading framework guided by Fountas and Pinnell’s source of enrichment for the students, teachers and the community. This framework focuses on (2001, p 13):

1. Language: reading and language are language based. Using language orally (that is discussing, sharing opinions, questioning, criticizing, describing, and performing,) is the precursor to sharing thinking in writing.
2. Literacy: there is a powerful and complementary relationship between reading and writing. “When students are learning how to think about texts as readers, they are also learning how to notice and use the craft of writing’ (p 13).

3. Literature: whatever type of literature used (nonfiction, fiction, or poetry) students are learning to read through this invaluable resource. They also receive the guidance from their teachers as they learn to read and discuss literature orally and in writing.
4. Content: students read and write about topics related to science, social studies, health, math, etc. By connecting it to the curriculum, students expand their vocabulary, communicate their knowledge and learn about the world.

By having this block framework, a teacher is able to conceptualize the language arts curriculum, think about students' literacy learning, plan and organize instruction, and provide a high level of productivity and engagement.

This is a case study of a designed literacy program in conjunction with a mini-library for a low-income rural school, outside Quito, Ecuador. This project included the participation of all students, teachers and parents in learning and discovering our world through the different genres of literature.

1. Case Study

This case study is a descriptive inquiry about a real-world situation in Ecuadorian's public schools. Its data was analyzed inductively with descriptions of the findings gathered by the researcher. The researcher was a researcher-participant who had direct contact with the population and who shared personal insights from visits to the school as well as shared the experiences children and teachers with literature. Valid and real-life reasons existed for the elaboration and creation of this project because it was designed for a population who I believed was thirsty and in need for literature.

2. Participants

Site - The school is located in a small town outside Quito. Its student population is made up of many low income, indigenous families where both parents work. It offers first through sixth grade (221 students, ranging from 24 to 52 in a classroom), and a director's office as well as a small teacher's lounge. The classrooms were made up of a combination of both male and female students.

The classroom environment is not print-rich. Walls were mostly empty (no display of student's own written or art work); as well as materials accessible to students (pencils, markers, scissors, paper, etc) are locked in a closet.

The student body is made up of 221 students from low-income families. The classroom sizes are very big (first grade 38 students ages 7-8; second grade 24 students ages 8-9; third grade 52 students ages 9-10; fourth grade 38 students ages 10-11; fifth grade 38 students ages 11-12, and, sixth grade 31 students ages 12-13). All classrooms were formed by male and female children. I did not see any children who had any type of handicap. I worked with the third graders where 80% of the students were nine years old and the remaining 20% were either turning nine or ten in the coming months. There were 27 girls and 25 boys.

The staff is made up of eight teachers (among them the director) and a cook; the Ministry of Education pays six of those teachers. These teachers are known as the "fiscals," among them is the English teacher too. The other two teachers are paid by parents' donations and cooperation. The teachers were mostly women who lived around the area and who also had children attending the school. I did not inquire about their professional and educational background. All I know is that at the beginning they were all excited about my presence and what I could bring to the school.

3. Investigation site

The school is located in a small rural town outside the city of Quito. It is surrounded by middle class neighborhoods. It has a small plaza in the center of the town. Next to the school is a catholic church. Across are the police quarters, which is a very small office. Surrounding the plaza are small stores that sell different types of items, such as: bakery, hardware and shoe stores, etc., and a bus stop.

4. Role of the investigator

In this case study, the investigator played the role of an informal researcher and observer.

5. Procedures:

- 1) An interview to the director of the school, Mrs. Marisol Luna (see appendix A – Monday, June 20, 2005).
- 2) Presented proposal to director on the sole purpose of a Literacy Program (see appendix B).
- 3) Approved the implementation of the literacy program signed by the director of the school, Lcda. Marisol Luna (see appendix C).
- 4) Observed teacher/students relationship and interaction. The researcher took informal field notes. Each observation lasted approximately 20 minutes (see appendix D).
- 5) Designed a literacy program during the months of July and August (see appendix E).
- 6) Searched for funds to buy the books needed for the creation of the “Descubriendo el Mundo” library.
- 7) Teachers were trained twice on using, applying, and planning with the given literacy program (Appendix F).

- 8) The director was given an inventory list of the books, shelves, pillows and chairs donated for the library (see appendix G).
- 9) The researcher modeled two lessons for the teachers to evidence the reading and workshops.
- 10) From February to June the teachers ran the literacy program.
- 11) Interview to grandparents (see appendix H).

6. Data Collection Strategies

- Documented first interview with the director (see appendix A). This interview describes the school in detail (number of students, curriculum, uniform, extra-curricular activities, academic programs, description of building, parental involvement, meals, number of teachers, offer a library, and calendar).
- Presentation of the Literacy Program to the director (see appendix B). This describes the Literacy Program (objectives, research that supports its importance, teacher's role, and positive conditions for learning).
- Classroom observations (see appendix C). This document describes what I observed on my visit to the school. These observations were done for thirty minutes each. I made notes of the classroom, the students, and the teacher's behavior with her/his students.
- Designed literacy program (see appendix E). This document describes the key elements of the Literacy Framework designed by Fountas and Pinnell (2001). It focuses on reading, a short description of reading strategy and its attributes.
- Inventory list of books and library materials (see appendix G). This is a list of books bought in different bookstores. It also has a list of donated books.

VI. Findings

In addition to the Fountas and Pinnell's (2001) literacy framework, Cambourne (1988) also provides a framework for reading based on his research that "students spend up to 70 percent of the time allocated for reading instruction on worksheet type activities that require only a perfunctory level of reading" (p 151-153). Therefore, he proposes a change in the curriculum and expands upon the themes of the reading initiative.

1. An introduction to children's literature to encourage all students to read.
2. An emphasis on the interaction of listening, speaking, reading and writing.
3. A growth in language acquisition, vocabulary and knowledge growth.
4. Constant teacher – student motivation to read daily, write frequently, use language effectively, and visit the library repeatedly.
5. Teacher preparation is a must! Programs that train teachers with broad literacy background, an understanding of how to teach higher order thinking skills in meaningful contexts, knowledge of new insights into how children learn, knowledge of where to go for aid, and integrate language arts instruction.

This type of framework stresses the importance of teacher training during the summer for several weeks. I trained teachers at the Fray Jodoco Ricke School for two days. When I realized there was a need for more training and modeling, the administrator informed me that there was no time and need for that. She considered it

was important to give time to the teachers to read all the material given and wait for them to learn how to use literature in the classrooms so that the students would become engaged and fascinated by it.

Creating the Literate Library

Physical Setting

I was fortunate to have a small room that had been used as a storeroom, and turn it into the library for the school. I filled the room with hundreds of books I had acquired. Teaching in the atmosphere of a library was perfect because I longed to introduce children to good literature. I had created labels at the children's eye level. There was room for projects in progress, and artwork or writing on every wall. There was a rug with pillows and two tables that invited reading, writing, and creating. I had created posters with all the different branches of literature, parts of a book, and different reading strategies.

The Teacher

All the teachers at the school had been trained to use the program. Additionally, they had been given a binder that included: the theory behind the importance of reading, a list of the books available at the library, and a variety of comprehension strategies that they could use for their students.

The Students

The students directly participating in this case-study were eager and enthusiastic to participate. At the beginning, the students were shy and did not want to participate voluntarily. As time went by, they grew more confident in their own comprehension and understanding of the story, they were more comfortable in the library and with me, and they looked forward to my visits. This was reflected as they waited for me at the door cheering and talkative, ready to work and listen to a story.

How can we make students willing readers?

Literature in a reading program does more than merely attract readers. “Literature educated the imagination, provides language models, and molds the intellect” (Cullinan, 1987, p 6). I believe that our heritage is in books, we endow students with the key to their legacy when we teach them to read. The idea is to teach students to reach a high level of thinking and analysis skills on children’s literature. Reading aloud allows students and teachers to be successful in accomplishing the latter and for that the teacher needs to provide time.

Providing time to read

Students need a lot of practice to become skilled readers. I believe the old saying “practice makes perfect” applies to reading as much as it does to anything else we do. The more we practice reading, the better we will become at it. That is why reading in school is so important and it should be the key element in our daily routine plan and schedule. Eventually, students who read a lot become fluent readers. Enthusiasm for reading inevitably becomes contagious if the teacher is enthusiastic about the reading herself. Again, the teacher plays an important role in reading aloud.

Observations to a third grade teacher and her students

After proving the training and modeling the Implementation of the Fountas and Pinnell’s Literacy Program, I was ready to observe the seeds of my work.

1. February 28, 2005

When I returned two weeks later, I was confronted with a reality. “But,” said a teacher, “these are just stories. I have got a curriculum to cover. I do not have time for *stories!*” Far from suggesting the curriculum be abandoned, I say it is enriched and made meaningful because of stories. As Trelease says, “stories do not exist to teach reading skills; stories are the vehicle we use to make sense out of the world” (p

58). I believe it is a story that focuses our attention, helps us make sense out of the world around us. Therefore, I continued to motivate the teacher by modeling on how to use literature and the different sources the mini-library had.

Due to the variety of children's books offered for students, I hoped the teachers would expose their students to children's literature. Children of different ages have diverse interests in literature; and I believed the "Descubriendo un mundo a traves de la lectura" – mini library provided various age appropriate books. Furthermore, Trelease affirms that if "the experiences are interesting and memorable enough they will relish the opportunity to read more often and for life" (ibis, p 62).

2. March 8 and 9, 2005

I modeled for the teacher how to create questions that would entice children's understanding of what was read to them. At an important part of the story, I would stop and ask my audience – the students - "What do you think is going to happen next?" "What's the problem here?" "What do you think is wrong?" "What would you do in this situation?" These kinds of questions solicit children's opinions and nurtures memory and prediction skills; besides by involving children in the reading, one also enhances their understanding.

In my opinion, the Fray Hodoco Ricke School should have taken advantage of the opportunity given to them - a mini library – which increases the reading abilities of their students and not to mention their listening, speaking and attention skills.

2. March 16, 2005

Reading, writing, discussing, creating, thinking and sharing are activities that ought to take place in every classroom. These activities can substitute the tremendous amount of time devoted to worksheets and workbooks that characterizes so many classrooms today. From my weekly observations done at the Fray Jodoco Ricke

School, I found that the students were engaged in copying endless words, sentences and paragraphs from the blackboard onto their notebooks for class or homework, and facing daily difficulty when reading instructions for assignments. I often helped those students who struggled reading what was on the board and then transferring that same information to their notebooks. This task often took the entire period of class, stressing the teacher further on because of the lack of speed of her students and her constant need to meet her daily plans. Struggling readers and writers often found themselves caught in a cycle of failure. They had difficulty learning to read and write, so in many cases they ended up avoiding literature activities all together.

3. March 23, 2005

This day was a difficult day for the teacher. They had been rehearsing a dance in the patio. The students were tired, but at the same time hyper. They did not want to pay attention to what she was teaching. She wanted students to repeat the words written on the board and then copy them in their notebooks. I noticed that the students in the back were moving around too much causing her to reprimand constantly. She kept on saying to them that they were being disruptive. They opened a window, threw things at one another, fought with one another, and talked constantly. She frequently pinpointed students who were not able to do what she asked. I wondered what would happen if one of these disruptive students sat at the front of the class instead of in the back for one day? Later that same day I learned that the students who sat in the front were those students who were well behaved; and those students who sat in the back of the classroom, were students who were disruptive and failing the class. The teacher had even predicted that they might have some learning difficulty.

4. April 17, 2005

From my experience as a teacher who uses children's literature in the curriculum, I would have loved to see the teachers use many of the strategies I presented during their training. However, when I visited their school and worked with the students and the teachers, I was quite disappointed to find:

1. The students locked inside the classroom during class. The teacher explained that the students have a tendency to walk out of the classroom, go to the restroom or playground, and neglect her calls for returning back to their learning environment.
2. The teacher never read to her students or took them to the mini-library for a visit to dwell among the various titles of children's literature.
3. The children were never being read to, aloud, individually, in pairs, or in small groups. The mini-library was always closed to students. Sometimes, while I was working with a small group of students, other children from different grades who were wondering around asked if they could come in and borrow some books to read. I loved to watch them browse through the books until they found a title that caught their attention. They asked for a pillow and quietly sat while I worked. When they finished one book, they would ask if they could borrow another.

At the end of my session, I had mixed feelings: I was very happy to have their constant visits. I knew they were enticed with the literature available to them. They were obviously marveled by the variety of books. However, I also felt sad and disappointed because I knew the students would not have a chance to visit the library until the following week when I came back.

4. Readers' responding to literature was only done when I was visiting the school because students were hardly ever read to; little or no free writing took place.

When I asked them to write in response to the book read, few students were able to answer freely. The great majority of the students copied the answers from each other, word-by-word. This reflected a heart breaking reality that these children are not taught to think for themselves, but rather focus on copying and transferring materials (words) exactly as the teacher or a peer said has said them.

5. Students talking and sharing responses to literature in whole-group situations, pairs or small groups never occurred. I asked them questions during the reading to help them understand the text but it would always be the same two or three students who openly shared. The majority of them only gestured with their face agreement and smiled. When I asked them to tell me what they thought, they would keep quite. This silence seemed endless. I became very concerned about these children.
6. Students asking questions and raising issues from their reading also rarely occurred. Since reading aloud hardly ever happened in their classrooms, there was very little to share openly. Students were very shy. I am almost certain that when reading does in fact take place in their classroom, students are asked to answer teacher-directed questions to prove their retelling ability or just to complete a fill-in-the-blank sheet.

This I know because I browsed through the curriculum and textbooks in my first visit to the school. I was able to read what teachers taught in each subject. I can also vouch that teachers are not learning from their students, nor reflecting on their teaching, nor applying new methods and strategies to improve the learning process of their students. I can make this assumption because of my observations and modeling

classes; but primarily from gathering data that reflected no progress or development, let alone any interest.

The Dos and Don'ts of reading

Besides the findings and observations done, I took note of the importance found in Trelease's (1995) dos and don'ts of reading a teacher ought to do and not do (p 106-107):

THE DOS

- Begin reading to children as soon as possible. The younger one starts the better and easier it is.
- Use Mother Goose Rhymes and songs to stimulate language and listening.
- Read as often as you can.
- Set a time for a story on a daily basis.
- Remember: the art of listening is an acquired one. It must be taught and cultivated gradually.
- Start with picture books, and build to storybooks and novels.
- Vary the length and subject of readings.
- Before reading always announce the name of the book, the author and the illustrator.
- Discuss the illustration on the cover.
- Follow through with the reading.
- Occasionally, read above children's intellectual level and challenge their minds.

THE DONT'S

- Don't read a story that you don't like yourself.
- Don't continue reading a book once it is obvious that it was a poor choice.

- Don't feel you have to tie a book to class work.
- Don't read a book that students have read or seen on television.
- Give the time necessary to complete the read-aloud on that one session.
- Don't be unnerved by questions during the reading. There is no time limit for reading a book, but there is a time limit on a child's inquisitiveness.

All of these do's and don'ts are very important because they set the standard for reading in a classroom as well as the seeds for future readings. From the do's list, all the authors I have read (Cambourne, 1995, Hindley, 1996, Short, 1997, and Fountas and Pinnell, 2001), state the importance of reading and mention those do's constantly. In my experience as a teacher, I apply those do's emphatically. However, from the don'ts list, I was disappointed to realize that the students at the Fray Jodoco Ricke School were never going to get from their teachers the exposure to reading because of the lack of interest shown in the Implementation of the Fountas and Pinnell's Literacy program.

VII. Analysis

Library Description

The mini-library had 350 volumes of children's literature at different reading levels, various Ecuadorian and foreign writers, great illustrators, a few children's magazines from the El Comercio newspaper, dictionaries and biographies. When I bought those books, I asked colleagues who teach Spanish for suggestions on titles and authors, so that I would have texts that would entice students to pick up a book day after day. I assured myself, that the mini-library had texts that are accessible in terms of students' reading fluency and their interests.

Training Teachers

The teacher training took place on February 14, 2005. The director of the Fray Jodoco Ricke School requested all her eight teachers be present at the workshop. Additionally, a lunch was provided prior to each workshop. During the workshop I read to them *Pique, Pique, el Piquero de Colores* by Elsa Maria Crespo, *La Pobre Viejecita* by Rafael Pombo, *El Nido del Hornero* by Silvia Alvarez, and *Gracias* by Maria Fernanda Heredia. The workshop was designed as a Power Point presentation (see appendix E).

After the teacher training was done, teachers seemed interested and willing to use literature in their classrooms. As a conclusion of the workshop, I invited the teachers to visit the mini-library. I believed they were uncertain of what was behind the door. I heard comments of excitement as they read the sign on the door that said "Descubriendo un mundo a traves de la lectura." Once inside, they were in awe. I

watched them browse through the books eagerly and with great enthusiasm; they discussed certain titles; some even found books that had a connection to their curriculum. They were amazed to find such an ample collection of children's books (poetry, encyclopedias, folklore, science fiction, fiction, bibliography, and fantasy). I believe they did not expect this scenario.

I would like to restate Trelease (1995) laudable goals (p 78):

1. The children see their teacher as an active participant in reading many books from the library.
2. The books themselves appear ageless.
3. A great deal of sharing takes place among students' as they perceive themselves to be experts on authors, themes, types of poetry, and folktale.
4. The entire library becomes a potential reading source; children select materials according to their own interests and at their own reading levels.
5. Students and teachers develop a respect for a writer or illustrator.
6. Teachers and students begin to see connections among different writers and recognize the universality of their themes.

Unfortunately, the teachers at Fray Jodoco Ricke School hardly ever integrated literature into the curriculum and constantly kept the mini-library locked. Although the director had explained that books were considered precious. The school did not have any books, and the few they had the teachers did not want to risk the children damaging them. I wondered how a book could impart knowledge if it was looked up, but I kept that thought to myself. I continued to analyze the role reading has in children. Trelease mentions goals that appear when students are read to: having a positive reading model, experiencing the pleasure of reading, enriching vocabulary as well as grammar, and surrounding students with a safe world of fantasy (p 21). Apparently none of these goals mentioned were feasible.

Supportive Setting and Caring Communities: Creating the Literacy Environment

During the last class of the masters program ‘Research’ I knew I wanted to give my community something back from my teaching experience and what I had learned. I was convinced I wanted to provide children’s literature to a school that lacked it. I set myself to work looking for a school that did not have a library or books to integrate into the curriculum. I considered myself lucky at finding Fray Jodoco Ricke School, an ideal place for my project. I quickly set an appointment with the director and presented her the project. She enthusiastically accepted the ideas and was eager to have me work with her teachers. I planned an in-service training, and gave the teachers lunch and snacks during the professional development. I visited them frequently so they could observe me: teaching in their class, reading aloud to students, asking open-ended questions, making groups for reading, discussing with students, writing about what they had read, and working in the activities designed for that lesson. Additionally, I provided them with posters, charts, phrases, poems, and a vast variety of children’s literature to be used in their classrooms and improve the learning environment of their students.

My excitement for setting up a library can be traced directly to my childhood. My earliest and most vivid memories involve reading. On Sundays, my mother would spin a story from a newspaper or grab a children’s book to read it to me. This love of reading, learning, and exploring new worlds predominates, my memory of youth that I simply could not imagine a childhood without books.

According to Fountas and Pinnell (2001), students learn to enjoy children’s literacy when teachers create a literacy environment. If we want children to learn to read and to take delight in reading, we need to make their classroom environments rich in literacy (p 254). Children need to see a reason for reading and find personal meaning in stories. They need to be immersed in literature, surrounded by books, art,

and writing materials of all kinds for extending and interpreting books; and they need to be given time to listen to and read stories. Children need to feel comfortable when working and learning in their classrooms; as Hindley (1996) said, “they need to feel safe, respected, and free to be themselves” (p 27).

As mentioned in my first observations (see appendix B), during my first visit Wednesday, June 22, 2005, the classrooms lacked literature altogether; there were no posters or poems posted on the walls. Most of the materials (markers, notebooks, colored pencils, rulers, colored paper, and books) are locked in cabinets. Seeing this dry scenario, I was determined to help.

I spoke with colleagues who taught Spanish, and they kindly donated posters of poems, rhymes, phrases, a train alphabet, and a number chart to be placed on the walls and windows of the Fray Jodoco Ricke classroom. With these items in hand, I wanted to surround the students and the teacher with a positive learning environment enveloped by words, pictures, actions, and color. When I visited the teacher (September 19 and 20, 2005), I enthusiastically asked them if I could put them up on the classroom walls while the students were at recess. She eagerly helped and seemed motivated to share them with her students. When students entered they went directly to the posters and signs posted. They tried to read them. I was extremely happy to see that reading had already begun. This was the first step.

Unfortunately, on my next visit, the posters had been taken down. The walls were bare again. When I asked the teacher what happened to everything that had been put up just last week, the teacher found herself unable to respond. I decided not to pursue the matter any further because she refused to respond to my questions.

The community:

Additionally to the student's school, their community and surroundings also play an important role in a reading program. It is important for the whole community to be involved in reading. Children have to see their friends, older students, parents, other adults, and teachers being really enthusiastic about books and reading if they are to become readers. If children never see their families reading, as it happens at the Fray Jodoco Ricke School, then the school will have to serve as a model.

I learned, from the director of the school that, illiterate grandparents were educating many of the children and who could not help them. So the opportunity for these students to actually have a book, a newspaper or an adult read them a book was nearly inexistent. These grandparents were mostly grandmothers who were uneducated. Therefore, education was not considered important or seen as a need. As Graves explains in *Discover Your Own Literacy – The Reading/Writing Teacher's Companion* (1990), reading should never be limited to a morning or assigned period of time in a classroom or at home. "Reading should be natural, everyday, and an all-day occurrence. However, if surroundings don't provide an incentive or motivation to read, students will be minimally interested in reading" (Graves, 1990, p 47).

Through conversations with twelve grandparents, they said that they hardly ever encouraged the children to read. The children's responsibilities at home were: first, to get their homework done; second, to take care of the younger siblings; third, to help feed any farm animals (pigs, chickens, or goats); and fourth, they preferred that the children stay outside in order for them to get the house chores done quickly. They also said they found it difficult to help them with their homework because they themselves did not know how to read (see Appendix L).

Reading Aloud by the Teacher

I continued to go back to my experiences as a teacher. I know that over the years reading aloud to my students was a central part of our day. Throughout time, I have read many books written by teachers and educational researchers that provide positive results about reading aloud. Below is some of the evidence I have found.

After providing charts and conversations on the importance of creating an inviting environment for reading in the classrooms at Fray Jodoco Ricke School, I strongly encouraged the teacher to read aloud to her students. Graves (1990) believes reading aloud “is an activity that has such a lasting impact in adults’ memories of schooling. It exposes children to literature that, sometimes they would not read by themselves” (p 46). Reading aloud creates a community by surrounding students with books; it gives children something to talk about, a reference point for extending literature into the entire school day. I also believe that a primary objective of the reading aloud should be to engage all students in a reading experience that is rewarding. Therefore, it is up to the teacher to make it meaningful and enjoyable.

Modeling read-alouds is a key element of the reading program designed by Fountas and Pinnell in their book *Guiding Readers and Writers – Teaching Comprehension, Genre and Content Literacy* (2001). To make sure that students will enjoy a story read they have to be comfortable on the rug or at their desks with no distractions. Additionally, reading aloud has to be paced, with a good tone of voice and willingness to risk feeling silly by taking on the voices of characters in the story (Fountas and Pinell, p 213). Reading aloud requires being expressive and even using body language.

Reading aloud should be modeled every day, through poems, picture books or chapter books. The authors mentioned above, also suggest that when starting a new book a teacher can model by reading the first few pages or reading the first chapter to

entice her students into reading it. This technique allows struggling students to have a smooth transition into the story and is likely to enhance their understanding when they read to themselves. When I read aloud to the students I could see their enjoyment; they smiled, and their eyes and face expressed excitement and pleasure. There are many reasons for reading aloud to students. Joanne Hindley in her book *In the Company of Children* (1996) states that if reading aloud is not done often or never in a classroom, students will (p 167):

- Not be thinking and talking about real-world issues
- Not make connections between literature and their lives
- Not read challenging powerful stories that may be too challenging for them to read on their own yet
- Not explore other learning areas
- Not connect to content in a curriculum area

I believe that read-alouds help students discover reading as an enjoyable, meaningful activity and foster positive attitudes towards reading. As I browsed through the 350-volume mini-library at the Fray Jodoco Ricke School, I chose 14 books to read-aloud to students during my visits. I read these books before hand in order to elaborate questions, vocabulary and possible discussion questions to enhance the reading itself. They are the following:

Date	Title of the book	Author
February 1	Los Gorillas	
February 8	Torbellino	Maria Fernanda Heredia
February 13	Pique, Pique – El piquero de colores	Elsa Maria Crespo
February 15	Gracias	Maria Fernanda Heredia
February 22	Historias de Dorado y Sebastián	Hernán Rodríguez Castelo
March 1	El Nido del Hornero	Silvia Álvarez
March 8	¿Cómo debo hacer para no Olvidarte	Maria Fernanda Heredia
March 15	¿Hay Alguien Aquí?	Maria Fernanda Heredia
March 22	La Pobre Viejecita	Rafael Pombo
April 17	El Cangrejo Curioso	Olivia Casares
April 18	Dos Historias Rimadas	Silvia Álvarez
April 19	La Casita de Chocolate	Jacob y Wilhelm Grima

April	26	El Patito Feo	Jacob y Wilhelm Grima
May	3	El Contagio	Maria Fernanda Heredia

Read Aloud Throughout the Curriculum

Trealease in his book *The Read-Aloud Handbook* (1995) said, “of all the qualities a teacher might possess, the most contagious is enthusiasm”. Teachers have to be enthusiastic about reading in order to communicate this interest to their students (p 54). There are various books that can be read during class time that have a connection to either science, social studies, math or language arts. This author created an anthology of fifty read-aloud selections for children of all ages (p 229-345). In making his selection of the books the author went after the following criteria:

1. Must have read the book.
2. The book must have a proven track record by teachers, parents and librarians.
3. The book must be interesting enough to inspire children to want to read it again.

I knew that many of the books suggested by the author were not in Spanish and they would be of no help to the teachers at Fray Jodoco Ricke School. So, I turned to a great colleague of mine named Aura Añasco. She has been a Spanish teacher for more than twenty years. When I approached her with guidance for recommendations of books, she was eager enthusiastic and pleased to be of help. I now knew I would be able to purchase the correct books for the teachers and ease the process of integration of literature into the curriculum. After the workshops were given to the teachers and their observations on my modeling were done, I hoped they would be able to see the students’ interest and their need for stories.

To conclude this section about reading aloud, I restate that reading aloud to children every day establishes one of the essential conditions for a literate classroom. Graves (1990) confirms that, “when reading aloud children meet different authors, get

to know characters, and learn from plots through the medium of shared books. They acquire a common experience of literate events, which can be used in conversation or in writing. The ultimate goal is to become a literate community” (p 46).

VIII. Personal Views

My Opinions on reading aloud in contrast with the view at the Fray Jodoco Ricke School

In my seventeen years of teaching I have developed certain beliefs about how children learn, which guide my daily planning, and my responses to individual children as well as group situations. These beliefs are the foundations of my teaching and they are a combination of many theories implemented into my teaching routines. I hoped to emanate these same beliefs to the teachers at Fray Jodoco Ricke School, in order to improve the learning experiences of the children enrolled at the school, as well as increase a level of enthusiasm and motivation for teaching for the teachers. I considered these beliefs directly connected to how young children learn. Therefore, it is necessary that I mention them at this moment in order to allow my perspective to come into play with my experience observing, teaching, and collecting information. They are the following:

1. Children learn naturally
2. All children can learn
3. Children learn best when learning is kept whole, meaningful, interesting and functional
4. Children learn best when they make their own choices

1. My Opinion on: How Children Learn Naturally:

It is human nature to learn by observing people that surround us. Parents, siblings, relatives, teachers, etc, engage children into meaningful and authentic conversations. Holdaway in his book *The Foundations of Literacy* (1979, p 59) refers to these people as “significant others” because they play an enormous role in the life of a child. Furthermore, Cambourne in his book *The Whole Story – Natural Learning and the Acquisition of Literacy in the Classroom* (1988, p 45-80) examined the conditions under which children learn to talk and which enable some children to learn to read before schooling takes place. I *immersed* the room in print; *demonstrated* reading and writing that *engages* the children in literacy activities. I have high *expectation* that children will take the *responsibility* to become readers and writers. I value their *approximations* (acquisition of the oral form of language, p 66), giving children and practice language; and so to share and *perform* what they can do.

My View at Fray Jodoco Ricke School of how Children Learn Naturally

Throughout the conversations I had with the director and teachers of the school, I learned that the great majority of the children were brought-up by a relative (mostly grandparents) because their parents had left the country to become working immigrants in Spain. The parents send money and these relatives do what they can with the resources they have. Therefore, children are left alone at home to watch over younger siblings, to watch endless hours of television, and to take care of any farm animal the family may have (chickens, pigs, or sheep). Additionally, grandparents who are illiterate are educating many of these children. So the possibility of having any kind of print in their homes is practically inexistent (*immersion*).

When I visited the school, I realized that the classroom lacked print altogether. There were no books to read, no posters with interesting phrases or educational value, or any posters that implied what children were learning. So *immersion*, *demonstrate*

and *engagement* in writing and reading as literacy activities did not take place. How can we have high *expectations* that the children will take the *responsibility* to become readers and writers if there are no books in the classroom or at the school? Although, I was informed that the students do have a textbook that contains information and short stories from all the subjects they have, they are not allowed to use it unless the teacher indicates. Additionally, without the opportunity to *approximate*, giving children opportunities to *use* and practice language and so to share and *perform* what they can then practically learning becomes a terrible task. This is due to the fact that students are not allowed to participate often in class. The teachers often raised their voices if they were interrupted during while giving instructions. The students wanted to ask several questions as she gave the class, but they knew that if they did, they would probably receive a public reprimand affecting their self-esteem.

2. My opinion on: how all children can learn

One of my primary goals is for the children in my class to know that I believe they can learn. I want them to have the same high expectations for their own learning as I have for them. I want them to trust themselves as learners just as I do. Therefore, I treat them all as great readers, regardless of their reading level.

I also believe that children learn in their own unique way, and I plan opportunities for them to develop and follow their own learning style. I am continually evaluating my curriculum, methods, and making adjustments to fit the needs, interests, and styles of each student. When children are struggling to learn, I look closely at what they can do to improve and what can I do to help them become better readers.

My View at Fray Jodoco Ricke School of how All Children can Learn

Throughout my visits to the school, I noticed children happily engaged in their games during recess. A bell would sound letting students know that recess was over and it was time to go back to class. They would line-up in front of their classroom door and wait for the teacher to arrive. On many occasions, students waited for more than ten minutes for their teacher while they engaged in conversation and play.

Once inside the classroom, the teacher would instruct them which notebook to take out. Then, she wrote on the board “palabras con la, le, li, lo, lu” (words with la, le, li, lo, lu syllables). Students were to copy them and come up with ten words for each syllable. She rushed her students to copy it quickly because she said they were running behind on what she had planned. She hastily moved to the back of the class and expressed herself harshly to several students who hadn’t finished. She grew impatient and would copy the instruction for the students as she compared them with other students in the class using a loud tone of voice. She was not discrete about it. This negative behavior often reflected her lack of confidence and mistrust of the learning abilities of several students who had some sort of difficulty. On some occasions, she would give the instruction from her desk and not move.

On other times I visited, I found the students coloring a sheet of paper they had been given. Some students choose not to color and started bothering those who were coloring. The teacher did not seem to care about this particular group of disruptive students. Rather, she focused on those who were doing the work. When I asked her why she was not talking to them, she quickly sighed and said, “Ay Seniorita, esos niños no hacen nada. Mas bien solamente interrumpen la clase. No les haga caso y va a ver como cambian” (oh miss, those children don’t do anything. They only interrupt the class. Don’t pay any attention and you will see how they will change).

Additionally, she did not modify her teaching style in order to draw in the attention of all her students, not only the good ones but also those who had some sort of learning difficulty or were just distracted. She neglected to provide some sort of aid to those students who needed her most.

3. My opinion on: Children learn best when learning is kept whole, meaningful, interesting and functional

When learning is whole, meaningful, interesting and functional students are able to learn and retain what they learn with ease. When teachers teach this way, learning becomes palpable to students' daily experiences and lives in this world. Holdaway (1999) calls this type of teaching "generative" or "developmental curriculum" because it allows for growth and understanding of daily experiences. He further explains that "when materials, activities, and discussions develop from the interests of the children, curriculum remains: *whole*, not broken into bits and pieces; *meaningful*, not irrelevant; *functional*, not artificial and contrived; and, *engaging*, not boring" (p 57).

During shared reading I read to my students a story, always focusing on meaning, but as the need or interest arises, we discuss parts of the text within the whole story. For example, I read a book called *The Yellow Star* by Jennifer Roy, and their interest on the descriptive language used by the author, on the escape of the Jews from the concentration camp was so intense that their ideas showered our learning experience. Reading is a marvel as students learn through it when it is kept whole, meaningful, interesting and functional elements that make our daily lives so very interesting.

My View at Fray Jodoco Ricke School on: Children learn best when learning is kept whole, meaningful, interesting and functional

The learning that took place at this school was *tense, broken into pieces, not relevant, artificial* and *boring*. This was the view I gathered as the teacher was giving her instruction, while many of the students seemed distracted. They played with their pencils, drew on paper, looked at passer-bys through the window, talked with one another, played with toys, and even dozed off. The teacher never walked around the class in order to gather her students to focus on the instruction, she stayed at the front and constantly used put-downs of those distracted students.

The activities that the students did were done under *tension and stress*. The teacher used a very loud tone of voice and constantly threatened students who were distracted. These students were not moved to another place or spoken to with respect and/or asked to be attentive.

An example of poor teaching was when teaching was *broken into pieces* was copying endless word lists from the blackboard without putting them into a real context. The students were copying a list of new vocabulary words that did not have a connection to what she had just taught. She then went onto Ecuadorian geography without a map or graph to make it realistic and vivid to the students making her teaching irrelevant.

Artificial teaching took place when students were asked to complete endless worksheets without asking questions or interrupting the class. Last, her teaching style was *boring* because she taught from her desk; she did not move, did not ask questions, and was not interactive.

Last, it is easy to understand why some students would doze off in the class. Many children attended school without having enough breakfast (if any) or slept few hours because of the work they did after school. If they had some breakfast, it was

certainly not enough to help them stay focused during class. Unfortunately lack of sleep and food definitely block learning.

4. My opinion on: Children learn best when they make their own choices

I want students to know that they are the primary directors of their own learning. I want them to gain confidence that they can make appropriate choices and to take responsibility for those choices. Why is it so important for students to make choices? I believe that when encouraged to choose activities that are whole, meaningful, and functional to their lives, students naturally engage in activities that meet their intellectual, social, emotional, and physical needs. As Holdaway (1979) states, “there is no better system to control the complexities and intricacies of each person’s learning than that person’s own system operating with genuine motivation and self-determination within reach of humane and informed help” (p170).

My view at Fray Jodoco Ricke School on: Children learn best when they make their own choices

I believe that the students at the school did not and probably will not have choices to make about their education. The students depend on what their teachers, community, directors, and higher order authorities say and enforce on their education. I can make an assumption that many public schools in Ecuador face the same situation as the one in Fray Jodoco Ricke School.

On many occasions, I asked the teacher to explain why she would not integrate reading into the curriculum. Her response was that she felt pressured to finish a set and organized curriculum given at the beginning of the year by the Municipality of the National Ministry of Education. Additionally, she added the lack of time to read-aloud or take students to the library. I was truly disappointed to hear this. I had hoped these students would experience literature in the same way my

students do. I started to wonder if my expectations were just too high. Would the children be as excited as I would with the books? Who was I to be showing up in this remote town with a bunch of books? There were many reasons to be enthusiastic. Still, I wondered whether anything could make the reality as wonderful as the scene that had played in my imagination over the last months.

When I asked students, “what did you do during reading time today?” Their response was silent at first. After several of my visits, they told me that their teacher never took them to the library or read-aloud to them. When the teacher was confronted with this issue, her response was that, “when students finish their daily activities, and if there is time we will go to the library.” After listening to this response, I realized that the teacher was not truly interested in reading to her students or allowing them to read freely from the many children’s literature available to them. I also realized that she was not motivated or desired to put aside her curriculum and allow her students to dwell in literature.

IX. Discussion

The Reading Workshop

The Origin of Reading Workshop

According to Fountas and Pinnell (2001) in their book *Guided Reading and Writing – Teaching Comprehension, Genre, and Content Literacy*, the origin of the reading workshop comes from Nancie Atwell (1987, 1998). “Atwell’s pioneering work offered an alternative to the tradition of ‘assigning’ reading. Her reading workshop invited students to become more actively involved in their own learning and, in the process, to learn more about how to read various kinds of texts” (p 40 -41). When applying this approach, teachers were able to dwell into students’ perspectives and offer systematic teaching when it was appropriate. Atwell wrote (p 41):

In establishing the structure of the reading workshop and organizing who would do what, when and where, I looked to writing workshop for parallels. Writers had time in class to write, choices of topics and genres, access to materials, opportunities for peers to respond to their writing, and instruction and demonstration from me in mini-lessons and conferences. I began to push the parallels across the curriculum, beginning with the right to choose one’s own books. (1998, 35-36).

This type of workshop included the approaches of independent reading, small-group reading and literature study. All three contexts provide active learning and help students become more competent readers. Additionally, these three approaches provide variety in the reading program and it also allows for more explicit teaching to help students develop a range of effective strategies.

Why call it a workshop?

Fountas and Pinnell (2001) call it ‘workshop’ “because it describes students actively working; learning to read by reading rather than simply hearing about reading” (p 41). In the reading workshop, students (p 41-42):

- Learn how to work together.
- Set goals and evaluate their own accomplishments.
- Engage in meaningful communication about what they read.
- Take responsibility for their own learning and support the learning of each other.
- Work at their own pace while expected to accomplish a series of tasks.
- Make choices and carry out assignments.

Holdaway in his book *The Foundations of Literacy* (1999) has investigated about the characteristics of children who learn to read because of their experiences at home and school. He states,

“Knowing learners as individuals, who come to the classroom with well-defined influences on their lives, is equally if not more important than paper and pencil screening devices designed to yield information about children’s knowledge of letters, sounds, and words. It should be noted that some of the risk factors refer to the child’s personal development. Others refer to the group or situation in which the child resides” (p 32).

According to Holdaway (1999), learning to read and write may be extremely challenging and difficult for: children with a history of preschool language impairment; children with limited language; children whose parents had difficulty learning to read; children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); children who lack motivation to learn to read; children from poor neighborhoods, and children who attend schools in which the classroom practices are deemed ineffective (p 33-34). Among these, Holdaway stresses on motivation as a crucial element for success in reading, “children need to be motivated to read and use literacy to develop

into fluent readers. Becoming competent readers and writers requires practice, and students who have difficulty with these activities often lack the motivation to invest in the practice required for reading and writing” (p 40).

Before getting the students engaged in the reading program on my weekly visits, I sought to motivate them by doing some of the following activities: made a body-movement activity (dance) before starting the class, read aloud on every one of my weekly visits, asked various types of questions before, during and after reading, encouraged participation, inspired students to read the books I had brought, provided small group instruction, placed students into small groups (4 students) to read a book, helped students identify areas of interest, provided independent reading time, discussed with students the reading, and last, shared what they have read with the whole class.

After I modeled the read aloud to students, I asked the teacher if she had any questions. She just giggled and hoped she would be able to do it. I believed students were ready to hear stories read by their teacher. I also provided the teacher with a questionnaire suggested by Fountas and Pinnell in their book *Guided Reading and Writing – Teaching Comprehension, Genre, and Content Literacy* (2002, p 119) to evaluate students’ interest in reading. I believed this would give me information about how the students worked in the reading activities planned by the teacher as she followed the program. The questions of the questionnaire are the following: (See answers on Appendix C).

- Do the students enjoy reading?
- Do they choose books with enthusiasm?
- Are they motivated to read independently, within a group or aloud?

- Do they choose to read at home?

As I analyzed the information gathered by the questionnaire, I realized that students were taken to the library only when I came. If I did not come, the teacher never took the students to the mini-library. Two weeks later (February 22, 2006), I noticed that the teacher continued to use the text required by the school administration. She only read this one text. When I asked her how the small group instruction was working, she said it was too difficult to manage. I however, continued to insist that “group work reinforces students’ reading and extends their thinking as they benefit from the thoughts and ideas of others; it is a time both to summarize and to extend children’s learning” (Fountas and Pinnell, p 124). The ultimate goal of the group work is for the students, as a community of readers, support one another’s work.

I continued to explain to her that whole-class instruction that involves reading is generally aimed at teaching subject matter rather than at teaching students how to read. When the objective is for all students to learn a particular content or become familiar with a particular story, whole-class instruction can be successful (p 124). However, I wanted to help her understand that accommodations should be made to ensure that the material was accessible to all students, regardless of their different abilities. This meant that she needed to pair struggling readers with more capable readers because this type of grouping would be beneficial in the long run to struggling readers as they felt the support from their peers. When the goal is to teach specific reading strategies, small-group instruction is necessary. There are many ways a teacher can vary how students share with the group. For example, Fountas and Pinnell suggest a teacher could invite the students to (p 124):

- ❖ Talk about their reactions to their reading.

- ❖ Read parts of a book.
- ❖ Write something before they come to the group.
- ❖ Share responses.

Sometimes it is important to encourage individuals to share with their group. This task seemed complicated and difficult to do since most students at the Fray Jodoco Ricke School are not encouraged to participate and openly give their opinions. However, when I was working with them, I was able to gather some information about how students worked in what I had planned for that lesson. At the beginning students were shy and would not share willingly their thoughts. Other times they would repeat what their peers already said to make sure they had the correct answer. Overall, I believed students enjoyed the stories they read but lacked the self-confidence to speak out and share their opinions and ideas (see appendix C).

Rationale for implementing Literature in Reading Program

Literature is without a doubt a key element in the language and reading literacy program. On one of my visits in May 2006, the teacher said, “But Ms. Ortiz, I’m so busy teaching that there is no time left for literature and daily read aloud as you suggested.” That statement, made by a competent, caring, but somewhat frustrated classroom teacher, is not unusual. Many teachers care about providing their students with quality experiences with literature. They also know the importance of literature and its applicability in their curriculum.

Guidelines for Developing Literature in a Reading Program

The author of *The Whole Story – Natural Learning and the Acquisition of Literacy in the Classroom* (1988) Brian Cambourne proposed seven strategies to develop an interest in literature as well as integrating it into the curriculum. These strategies are not intended to be one-time activities, perfect for a particular book and

never to be used again. Instead, they are to be used as predictable elements of the curriculum. This is possible because they invite a variety of applications.

The ultimate goal of the reading program then, is to construct meaning because what children know about words affects their ability to make meaning. When word knowledge is limited, as is the case of the students at Fray Jodoco Ricke School and also often the case of struggling readers; a lot of attention must be given to figuring out individual words than to develop comprehension ideas. In my experience I have seen how laborious this process can be when: students struggle with words. I have also seen struggling readers sometimes compensate for their deficiencies in word knowledge by relying heavily on context and picture cues. According to Cambourne in his book *The Whole Story – Natural Learning and the Acquisition of Literacy in the Classroom* (1988), seven guidelines offer students the potential for expression, creativity and independence. “These strategies are based on what is required in a literature based school in order for literature to work and bring together the language, interest and desire to read as a unified whole” (p 88- 95). These are the following guidelines:

1. Students need to have access to many books in their school. A plentiful and accessible literature resource is essential to a successful literacy program.
2. Time is set aside daily for independent reading in school. In order for students to view the self-selection and voluntarily read books, as an important part of their lives, they must not be assigned as homework or relegated to something to be done when work has been completed.
3. Reading aloud to children from various types of literature is part of the literacy program.

4. Book talks and sharing sessions involving the discussion of books by teachers and students, are part of reading activities.
5. There is a conscious effort to relate reading and writing instruction. Lessons during writing workshops features examples from literature: how authors develop a plot, use interesting language, and create good leads and closings. Discussions during reading help students learn to read like writers.
6. At times, there are several activities focusing on a single work of literature, a particular genre, or the work of a certain author or illustrator. Children need in-depth explorations into literature to extend their sense of story and to develop appreciation and understanding of literacy works.
7. Finally, students respond to literature in various ways. Responses may be written or oral. Students have opportunities to respond and share while they are reading as well as after they finish a book.

These guidelines presented by Cambourne exemplify the unifying role literature and literature related experiences can play in the language arts program. These strategies are long term, ongoing practices for the language arts curriculum, rather than specific activities for the use of a particular book or books. They are so great that they demonstrate the influence literary experiences can have on the development of the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. I believe that inside books you will find hidden the mysteries of the world. With books, you can learn, and you can make a better future for your families and for our country.

To concur, I believe the following elements provide an essential component to the development of literature in a reading program. Cambourne (1988) mentions three key elements that build on to his seven strategies: the Dialogue letters and the Story Structure Framework for Reading and Writing (p 96-101).

Dialogue Letters: are correspondence between a teacher and a student that come from a classroom where activities centered on literature are a natural part of each day's activities. These letters establish a dialogue about something of interest. Additionally, the teacher may focus on each individual's special interests and manner of expression. The letters support the students' ideas and opinions; the questions and comments make them think in new ways and leave them with additional options to consider. The teacher may refer also to other literature in the letters, comparing and contrasting various titles and authors. Plus, the teacher models strategies students might find valuable in their own reading, writing and thinking skills. Last, the dialogue letters about books students read independently may be easily adapted to any classroom. The letters stimulates students to read too (Cambourne 1988, p 96-97).

Story Structure Framework for Reading and Writing: this structure involves three phases: exposure to and discussion of stories within a particular genre; retelling and reconstructing stories within the genre; and writing activities focused on the genre (Cambourne, 1988, p 97-98).

- 1. Story Structure - Exploring the Genre:** the teacher presents book talks about books in the same genre and encourages students to select books for independent reading. Both reading aloud by the teacher and independent reading by the students are accompanied by group discussions and personalized conferences focused on the elements of story. Questions related to setting and characterization, initiating events, goals, major actions, conclusions, and the reader's personal reactions and responses are used to further story comprehension and appreciation.
- 2. Story Structure – Oral Response:** this phase overlaps the first. It involves engaging students in various follow up activities to the reading. Teachers

make the choices to involve students in an extended discussion based on major events of the story or create dramas. This phase should involve students in reflecting on and recreating the story in some way or in projecting alternative outcomes to those in the text (Cambourne, 1988, p 99-100).

- 3. Story Structure – Comprehending to Composing:** the final phase of the plan involves a series of writing activities, moving from whole group shared writing to independent writing. Making this knowledge explicit is a good way to launch students into the writing phase. In order to do this, the teacher elicits from the students what they have learned, and they discuss what makes this type of story different or special from others (Cambourne, 1988, p 100-101).

As the year progresses, students strengthen their knowledge of story structures and adds to their repertoire the types of stories they feel confident reading and writing. In my experience as a teacher, these strategies and guidelines recommended are a useful vehicle for systematically introducing literature into the language arts program and as a basis for developing listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

My experience reading a story at the Fray Jodoco Ricke School

In my first visits, I realized students had a hard time talking and discussing a story I had read. I knew they did not know me and were afraid at what I might say or do. As they grew familiar with my presence, they slowly started sharing their thoughts about a book. I would follow what Fountas and Pinnell (2001) suggests: book talks, read the story, provide guiding questions, and discuss the story as a group (p 120). I gathered students together on the rug and began with the book talk. The students seemed attentive, yet they hardly said a word or wanted to participate. The majority of them stared at me with wondering eyes, choosing to stay quiet. When

students participated, I wrote on chart paper their opinions, feelings, and interests in the story.

The following activities helpful to engage students in teacher/learner are suggested by Cambourne (1988). He calls them teacher/learner interactions (116-121):

- Introduced story or book talk
- Discussed orally on possible topic of the book
- Students brainstormed possibilities
- Students listened to the story read
- Several stops were made to ensure understanding by asking questions
- Students answered questions given by participant-observer
- Discussed orally likes and dislikes of the story
- Explained the follow-up activity and hand-out working sheet
- Students put the date and their name on the sheet
- Students listened to the explanations given by the participant-observer
- Students completed the questions given on the sheet of paper
- Students made a drawing of the story

As I reflected on the lesson, I realized that the experts, authors such as Fountas and Pinnell (2001), Trelease (1995), Goodman (1986), and Cambourne (1988) agree that in order for a read-aloud to be successful, it is important to mention the roles of both the teacher and the students. I hoped that I would be able to help children gain the lifelong gift of a better education. The following graph helps understand what the above authors want to convey.

COMPONENT	STUDENTS	TEACHER
Objective	Listen to and participate Offer comments, examples or pose questions Listen carefully for directions	Select objective of lesson Engage students in lesson State rules for group/individual work Guide reading

	Remember direction while reading	Provide effective reading strategies Show examples of previous work Be clear and explicit
Book Talk	Listen for books that might be interesting Learn how to give a book talk	Look at everyone Speak loudly so all can hear Talk about characters, the problem in the story Read a small part of the book to interest readers Get readers interested in the book
Reading	Select a book for reading Read silently Write responses on various aspects of the text as directed by the teacher Keep records of reading	Help students select a book Monitor reading Analyze students records Listen to them read aloud Listen to group share
Group Sharing and Evaluation	Share thinking within the group Learn to reflect Evaluate how reading is going Share group work	Invite students to share Vary sharing activities Reinforce objectives Guide individual evaluation Summarize ideas with students Guide group evaluation

How can a Teacher Enrich the Reading Program with Literature?

Enriching a literacy program with vast samples of literature was my objective. According to Cambourne (1988), the major aim of reading instruction program is to develop readers who not only can read but who do read and who will continue to read throughout life. To accomplish this goal, children must have ample opportunities to read different types of literature. “Certainly, skills are important, but skills alone will not get the job done. They must be taught in a context that encourages students to read and to love reading” (p 52). Fountas and Pinnell (2001) states that “teachers who supplement their curriculum with a variety of other printed matter, such as newspapers, magazines, and many books from the library, are providing a rich environment for developing readers” (p 45). Extensive reading leads to increased vocabularies, enlarged knowledge, broadened interests, and greater appreciation of writing techniques and styles, and improved speed of comprehension (p 55). Teachers should focus on every opportunity to encourage students to read. They must

also provide time to read and make books readily available if students are to become lifelong readers.

Effective Reading Strategies

In order for students to understand what they read, Fountas and Pinnell (2001) state that “reading strategies are in-the-head” processes that readers employ as they construct meaning from print” (p 128). The following is a list of strategies that they recommend (p 132).

<p>Word Solving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building a sight vocabulary - Using context to figure out new words - Using letter-sound relationship - Recognizing base words (prefixes and suffixes) - Recognizing plurals - Using knowledge to discover new words - Using syllables to understand new words <p>Using visual or Print features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognizing and using punctuation (commas, periods, parenthesis, etc) - Recognizing different kinds of print (italics, bold) <p>Processing Fluency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading with phrasing - Reading with intonation - Adjusting reading speed - Reading orally in an effective way - Knowing what to do when what you read does not sound right <p>Personal Responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writing a quality response to a book - Generating topics for writing 	<p>Comprehending Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attending important ideas in a text - Identifying a sequence of events - Selecting important events in a story - Summarizing text - Creating sensory images from words - Making and confirming predictions - Locating evidence to support thinking - Extending meaning of the text - Thinking beyond the text <p>Characteristics of Texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying organization of ideas in narrative, expository, and poetry texts - Identifying genre - Using glossary, index or graphic aids - Comparing texts in different ways - Making connections to personal experiences - Making connections to previous knowledge - Making connections between texts - Evaluating reading
--	---

I believe that if the teacher: introduces the strategy with clarity and gives examples; provides opportunity for student interaction; ask readers to apply this learning; reinforce and extend the learning by sharing students are able to make significant changes in their reading.

Bellow are the strategies chosen as well as the applications used at the Fray Jodoco Ricke School.

STRATEGY USED	OUTCOME OF STRATEGY
Word Solving: Build sight vocabulary	I choose ten words Words were written on chart paper Discussed meaning of word Gave examples of word
Process Fluency: Read with fluency Read orally in an effective way	Emphasis on punctuation Read aloud often with intonation Highlight passages that contain an interesting idea Making reading sound as characters are talking Use different tones of voice
Comprehension Strategies: Attend important ideas in a text Identify sequence of events Summarize Create sensory images Make and confirming predictions	Prompt students to make connections Make Predictions Gather important information Ask questions Think about what we read: before, during and after the reading Adjust lesson when understanding is lost Demonstrate ways of getting the meaning of text Reflect on reading
Characteristics of texts: Compare texts in different ways Make connections to personal experiences Make connections to previous knowledge	Make connections before, during and after reading Draw on personal experiences Show how to make connections between text and self Prompt students to make connections Give positive feedback Observe students' conversations
Personal Responses: Write a response to a book	Check understanding Make inferences
Book Talk: Talk about title and author Show cover and some illustrations Posing questions	Look at everyone Speak loudly so all can hear Talk about characters, the problem in the story Read a small part of the book to interest readers Get readers interested in book

While some of these strategies focus mainly on routines, students were also reading and learning the essential elements in their reading. Fountas and Pinnell (2001) state that with time, “readers learn to monitor their interests” (p 162). Reading a book is not simply a task to get through, reading means thinking about and believing in what you read.

An Initiative for the Reading Program

How do we motivate students to read? Brian Cambourne (1988) developed what he called the Basic Themes of an Initiative for reading in his book *The Whole Story – Natural Learning and the Acquisition of Literacy in the Classroom*. They are:

- Reading is attainable and pleasurable.
- The emphasis is on readers (students) for readers (books).
- Learning to read is a means toward the goal of becoming a lifelong reader.
- Teachers model and inspire as well as teach.
- Parents are teachers, also. When they read aloud, listen to children read, and encourage reading, they enhance the learning process.
- Literature should be the core of the language arts curriculum.
- Books are treasures that should be accessible to all.

My focus was to engage and initiate a reading program at the Fray Jodoco Ricke School, the administrator, the teachers, the students, and their community. However, this purpose was unsuccessful. I believe that throughout this whole process, the administrator and teachers were not committed to establishing a connection between: the students - children's literature - to their curriculum.

The last point "*books are treasures that should be accessible to all,*" sounds adequate but in the true sense of the word, it did not apply to Fray Jodoco Ricke School. The training for teachers done in February 2005, on teaching strategies was never applied to their lesson plans, teaching styles, and classroom management. The fact of not having the teachers needs in a classroom met, meaning: desks and chairs for every student, chalk or markers to write with, a roof above their heads, suitable and clean bathrooms, a library, and an open-free curriculum. In order for teachers and students to have a successful teaching and learning experience, they should have:

curriculum, staff, test, and resources for development and improvement for the whole community.

Developing a community of readers

How do we develop a community of readers? Children have to see their friends, older students, parents, other adults, and teachers being really enthusiastic about books and reading if they are to become readers. If children never see their families reading, as it happens in many of the families of the Fray Jodoco Ricke School, the school ought to serve as models. Therefore, the opportunity for those students to actually have a book, a newspaper or an adult read to them a book is nearly inexistent. As Graves explains in his book *Discover Your Own Literacy – The Reading/Writing Teacher’s Companion*, (1990) reading should never be limited to an assigned period of time or by a specific person. Reading should be natural, everyday, all-day occurrence. However, if surroundings don’t provide an incentive or motivation to read, students would be minimally interested in reading (p 47).

Rationale and Explanation

The prime purpose of reading is to motivate the child to read independently for pleasure. However after reaching the findings in my study, I wondered why students and teachers were not reading? The only logical answers were:

- ❖ The students and teachers don’t like reading
- ❖ The students and teachers don’t have time for reading
- ❖ The teachers had no interest in Implementing the Fountas and Pinnell’s (2001) Literacy Program reading to their curriculum
- ❖ The teachers and students always found the library closed.
- ❖ The teachers were pressured to focus only in the curriculum. In this possible answer I find it ironic that any teacher would find herself pressured to

complete certain units when they would waste endless hours in practicing a march or dance to celebrate a special school day. I witnessed how they rehearsed for two hours every day of the week, as the school was about to celebrate the work of several teachers in writing the school's hymn.

- ❖ The teachers needed more training in how to use reading in their classrooms; more workshops on how to implement reading as well as witness modeling so that they would learn more about how to read to such a large group of students.
- ❖ The teachers needed more book talks in order to learn about the different sources that were available to them in the mini-library.
- ❖ The students also could have needed more motivation to read and feel driven by the stories available to them.
- ❖ The students could have benefited from the support given by the teacher
- ❖ The students should read to themselves for a certain amount of time. Teachers should adapt this to their individual class. Ten or fifteen minutes are a good choice time for the classroom.
- ❖ Each student should select his own book, magazine or newspaper and read for the allotted time.
- ❖ The teacher must read also, setting an example.
- ❖ The students could have also benefited from the support given to them by parents or families.

Regardless of how much effort was put into the building and assembling of the mini-library, organizing and preparing the workshops, training teachers, modeling lessons, and gathering data, I reached the above mentioned rationale and explanation for the failure of my goal.

XI. Reflection

My main goal throughout this project was to encourage teachers to read to their students. From my experience with literature, I had hoped I would be able to motivate teachers to read children's literature and find ways to incorporate the books they enjoyed into an already crowded schedule. Trelease in his book *The Read Aloud Handbook* (1995) explained that, "wise teachers know that literature enriches a curriculum when it is integrated into every area. As teachers read to their students, they shared with them the magic contained in children's literature and entice them to want to read more" (p 78). This statement is truly powerful as it reflects my personal teaching as well as my love and admiration for children's literature and the authors. I believed I was too optimistic thinking that if I persuaded the teachers to implement reading into their daily routine they would immediately do it because I had motivated them to do so. However, the results proved differently.

Yet, the teaching circumstances are not unusual for many municipal and public schools in the country. A reality that faces viewers every beginning of the school year in both the coast and sierra regions: schools lack well structured buildings with the necessary supplies (desks and students' materials, electricity, a working sewer system, water, playground areas, and stable roofs) cannot invite learning to take into place. This is something we hear year after year on the news. The teachers at

Fray Jodoco Ricke School were given the opportunity and tools to improve the education of their students, but their experience as teachers took them back to their old ways of teaching: text-to-text student learning, no outside exposure to something different – just follow the rules given.

Now reflecting on the project I believe I was not ready to face the challenges this whole process took me through. I thought the teachers would enjoy reading to students, provide the time for reading, take students to the mini-library, follow the Fountas and Pinnell's (2001) guidelines for reading, and provide and surround their students with a new world through literature. I did not know I would have to work against their pressure to follow and complete the set curriculum. I thought they didn't want to read or take their students to the library. I believed they just found themselves under stressful circumstances that did not allow them to surround the students in supportive and caring literacy and learning environment. Yet I had hoped I would be able to change something in this school and leave a little grain called *'literature'* in their hearts and minds.

“Each time a person reads we are changed by the experiences the author gives us and we see the world in a new way” (Trelease, 1995 p 67). It is this capacity to change us, to change our perspective of the world that makes literature a vehicle for understanding cultures and experiences different from our own. I myself love to read. I delight in reading to my students every day, whether it is a chapter from a chapter book, a picture book or a poem. I see in them a true enjoyment of what I read. We discuss the book, provide opinions, give predictions and even laugh or cry as we end a book. Those feelings reflect enjoyment and a desire to continue reading more and more books. It is that same pleasure and enjoyment I wanted to communicate to the teacher and students of the Fray Jodoco Ricke School.

It is ironic, then, that in the Fray Jodoco Ricke classroom, reading is considered “frills” and are only included “if there is time.” When students come to school without reading experiences, it is then the teacher’s role to spend time reading aloud in the classroom. The reason why I care so much about the teaching of reading is that I too, have found like Hindley in her book *In the Company of Children* (1996) that “when we give the children of the world the words they need, we are giving them life, growth and refreshment” (Hindley, 1996, p 24). This phrase encompasses what reading means for me. I am thrilled when I read a great book, when I read several books by the same author, and/or when as I read I can feel, see, and dream about the situations lived by the characters found in great books.

I would have personally enjoyed if students told me about one of the about books they’ve read aloud together. I would have also liked if students told me the books they had been reading; maybe they were studying a particular topic, or maybe just reading poetry or picture book. Or if they said they had in class talked or browsed through the literature read to them or what they had read individually. I pointed out various types of books, to the students and teachers and reminded them of the importance of enjoying and understanding what they were reading. The teacher could have had a conversation about literature, as I modeled. Students might have made personal connections to the story, characters or plot.

Having easy access to books makes it easier to read them, especially if they are right in the school or classroom. If this takes place, then students have an easier access to reading during recess or if they have free time. I question what prevents that from happening in a classroom or a school? Generally speaking, I believe now it is not money or lack of equipment; it is ignorance on the part of educators who don’t read the research and aren’t prepared for new changes in their teaching. The whole

idea on the mini-library at the Fray Jodoco Ricke School was to enlarge children's contact with books, give them an opportunity to learn in different ways, and dream of the magic hidden within books.

Real reading happens all day, every day with administrators, teachers, parents and students are all involved in this delightful activity. However, I became aware of how much parent education and involvement needed to be encouraged. I wanted parents to visit our classroom or mini-library for a few minutes to understand how reading had changed the learning of the sons or daughters. Unfortunately, these visits never occurred due to various reasons.

When looking back at my experience at the Fray Jodoco School, I realized my expectations were too high. I hoped for the school, administrators, teachers, families and students to suddenly make the necessary changes in order to enrich their community with literature. I sincerely believed I was going to help them change the future of each young learner. This I had planned to do by providing them with a fantasy, an unknown world waiting for them to discover in literature.

C O N C L U S I O N

A literacy program provides students with great opportunities to read. It gives them a chance to have different experiences, to broaden their world knowledge and to enrich their learning in ways that builds their literate foundations for the future. The gains for teachers are also grand. With a literacy program they are not only growing professionally, but also as human beings who have the great responsibility of teaching our youth and planting strong roots for the enjoyment of reading. Therefore, the role that teachers play is understood to be motivating, providing and encouraging students to be lifetime readers.

I had hoped that with the necessary literature resources teachers would be able to provide rich knowledge and vast literary experiences to their students. Learning about reading does not only happen during the reading workshop or when I visited the classroom. Reading ought to take place every day, and at any time of the day.

The teachers of the Fray Jodoco Ricke School never approached and asked me any questions about reading to their students. I opened a door for communication as often as I could so that teachers would become more familiar as well as confident using the program and the mini-library. I believe that having a vast sample of children's literature available on a daily basis seemed too overwhelming for the

teachers. However, it's what we do with this new tool, however, that makes all the difference.

Learning and teaching are processes of action, reflection and inquiry. Teachers need to think and talk with each other to discover how they are teaching. I do believe this program of the Implementation of Fountas and Pinnell's Literacy program (2001), was imposed on teachers before teachers were given time to think through these ideas themselves. When I see myself as an inquirer who poses my own questions and explores possible answers to those questions, I can create lasting changes in my teaching. I believe it is time for teachers to take charge of their learning and make schools a true learning community.

Students need to use books and other reading materials for meaningful purposes, instead of filling in worksheets, copying words from the board, and answering questions from textbooks. Students should use literacy to solve real problems and to communicate with real audiences.

Recommendations and adaptations for classroom use:

- ❖ Encourage teachers to motivate students to explore literature.
- ❖ Guide teachers with strategies to ease learning and understanding.
- ❖ Promote the reading workshop.
- ❖ Provide teachers with a three-part reading model to develop students' reading comprehension: before, during and after reading.
- ❖ Support teachers through the use of conferences with their students so that they can reflect on and self/peer-monitor their reading.
- ❖ State the importance of the teacher's role in the literacy program.
- ❖ Guidelines for assessing and evaluating students' progress.

Limitations:

- ❖ Teachers' unwillingness to apply, use and conduct the literacy program.
- ❖ Reluctant readers, students who dislike and avoid reading.
- ❖ Lack of funds to assemble the small library.
- ❖ Unforeseen political disturbances.
- ❖ External factors that will affect the literacy program's success or failure.

X. References

Appendix A

Interview Protocol

Project: Designing a Literacy Program with a library for a school that doesn't have one.

Time of the Interview: 3:30 pm

Date: Monday, June 20, 2005

Place: Wheat Public School in Lumbisi, outside Cumbaya.

Interviewer: Paola Ortiz (R)

Interviewee: Lcda. Marisol Luna (D)

Position of interviewee: Director of the school

Brief Description of the Project: Provide maximum assistance and support to students in their literacy development. Its emphasis is on teaching reading through diverse genres of children's literature and teaching writing for different purposes.

The following interview was a source of information to understand and learn the conditions in which the school is. This source will be used in my analysis.

Questions: (R – Researcher)

R - *What is your full name and your responsibility to this school?*

D - My name is Marisol Luna. I am the director of the school and the 5th grade teacher.

R - *How many students do you have in the school?*

D - We have a total of 221 students. We have 28 first graders, 24 second graders, 52 third graders, 38 fourth graders, 38 fifth graders, and 31 sixth graders.

R - *Do you work with trimesters or bi-trimesters?*

D - We work by trimesters; monthly unit assessments; and trimester exams.

R - *What is the schedule of a school day and how long are your class periods?*

D - Classes are from 7:30 to 12: 30pm with a 30 minute recess from 9:45 to 10:15. Each class period is 45 minutes long.

R - *Do students wear a uniform?*

D - Students have a uniform: girls a burgundy skirt with yellow sweater, boys burgundy pants with yellow sweater, and a burgundy sports uniform.

R - *Do you offer art or music classes?*

D - Once a week they have art classes. We do not provide music to lack of resources.

R - *Do you have a special ed- teacher/ psychologist to help with student's needs?*

D - We do not have a psychologist or special education teacher available that would work specifically with students who are having learning difficulties.

R - *Do you have a library?*

D - We do not have a library. That would be our dream!

R - *Do you teach English?*

D - English is taught three times a week for each grade level for one period.

R - *How many teachers do you have on staff?*

D - There are a total of 8 full time teachers in the school. The Ministry of Education provides the school with 6 teachers called "fiscales". The government pays their salary. Parents pay two teachers. The English teacher is among the fiscals.

R - *Please describe the curriculum you use?*

D - The school uses the Santillana textbooks for all grades. Each grade level has language arts, science, math, and social studies. The social studies curriculum covers Ecuadorian history, geographic regions, people and the Galapagos Islands. The science curriculum covers plants, human body, environments and animals. The math curriculum covers (one, two and three digit) addition, subtraction, multiplication, division; geometry; shapes; place value; fractions; roman numbers; and measurement. The language arts curriculum covers nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, pronouns, sentence structure, conventions, and reading short stories in the text.

R - *Does the school provide any meals for students?*

D - The Ministry of Bienestar Social provides the school with some ingredients for certain meals. A breakfast is provided on a daily basis. It is made up from warm porridge and crackers. Lunch is provided when the institution has received the money and ingredients from the Ministry.

R - *How is parental involvement in your school?*

D - Parents are very supportive. All children come from low-income families. Sixty percent of the students come from one-parent home. Many students suffer from violence in the home.

Appendix B

Designing a Literacy Program with a library for a school that doesn't have one.

Goal: Provide maximum assistance and support to students in their literacy development.

Emphasis:

- ❖ Teaching reading through diverse genres of children's literature

Teaching Reading:

Acquiring the skills of reading (becoming literate and learning to effectively communicate) is fundamental to all academic pursuits. Reading should be the core of any educational program and applied across all subject areas.

Research on Literacy:

The research on literacy development shows that children learn to read effectively when they encounter a wide variety of print, are given personal help in learning to read, and are supported in their development of reading skills.

The Role of the Teacher:

Teachers are crucial to the educational development and happiness of students. Teachers have a most important role during the educational formative years. They know that students have a tireless curiosity and desire to find out; they know that students learn best when they are involved and active.

Conditions for learning to Read:

In order to maximize learning, conditions in the classroom must provide students with a place and an atmosphere where optimal reading development can take place. The following are a list of conditions that promote optimal reading and writing:

1. Immersion: the teacher immerses students in meaningful reading and writing experiences. A print-rich classroom is important for children.
2. Interaction: students see numerous daily examples of reading and writing as the teacher models and uses writing.
3. Expectations: teachers convey positive expectations to all students that they can read and write.

4. Participation: students take an active role in their own learning.
5. Approximation: teachers encourage and value effort to reading and writing skills.
6. Use: opportunity to use reading and writing as students learn to read and write.
7. Response: teachers respond to student's efforts in positive ways.

7. Timeline:

June	Meeting with the director. Observing teacher/student relationship and interaction with reading and writing; and experiences inside the classroom.
July/August	Designing the Literacy Program (explained in a brief overview of the program given to the director). It will meet the conditions necessary for its implementation, use and applicability to the curriculum of the school.
February	Meeting with the director, training teachers, and modeling a lesson. Teachers start applying the literacy program in their classrooms.
February/June	Teacher observations focusing on the application of the program. Collecting data from journals (teachers and students) and providing help when needed.
June	Observing, collecting data, and compiling analyzed data for final thesis-project.

Key Elements of a Literacy Program:

<i>Element</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Attributes</i>
Oral Language	Students talking to each other and with the teacher for a variety of purposes.	Listens/Responds Makes statements Asks questions Elaborates/Explains Enjoys word play
Reading Aloud	Reading to the whole class or small group.	Enjoys/shares stories Gets sense of story Broadens horizons Builds vocabulary
Guided Reading Groups	Reading with students from multiple copies of books in small groups.	Variety of literature Reading strategies Reading problems Attends to letter/words Deeper understanding Learns from group
Literature Groups	Students read to themselves while applying reading strategies and lead discussion groups.	
Independent Reading	Students self-select books and read on their own. Records are kept on books read and conferences held.	Enjoys personal reading Reading strategies Takes on challenges Acquires fluency Builds confidence
Shared Writing	Teacher writes (notes, letters) brainstorms, drafts, revises, and edits.	Writing conventions Attends letter/words Own leads recorded Writes for a purpose Accomplishes real tasks
Guided Writing	Students write while teacher guides; teacher responds and extends ideas and skills.	Writing chance given Develops writer's voice Gets direct assistance Gets motivation to write Different points of view
Interactive Writing	Teacher works with individuals, small groups, or the whole class. Focus on helping students.	
Writer's Workshop		
Spelling and Conventions	Attention is given to spelling and writing conventions as writing evolves	Uses invented spelling Sight word knowledge Learns standard spelling Learns conventions

		Practices Prof-reading
Independent Reading	Students write on their own at all levels and for a variety of purposes.	Learns to compose Writes for purposes Chooses to write Satisfaction from writing Creativity is fostered
Print-rich environment	The classroom is rich with print (poems, letters, and information) and variety of books in different genres.	Broad exposure to print Information from books Writes for real reasons Chooses from books Reads throughout the day
Continuous Assessment	Teacher keeps observational records for students' progress over time. Teacher assesses students' concepts about print, their strategies for reading, retelling, writing, and explaining.	Evidence of growth Guides daily teaching Tracks individual progress Reports to parents Evaluates program

Appendix C

The following graph provides detailed information about the observation done at the school. I focused on the relationship and interaction between the teacher and the student with regards to reading and writing in all 5 classrooms (1st through 6th grade). Although this study focuses on second grade students, I considered important to have whole-school observation in order to understand their needs.

- Arrival at 7:25 on Monday, February 6, 2006.

- Civil Moment 7:30 and singing of the National Anthem in the school's patio.

Time	GR	Classroom	Teacher	Students
7:40	6 th	Windows on sides of class. Poster of human skeleton - back wall.	David Peralta. He asks students to take out their corrected and signed test from home.	While the teacher moves from one student to the next, students are talking, interacting with one another.
8:00	E N G L I S H	2 boards, white/chalk Styrofoam balls hanging Two students at each desk. 1 student sits at T's desk – no desk for her Desks are trapezoid shaped 4 light bulbs are on. Podium at front of class. Not an inviting learning environment	He walks to each student and checks the test. No English is spoken. Doesn't notice students are walking in/out of the class Seems to not mind the level of interaction among students which is very loud.	Wearing sports uniform. Some are still working on their corrections. Use only pen / no pencil They stare/smile at me Share their cross-stitch work Boys walk-out of class
8:05	1 st	Too many students (38) Windows on sides of class Lower case vowels - back wall. Cubbies – back wall Reading sentences hanging on easels.	To get students to sit, she says she will give them a prize. Reading sentences (phonetics) Practice for test Reads out loud/Gets a student from the hand and	Greeted me warmly Shook my hands Eagerly sit and wait for instruction. 6 sit at a table. Yell out the sentence. Tone of voice too loud.
8:30	S	Chalk board – front wall		Respond to questions

	P A N I S H	Two step-stairs at the foot of chalk board Puppet stand – back right Sink – left back corner Computer – front right One teacher’s desk – has nothing on it Multiplication charts hanging - front wall Lost of chaos around Not an inviting learning environment Too messy and disorganized.	moves him to another desk Asks questions loudly Explains sentences Doesn’t realize some students are playing Doesn’t notice that students in the back need to stand on their chair to read sentences Ignores those who are not paying attention Has them pray before exam (reminds them that a classmate has a mom in jail) She says the prayer Hands-out exam by name Begins exam	Those in the back are coloring and playing with a car and ball. Stand on chairs to read sentences that are at the bottom of page Two are shooting at each other with hand-guns Three build houses with colored pencils Repeat the prayer Run around to get exam Two start fighting
Time	GR	Classroom	Teacher	Students
8:35 9:05	2nd M A T H E M A T I C S	Desks form a semi-circle around class Windows in both sides View on right – brick wall View on left – piled up old desks (storage area) First aid kit – front right Closet – front right ABC – back wall Black file cabinet Clock Mirror Police chart Some desks – not attached to the legs (move around) Hooks to hand coats behind teachers desk Comfortable, secure, inviting learning environment	In control, good classroom management skills Reviewing math exam. Interrupted with administrative paper work Asks students to come and solve problems on white board completing graph of missing 3 digit numbers Re-emphasizes addition Chooses bright students often to participate and solve problems Ignores black student Some put downs on slow students	24 students 2 students at a desk Participate in revision Copy from board Work on individual corrections Move around when teacher is interrupted Take turns solving problems Many have problems with addition Repeat addition aloud A black student is outside the circle – raises hands constantly wanting to participate
9:10 9:35	5th M A T H E M A T I C S	Classroom next to main street Windows – right side; half painted with brown paint Hooks – left wall 2 boards: white/black Closet – entire back wall No signs on walls Easel with nothing on it Ceiling is peeling Dark room Not an inviting learning environment	Has a group of 8 students surrounding her asking questions about the test. Quickly finishes correcting Asks students in each row to line up close to the window with their notebooks, she will check them. Doesn’t notice students are walking in/out of the room Corrects individual work	Students 2 at a desk 4 close to the teacher Correcting math test Discussing about test Compare answers 1 st left row stands with notebooks Others talk, interact Discuss and play with hang-man. 2 are asleep
9:35 10:05	4th M A T H	Dark room Classroom next to main street Windows – right side; half painted with brown paint 2 small file cabinets	Doesn’t look pleased with my presence Reviewing math test Uses a rough tone of voice Uses too many put downs Walks over to distracted	54 Students (too many) 2 students at a desk Few are focusing on what the teacher is explaining Many are day-dreaming

<p>E M A T I C S</p>	<p>Computer-front right Broken easel – back left Teacher’s desk with a hand bag Wall are plain No posters Not an inviting learning environment</p>	<p>students, takes away the pen roughly and places student in another place. Reads story problems Again more put downs (pensara bien antes de hablar) Writes story problem on white board Touches a distracted students very roughly Reinforces place value</p>	<p>Get scared when they see her walk around the class Problem students are seated at the back – they are talking too much Bright students are seated at the front –they are the only ones participating</p>
---	--	---	---

Appendix D

The dialogue questions: invite responses to self-evaluative questions, experimentation with new instructional strategies in classrooms, rethinking learning philosophy and classroom practices stimulated by new knowledge and understanding (English version; Spanish also available).

1. What kind of memories do I have about books and reading as a child, both at home and at school?
2. What kind of reader am I as an adult? How do I see my early experiences at home and at school influencing my reading attitudes and habits now?
3. What are the ways I currently use literature in my classroom?
4. Which of the four roles of literature are highlighted in my curriculum: literature as a way to learn language; literature as a way to explore content area topics; literature as a way to know the world?

Version en Espanol

1. Que tipo de recuerdos tengo de libros y la lectura cuando era niño, tanto en el hogar como en la casa?

2. Que tipo de lector soy ahora que soy adulto?

3. De que manera incorporo la literatura en mi aula y en la enseñanza de mis alumnos?

--

4. Cuales de estos cuatro roles de la literatura incorpora en mi currículo: literatura para aprender el idioma; literatura para explorar un tema dentro de un contenido; literatura para aprender del mundo?

Only six teachers out of the ten teachers who attended the workshop returned this form.

Answers:

Teacher # 1:

1. I only read at school, short books that were not very interesting.
2. I do not have time to read.
3. I read to students a short story that is included in the curriculum.
4. I think I do literature as a way to explore content area topics.

Teacher # 2

1. None.
2. I do not like to read.
3. I have to read the short stories in the curriculum.
4. None.

Teacher # 3:

1. The teachers forced us to read. I never read at home.
2. I rarely read the newspaper.
3. I read the stories of the curriculum.
4. I think I do literature as a way to learn the language.

Teacher # 4:

1. None.
2. I like to read magazines, cheap ones.
3. All the teachers at the school have to incorporate the short stories in the curriculum.
4. I do literature as a way to learn the language.

Teacher # 5:

1. In doing homework.
2. There is no time to read.
3. Students read the short stories in the curriculum.
4. I think all.

Teacher # 6:

1. Oh, it was so long ago.
2. I have another job; I just don't have enough times to read.

3. I read the stories in the curriculum.
4. I think I do literature as a way to learn the language.

Appendix E

Inventory of books, shelves, pillows, shelves, chairs donated for the library. It contains 16 pages.

Appendix F

As part of the reading program, I provided a list of questions suggested by Fountas and Pinnell (2002, p 98) as a source to evaluate students' interest in reading. However, as explained earlier in this study, the majority of student's boys and girls are very shy and find it hard to speak and share their thoughts. Many times three classmates answered for them, these students were the most out-spoken students in the group. They explained that many times their teacher reprimands them for not doing their work and that is why they do not want to speak.

Questions	Code Given to Students														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Do the students enjoy reading?	N	S	N	Y	S	N	S	Y	N	N	S	Y	Y	N	Y
Do they choose appropriate books?	N	N	N	N	S	N	S	N	N	N	S	N	N	N	N
Do they use multiple strategies for figuring out new words?	N	S	N	N	S	N	S	N	N	N	S	N	N	N	N
Do they proofread work?	N	S	N	N	N	N	S	N	N	N	S	N	N	N	N
Do they choose to read at home?	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	S	S	S	N	S	Y	Y	N	Y

Symbols developed to understand graph:

Y – Yes

N – No

Silent - S

Appendix G

Examples of what was observed of group work

Fountas and Pinnell (2001) p 124-126

What was taught	What was observed
<p>Today we talked about how an author gets readers interested in the first few lines of a story. I would like you to read the first line of your book. Lets go around the circle, starting with student # 3. Say the title and author and read the first line of your book.</p>	<p>Students were attentive during class. Students are extremely shy; it is very difficult to get them to speak. Students browsed through books freely. It took students quite some time to participate and interact with me. Students did not want to read the title and author of book.</p>
<p>We have been talking about how you can make connections between the book you are reading and your life. Starting with student # 6 talk in threes about how the book you are reading is like something that has happened to you. I will give you three minutes to talk with one another and then I will ask a few of you to share with the groups.</p>	<p>Students greeted me warmly with a hand shake. Students browsed through books freely. Students were a little bit more dynamic during class. Few students also participated and asked a lot of questions about the books I had displayed for them to choose from Explained to students the meaning of connections. Brainstormed connections before reading. Students did not want to share findings. I shared my findings. Still students did not want to share findings. Finally, one student did.</p>
<p>I asked you to mark a place in your book where you were reminded of something or someone in your life. Talk with two other students about what you marked.</p>	<p>Students greeted me warmly with a hand shake. Students were happy to walk into the mini library. Students browsed through the books until they found one they liked. Students played with post its. Students shared openly very little.</p>

Appendix H

Strategies that span the entire reading process

These are strategies the reader can use before, while, and after reading: making predictions and asking questions.

Making Predictions

1. *Book Selection*: helps student predict whether or not they will enjoy a book.
 - Look at the title and cover. Read summary.
 - Browse through the illustrations or photographs.
 - Read the chapter headings or contents.
 - Ask a friend or teacher for recommendations.
 - Find books about hobbies and interests.
 - Find books from author or illustrator you enjoyed.
 - Older students should turn to a page and begin reading. If there are five or more words they can't pronounce or understand, then the book is too difficult.
2. *Predict and Support*: helps organize thinking and sort out whether predictions come from clues in the text or personal experiences in a chart. This chart consists of three headings: prediction, support and based on. The students and the teacher complete the chart during guided reading. The teacher stops once or twice during the reading and invite students to predict.

Comprehension strategies:

1. Comprehension monitoring: readers learn to be aware of their understanding of the material.

2. Cooperative learning: students learn reading strategies that work.
3. Use of graphic organizers: readers make graphic representations of the material to assist comprehension (story maps).
4. Question answering: readers answer questions posed by the teacher and receive immediate feedback.
5. Question generation: readers ask themselves questions about various aspects of the story.
6. Story Structure: students are taught to use the story's structure to help them recall story content and answer questions about what they have read.
7. Summarization: readers are taught to integrate ideas and generalize from the text information.

Appendix L

Through conversations with twelve grandparents, they said that they hardly ever encouraged the children to read. The children's responsibilities at home were:

- ❖ first, to get their homework done;
- ❖ second, to take care of the younger siblings;
- ❖ third, to help feed any farm animals (pigs, chickens, or goats);
- ❖ fourth, they preferred that the children stay outside in order for them to get the house chores done quickly.
- ❖ They also said they found it difficult to help them with their homework because they themselves did not know how to read

Bibliography

- Barchers, S.I. (1990). *Creating and Managing the Literate Classroom*. Teacher Ideas Press. Libraries Unlimited, Inc. Englewood, CO
- Cambourne, B. (1988). *The Whole Story – Natural Learning and the Acquisition of Literacy in the Classroom*. Ashton Scholastic, New York, NY
- Cooper, D. J. (1997). *Literacy – Helping Children Construct Meaning*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, MA
- Fisher, B. (1995). *Thinking and Learning Together – Curriculum and Community in a Primary Classroom*. Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH
- Fountas, I. & Pinnell, G. (2001). *Guiding Readers and Writers – Teaching Comprehension, Genre and Content Literacy*. Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH
- Goodman, K. (1986). *What is Whole in Whole Language*. Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH
- Graves, D. H. (1990). *Discover your own Literacy – The Reading/Writing Teacher's Companion*. Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH
- Harwayne, S. (1992). *Lasting Impressions – Weaving Literature into the Writing Workshop*. Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH
- Hindley, J. (1996). *In the Company of Children*. Stenhouse Publishers, York, ME.
- Holdaway, D. (1999). *The Foundations of Literacy*. Ashton Scholastic, New York, NY.
- Jewell, T., & Pratt, D., (1999). *Literature discussions in the Primary Grades: Children's Thoughtful Discourse about books and what Teachers can do to make it happen*. *The Reading Teacher*, Vol 52, No. 8, p 842-850

- McCormick, L. (1991). *Living between the lines*. Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH
- Miller, D. (2002). *Reading with Meaning – Teaching Comprehension in the Primary Grades*. Stenhouse Publishers, Portland, ME
- Short, K. (1997). *Literature as a way of knowing*. The Galef Institute, Stenhouse Publishers, York, ME.
- Tomlinson, C. & Lynch-Brown, C. (1996). *Essentials of Children's Literature*. Ally and Bacon, Boston, MA.
- Trelease, J., (1995). *The Read-Aloud Handbook*. Penguin Books. New York, USA
- Wilhelm, J., (2001). *Read-aloud and Think-aloud: Boost Reading Comprehension*. November/December p. 26-30