Characterizing Reading and Language Arts Instruction In Title I Schoolwide Programs: High Expectations and Disappointing Reality

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The Title I program was originally signed into law in 1965 as part of Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty" program. Title I, or Chapter 1, as the program was subsequently called, has been reauthorized six times during the past 30 years. Within Chapter 1, the most common instructional approaches were pullout models. Students identified as *educationally deprived* were removed from their classroom for specialized or remedial instruction. Educationally deprived children were those whose educational achievement was below the level that was appropriate for their age based on a needs assessment (e.g., scoring below the 40th percentile on a standardized assessment). Following an extensive revision in 1988, schools with 75 percent or more low-income students were eligible to become schoolwide programs (SWPs). All students attending a schoolwide program school were eligible for Chapter 1 services without having to be "tested into the program." In schools that did not qualify as SWPs, students continued to be selected for services based on educational deprivation.

As part of the "Improving America's Schools Act" of 1994, Congress reauthorized and renamed Chapter 1 as Title I. Under the new legislation, funds are allocated to schools on the basis of poverty rather than educational deprivation. During the 1995-96 school year, the poverty threshold was lowered from 75 to 60 percent to allow more schools to become SWPs. The overriding goal of the recent legislation is to improve the teaching and learning of *all* children in high-poverty schools to enable them to meet challenging academic content and performance standards. To accomplish the goal, schools must provide enriched, accelerated, high-quality instruction within an organizational structure that promotes schoolwide reform and minimizes removing children from the regular classroom.

Dallas Public Schools' Title I Program

Prior to 1995-96, the Dallas Public Schools' Chapter 1 program served primarily kindergarten to third-grade students in reading and language arts pullout programs. Under the new Title I legislation, funds were extended to all prekindergarten to twelfth-grade students in schools whose poverty threshold was 60 percent or higher. Additionally, funds could be used for all subject areas. As a result, the number of SWP schools increased from 18 to 144 between the 1994-95 and 1995-96 school years, respectively. Of the 144 eligible campuses, 121 were elementary schools. With the change, schools were able to implement programs that focused on upgrading the entire educational program. Due to reduced school-level funding and greater programmatic flexibility, many pullout instructional components (e.g., tutorials, small-group instruction) were eliminated from SWPs. The result was schoolwide programs that increasingly focused on extended learning time (i.e., extended day, week, or year) and diminished student removal from the regular classroom.

Title I schoolwide program descriptions submitted to the Texas Education Agency identified the models/strategies and activities each campus employed to serve students. Some schools served students in the regular classroom only. One SWP school is in the second year of implementing *Success for All*, a model for schoolwide reform designed at Johns Hopkins University under the guidance of Robert E. Slavin. Other schools continued to supplement regular classroom instruction by serving lower-achieving students in pullout components. The list of pullout components implemented in Dallas schools included, among others, Help One Student To Succeed (HOSTS), Reading Recovery ®, Jostens Computer-based Reading/Language Arts, Writing to Read, and Literacy Groups. Two SWP pullout components that are of interest for this observational study include *Reading Recovery* and *Literacy Groups*.

Purpose of the Study

The present study describes the instructional and learning characteristics of regular reading/language arts classes in two types of Title I SWPs (regular SWP classes and Success for All classes) and instruction in two pullout components (Reading Recovery and Literacy Groups). Specifically, the study focused on the activities teachers utilized to facilitate instruction, activities that students experienced, the prevalence of teacher lower- and higher-order questions, teacher- and student-mediated thinking indicators, and the materials and equipment used during classes. Because over half of the students in the district read below grade level, it was hypothesized that understanding the instructional and learning differences in particular reading classes and instructional components would be critical to support the restructuring efforts taking place in SWPs. Brief descriptions of the SWPs and pullout components included in the study follow.

Schoolwide Program Classes

Students in *regular SWP classes* received instruction from a certified teacher during reading time. The number of students in a class varied, but class size generally ranged from 18 to 22 students. The Texas Essential Elements, district core curriculum, adopted basal reading series, and supplementary materials provided the framework for reading and language arts instruction. Individual schools and teachers determined the topics for professional development; thus, teacher training varied across the district. Student achievement outcomes in reading show that by third grade, 74% of the district's Title I students read below grade level, and the below grade level percentage increases in the upper grades.

Success for All is designed to organize resources to ensure that virtually every student in a Title I SWP reaches the third grade with adequate reading skills. During reading time, students are regrouped homogeneously across Grades K-3 for 90 minutes so that each regular reading class contains students at one reading level. Class sizes vary from 15 to 22 students. Specially trained, certified teachers work one-on-one with any student who is failing to keep up with their classmates in reading. Cooperative learning

strategies are incorporated within the instructional approach. Frequent assessment, enhanced preschool and kindergarten programs, and family support are essential aspects of the program. Positive effects of the program on reading achievement were found in inner-city elementary schools (Madden, Slavin, Karweit, Dolan, & Wasik, 1993). Early achievement outcomes from the Dallas school have also been positive (Denson & Shapley, 1995; Shapley, 1996).

Schoolwide Program Pullout Components

Reading Recovery is a one-to-one, early intervention program that targets the lowest achieving readers in first grade. Reading Recovery lessons involve rereading familiar books, working with letters and sounds, writing a message or story, and reading new books. In Dallas, each Reading Recovery teacher worked with four students (one at a time) for half the day. On the majority of the campuses, the Reading Recovery teacher worked with small groups of students for the remainder of the day. A student was discontinued when functioning in the middle of his or her class. The key to the successful implementation of the program resides in the training model. Teachers are required to attend 30 hours of summer training and to participate in a weekly 3 hour after school in-service session. Reading Recovery has an established record of success with high-risk children (Lyons, Pinnell, DeFord, Place, & White, 1990; Denson & Shapley, 1995; Shapley, 1996). Studies indicate that there are long-term, sustaining achievement effects (Clay, 1985; Pinnell, DeFord, & Lyons, 1988).

Literacy Groups serve small groups of students (8 or less) with an intensive 45 minute period of reading each day outside the regular classroom. Trained teachers provide a balanced reading program that includes reading *to* students, reading *with* students, and reading *by* students. During a typical Literacy Group session, the teacher reads aloud, students have opportunities for guided and independent reading, and students participate in shared writing experiences. Running Records are used by the teacher for observing children's reading behavior, diagnosing, and prescribing instruction (Mathews & Seibert, 1993). District students who received supplemental instruction in Literacy Groups had positive reading achievement outcomes (Sheehan, Yang, Shapley, Johnson, & Thapa, 1994; Denson & Shapley, 1995; Shapley, 1996).

Using Classroom Observations to Explain Teaching and Learning

Classroom observations are generally used for teacher appraisal, program evaluation, and research purposes. Observational techniques reflect the observers' purpose and theoretical position regarding teaching and learning. What one "observes" is determined by that which is deemed important or worth observing (Wragg, 1994). In the 1920s and 1930s, teacher personality traits or characteristics were examined. It was assumed that traits such as good judgment, enthusiasm, adaptability, personal appearance, and leadership resulted in student learning. By the 1940s and 1950s, the unit of study shifted to the student. Teacher methods were studied by comparing the effectiveness of classes taught by different methods. Withall (1949) devised a teacher- and

student-centered category system that favored certain teacher acts and disparaged others. From the 1960s to the 1980s, a process-product paradigm was prevalent as teacher behavior patterns were believed to affect student learning. Flanders (1970) used interaction analysis to study classroom verbal interaction. Rosenshine (1971) looked at teaching style and climate. Porter and Brophy (1988) synthesized correlational studies to identify the characteristics of effective teachers such as clarity of goals, knowledge, emphasis on higher cognitive processes, and monitoring student progress. Subsequently, many of these characteristics were used by others to develop observational teacher appraisal instruments.

The focus for the 1990s is on student mediating responses. Current reading and learning theories view students as active interpreters or mediators of teacher behaviors instead of passive recipients of knowledge. Research evidence emerging from the fields of cognitive psychology and reading regards learners as active information processors, constructors of knowledge, and users of learning strategies (Fennimore & Tenymann, 1991; Jones, Palinscar, Ogle, & Carr, 1987; Fielding & Pearson, 1994; Resnick, 1987; Resnick & Klopfer, 1989, etc.). Investigations of complex learning environments are now undertaken that have both a student and a teacher focus (Ellett, 1990). Quantitative, descriptive, and ethnographic procedures are used to study teacher behaviors, student overt actions, and student covert mental processes (Knight & Waxman, 1991; Stallings & Freiberg, 1991; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993, etc.).

Recent studies by researchers who used observation instruments to describe complex learning environments provided the focus for the observation instrument development for the present study. Ellett, Loup, and Chauvin (1991) developed a comprehensive, classroom-based observation system. The System for Teaching and Learning Assessment and Review (STAR) integrates assessment indicators exemplifying common themes, including (a) the accommodation of individual differences, (b) teaching and learning as a total process, (c) time management, (d) student thinking skills, and (e) active involvement and engagement. Winocur's (1991) Classroom Observation Checklist is useful for noting cognitive indicators related to the presence of higher-order thinking opportunities provided by teachers and experienced by students. Evertson and Burry (1989), recognizing the need for a systematic observation procedure, created the Classroom Activity Record (CAR) to provide a more accurate record of classroom events. The CAR allows information to be recorded in a standardized manner through the use of instructional and content-related codes as well as relevant descriptive notes.

Method

Development of the Observation Instrument

A focus group of district evaluators reviewed educational research on classroom observations and analyzed various observation methods and instruments. A committee was established to develop a districtwide observation form. The observation committee relied on relevant themes from the STAR (Ellett, Loup, and Chauvin, 1991). Additionally,

the group selected items from the Classroom Observation Checklist (Winocur, 1991) and the systematic elements of the CAR (Evertson and Burry, 1989) to create the district Program Observation Form. The flexibility allowed by the CAR made it an ideal instrument to be adapted for the study. The *Dallas Public Schools Program Observation Form Observer's Manual 1995-96* was written to describe the procedures for conducting observations. In September 1995, the Program Observation Form was pilot tested by six evaluators who observed first- and third-grade reading/language arts and mathematics classes at an elementary school. After using the form and comparing observation notes and ratings, the form was modified to include new teacher and student activities, revised thinking indicators, and a system of recording teacher higher- and lower-order questions. The Program Observation Form underwent additional revisions after the observer training sessions to remediate other problems in coding teacher and student activities. The final version of the Program Observation Form is displayed in the Appendix.

The Program Observation Form is comprised of seven major sections: (a) identification information, (b) physical learning environment, (c) materials and equipment used by the teacher, (d) materials and equipment used by the student, (e) psychosocial learning environment, (f) thinking indicators, and (g) Program Observation Record. The Program Observation Record provided a record of the learning activities and events that occurred during the observation. Information included class time use, teacher activities, student activities, teacher higher- and lower-order questions, and the level of student engagement in learning.

Observer Training

In the fall of 1995, three, four-hour training sessions were held for 19 program evaluators who would conduct classroom observations. The training agenda encompassed (a) an overview of the manual and forms, (b) coding dialogue on a form while watching a videotape, (c) independently scripting and coding during a videotape of a class, and (d) question and answer sessions to clarify observers' understanding of the observation procedures. The training concluded with a group review of the form to ascertain the level of agreement observers achieved during the independent coding activity. Inexperienced observers were accompanied by other, more experienced, observers for their first observations.

Sampling Design

A two-stage sampling process was used in the selection of the Title I regular classroom sample. First, systematic sampling with a random start was used to select a sample consisting of approximately 25% of the elementary schools in each district cluster of schools (31 Title I elementary schools in total were sampled). This process was used rather than a simple random sample to ensure that all clusters were proportionally represented. It was further determined that the student population of the sample was similar in its ethnic composition to that of the district. Second, a core sample of first-, third-, and sixth-grade classes (including ESL and Bilingual classes, but not self-contained

Special Education classes) at each selected school was obtained from the district's database. A simple random sample of approximately 25% of these classes was selected for observation at each school. The regular SWP core sample included a total of 62 observations conducted in Grade 1 (n = 28), Grade 3 (n = 22), and Grade 6 (n = 12). Success for All was implemented in one school, and observations were conducted in Grades 1 and 3 (n = 2). The SWP classes were observed during periods of reading/language arts instruction.

Each school's SWP plan included a program description listing the pullout components serving students within the school. The first step in the sampling design involved identifying the implementation of instructional components by school and grade level. Next, approximately 30% of the campuses implementing components were randomly selected. Observers were assigned particular components to observe for first-, third-, and sixth-grade classes at selected schools to create a proportionate number of observations for each component. The instructional component sample included the following observations: (a) Reading Recovery, implemented in 29 schools in Grade 1 (n = 9) and (b) Literacy Groups, implemented in 34 schools in Grades 1-3 (n = 12).

Observation Procedures

Observations were conducted during the months of October, November, and December 1996. Each school was notified of a one-week window of time for classroom observations; therefore, teachers had advance notice when observations would be conducted. Observers spent approximately 30 to 90 minutes observing reading/language arts sessions. Times varied according to program specifications. Observers submitted completed observations to project managers for review. Teacher and student activity notes and codes were reviewed collaboratively to ensure that code definitions were interpreted accurately. Following the completion of all observations, a sample of approximately 25% of the elementary reading/language arts observations was reviewed to estimate observer agreement. Agreement was determined by comparing observers' coding with an expert coder. The criterion-referenced agreement was 77% for the teacher activities, 80% for the student activities, and 79% overall.

Limitations

This study was the first effort by evaluators from various district programs to use uniform evaluation instrument procedures. Consequently, it was difficult to train 19 evaluators to collect data in a way that was consistent, meaningful, and useful. Because of the subjective nature of the coding of the data and the complexity of data entry, extensive and time-consuming cross-checking procedures were employed by project managers to monitor data quality. Nevertheless, conclusions drawn from the observations must be tempered by an understanding that elements of subjectivity are inherent in any descriptive study involving a large number of observers. An additional limitation was the small sample size (n = 2) for one school that implemented Success for All. Even though the

sample size was small, the observational data outcomes for the school yielded comparable data for 1994-95 and 1995-96 observational studies.

Results and Discussion

Data from the observation forms were entered into a database on the district's mainframe computer. Data were reviewed, corrected, and cross-checking procedures were utilized to ensure accuracy. Data files were created and analyses were performed.

Teacher Activities

The Program Observation Record provided 18 categories of teacher activities occurring during a session, a description of the activity, and the number of minutes the activity lasted. The total number of minutes devoted to each teacher activity per observation was divided by the total number of instructional minutes to determine the percent of time allocated for each teacher activity per observation. Mean percents for each teacher activity were calculated and are presented in Table 1.

For the SWP classes and pullout instructional components, teachers devoted from 82% to 90% of class time to instruction, with the smallest percentage occurring in regular SWP classes. Teachers' instructional emphasis varied. All classes spent the greatest proportion of time on whole group teacher presentation of content and teacher-guided discussion. Differences in instructional emphasis were evident for other activities. While students in Reading Recovery spent the entire session working one-on-one with the teacher, individual seatwork accounted for 15%, 12%, and 9% of students' time in regular SWP classes, Literacy Groups, and Success for All, respectively. Pairs/group seatwork (24%) allowed Success for All students to work with partners and in cooperative learning groups. Literacy Group teachers used small-group instruction (13%) to individualize learning. Teachers devoted a minimal amount of time to testing, except in Reading Recovery (10%) where Running Records were used to assess students' reading progress. Classes that involved several students and a variety of teacher activities required more non-instructional time. Non-instructional activities, such as assignment directions and transitions from activity to activity, were necessary to facilitate instruction in regular SWP classes (11%), Success for All (10%), and Literacy Groups (9%). In Figure 1, predominant teacher activities are displayed graphically for the four comparison groups.

Table 1

Percent of Time Given to Teaching Activities

Teacher Activity	SWP Classes		SWP Pullout Components	
	Regular SWP (n = 59)	Success for All (n = 2)	Reading Recovery (n = 9)	Literacy Groups (n =12)
Instructional				
Presentation of content	15.7	32.0	43.1	25.4
Guided discussion	40.7	26.0	46.1	35.9
Individual seatwork	15.4	8.5	0.0	12.2
Pairs/group seatwork	2.3	23.5	0.0	2.5
Small group instruction	3.2	0.0	0.0	13.0
One-to-one instruction	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Student presentation	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Computer instruction	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	81.8	90.0	89.2	89.1
Testing				
Test preparation	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Checking/grading	5.4	0.0	0.0	0.6
Tests	1.0	0.0	10.4	0.8
Total	7.2	0.0	10.4	1.4
Non-instructional				
Assignment directions	4.4	1.5	0.9	2.4
Transitions	4.4	8.0	0.0	2.5
Administrative routines	1.0	0.5	0.0	1.8
Procedural/behavioral	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.9
Discipline	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Waiting time	0.1	0.0	0.0	1.8
Non-academic activity	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	10.9	10.0	0.9	9.4

Note. Percents may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

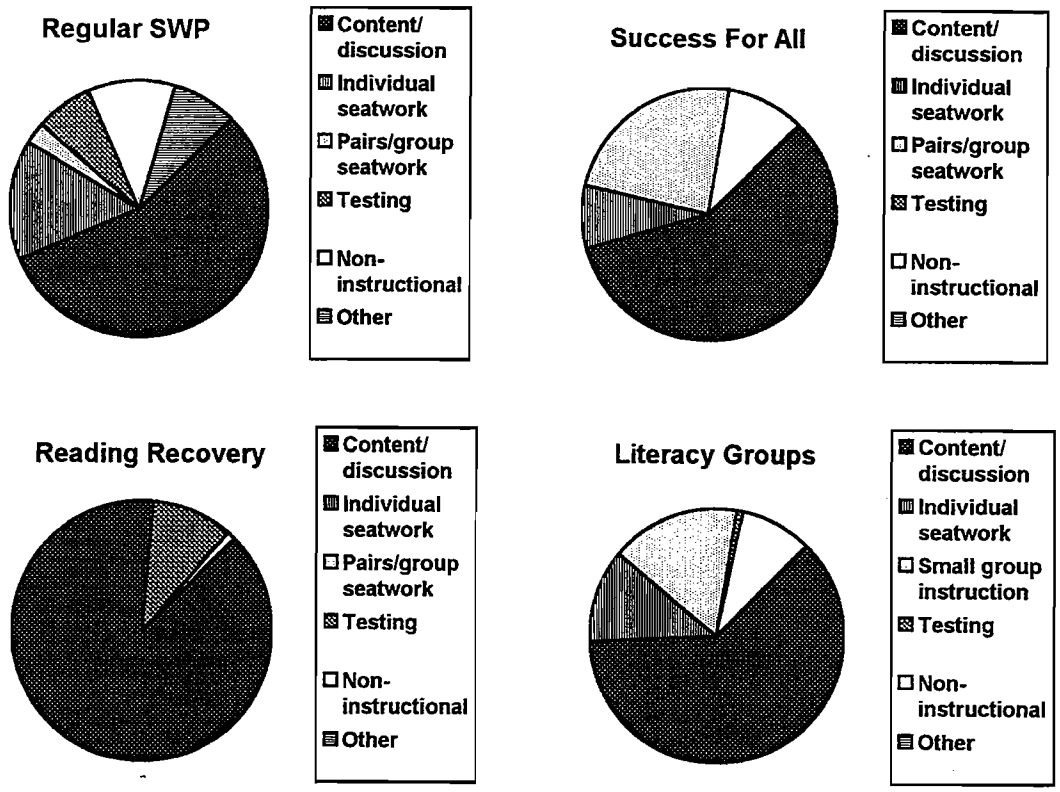

Figure 1. Percentages of time allocated for teacher instructional activities by comparison groups.

Student Activities

The Program Observation Record provided 19 categories of student activities, a description of each activity, and the number of minutes per activity. The number of minutes devoted to each student activity per observation was divided by the number of instructional minutes to determine the percent of time allocated for each activity per observation. Mean percents for each activity were calculated for comparison groups. In Table 2, the percentages of time students participated in activities are compared.

Table 2

Percent of Time Students Participated in Activities

Student Activity	SWP Classes		SWP Pullout Components	
	Regular SWP (n = 59)	Success for All (n = 2)	Reading Recovery (n = 9)	Literacy Group (n = 12)
Listening (3 min. +)	6.5	13.0	0.9	7.2
Listening and responding	46.7	36.0	13.3	40.7
Reading (oral, choral, silent)	10.0	37.0	50.4	23.0
Oral	*5.1*	*15.5*	*48.6*	*12.6*
Choral	*3.9*	*13.0*	*1.8*	*9.8*
Silent	*1.0*	*8.5*	*0.0*	*0.7*
Writing	7.0	3.0	19.0	0.9
Organizing information	0.1	0.0	0.0	2.6
Short-answer exercise	16.2	0.0	0.0	5.7
Chalkboard	0.0	0.0	4.9	0.0
Manipulatives	0.7	0.0	8.9	2.0
Game	0.2	0.0	0.0	1.5
Interactive discussion	1.4	0.0	0.0	2.8
Computer	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.7
Multiple student activities	2.7	5.0	0.0	1.8
Waiting	3.2	1.0	0.0	3.1
Non-academic activity	2.6	0.0	0.0	3.8
Other	2.5	0.0	3.2	1.1

Note. Percents may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Student participation in activities varied according to the instructional component. Time for reading (oral, choral, or silent) was emphasized in Reading Recovery (50%) and Success for All (37%). In contrast, it was alarming that only 10% of students' time in regular SWP classes involved reading. Success for All students experienced a balance of oral, choral, and silent reading. Reading Recovery (19%) allocated considerable time for writing; whereas, writing was limited in other observed classes. A large proportion of students' time in regular SWP classes (16%) was used completing short-answer exercises (e.g., fill-in the blank, multiple-choice worksheets). Overall, students had little time to use manipulatives, except students in Reading Recovery who used manipulatives (9%) and individual chalkboards (5%) for letter/sound recognition activities.

Across all classes, with the exception of Reading Recovery, student time was mainly devoted to listening or listening and responding to teachers. Listening and responding during teacher-led presentations of content and guided discussions accounted for 47%, 41%, and 36% of students' time in regular SWP classes, Success for All, and Literacy Groups, respectively. It was encouraging that little time was consumed on waiting or non-academic activities. The percentages of time devoted to prevalent student activities are displayed in Figure 2 for the four comparison groups.

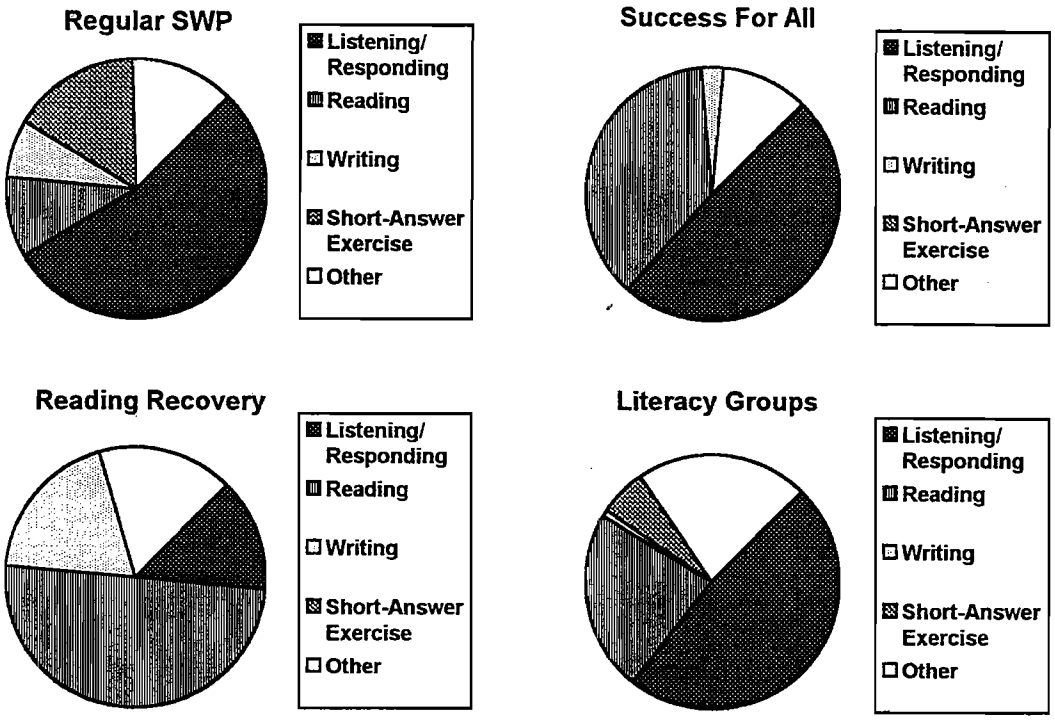

Figure 2. Percentages of time allocated for student activities by comparison groups.

Teacher Lower- and Higher-Order Questions

During the session, observers recorded the frequency and type of teacher-initiated questions. Typically, lower-order questions required students to remember or recall information. Students used lower-order thinking to define, describe, distinguish, identify, list, name, recall, show, state, indicate, tell, etc. Higher-order questions involved students in understanding the meaning of information, applying knowledge, analyzing information, planning, solving problems, or evaluating the worth of information. The number of lower- and higher-order questions noted during an observation were summed. These totals were converted to the number of questions per hour to facilitate comparisons. The means and standard deviations of the teacher questions are compared in Table 3.

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation of Lower- and Higher-Order Teacher Questions per Hour

Program/ Component	n^a	Lower-Order Questions per Hour		Higher-Order Questions per Hour	
		Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*
SWP Classes					
Regular SWP	59	23.5	21.8	5.2	6.8
Success for All	2	15.5	2.1	7.5	3.5
SWP Pullout Components					
Reading Recovery	9	28.4	20.3	4.7	8.1
Literacy Group	12	30.3	26.6	7.3	5.6

[a]This *n* refers to the number of classes observed.

For the Title I SWP classes and pullout components, teachers frequently asked lower-order, factual questions (15.5 to 30.3 per hour). Higher-order questioning strategies were used far less frequently (4.7 to 7.5 per hour). A large number of teacher questions per hour, whether lower- or higher-order, indicated a teacher-centered learning environment. Accordingly, it appeared that both SWP classes and pullout components emphasized teacher-controlled question/answer interactions with students. Classes where students had more opportunities to direct their own learning (e.g., Success for All) likely resulted in fewer teacher questions per hour. The mean number of lower- and higher-order questions per hour are displayed in Figure 3.

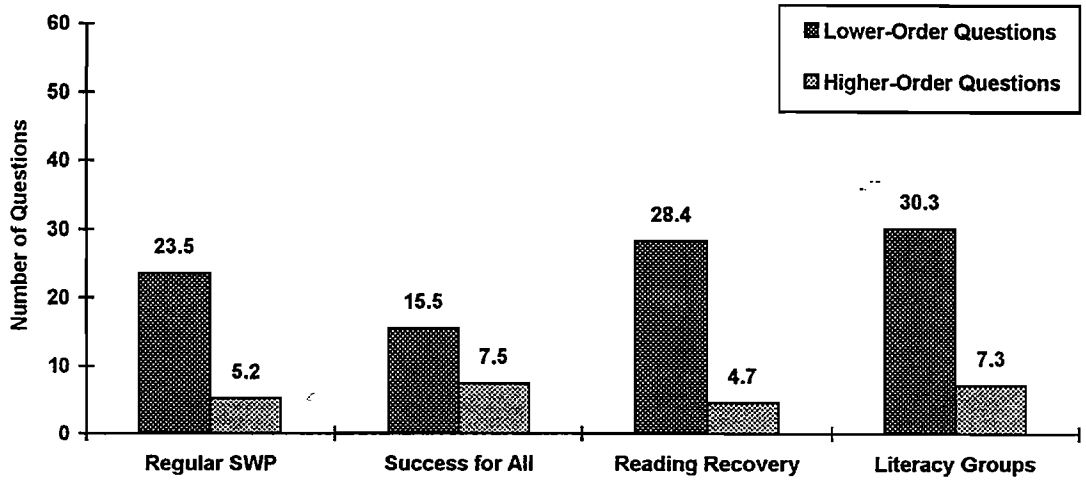

Figure 3. Mean number of lower-order and higher-order questions per hour by comparison groups.

Thinking Indicators

Teachers' instructional activities should stimulate and nourish students' mental elaborations of knowledge and develop students' capacity to monitor and guide their own learning and thinking (Resnick and Klopfer, 1989); thus, classroom thinking is mediated through both teacher and student initiatives. Based on evidence recorded during class sessions, observers decided if six types of teacher-mediated and five types of student-mediated thinking indicators were present. The number and percent of teacher- and student-mediated indicators reported as being true are presented in Table 4.

Teacher-mediated thinking indicators. The teacher-mediated thinking indicators were likely to occur during teacher-directed lessons or discussions; thus, the instructional configuration influenced the prevalence of the indicators. Having students "relate examples from their own experience" to build background knowledge was a strategy used frequently in Success for All (100%) and Reading Recovery (66%). Teachers seldom had students "to justify their own ideas or to explain their thoughts" during any classes. Success for All (100%) teachers frequently "allowed time to consider alternatives, points of view, and multiple solutions." Across all classes, many teachers "asked open-ended questions with multiple answers." Open-ended questioning was most prevalent for Success for All (100%) and Literacy Groups (75%). It was discouraging that open-ended questioning occurred in only 61% of the regular SWP classes. When teachers asked "*if then, what if,* or *suppose that* questions," it indicated that teachers encouraged students to use logical reasoning and problem-solving strategies. Across all observations, this was the least prevalent teacher-mediated thinking indicator. When teachers "related subject matter to other contexts or to everyday life," it supported the extension, or transfer, of learning. This strategy occurred most often in regular SWP classes (64%).

Student-mediated thinking indicators. Student-mediated indicators occurred during learner-centered lessons; therefore, the prevalence of the indicators suggested that students were actively involved in learning. The student-mediated indicators were rarely observed in regular SWP classes, except students frequently "explained concepts, definitions, and attributes" in their own words (62%). However, this generally occurred during teacher-centered discussions rather than student-centered activities. Other teachers promoted student thinking in various ways. The use of "manipulatives" was emphasized in Reading Recovery (100%). In Success for All, cooperative learning (50%) allowed students "to gather and organize information" (50%) and "to pursue questions" (50%).

As a whole, the student-mediated thinking indicators were infrequently observed, except "students explained concepts, definitions, and attributes." Students seldom "asked and pursued questions of their own." Opportunities for students to "use manipulatives or other active participation devices" were even more rare. Students seldom had opportunities to "work together to explore ideas collaboratively" because pairs, small groups, or cooperative learning groups were not common. A noteworthy exception occurred in Success for All classes in which students had opportunities to work together during pairs and cooperative learning activities.

Table 4

Number and Percent of Teacher- and Student-Mediated Thinking Indicators

	SWP Classes				SWP Pullout Components			
	Regular SWP (n =59)		Success for All (n =2)		Reading Recovery (n =9)		Literacy Groups (n =12)	
Thinking Indicator	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teacher-Mediated								
Teacher had students relate examples from own experience	33	55	2	100	6	66	5	41
Teacher asked students to justify ideas/explain thoughts	32	54	1	50	4	44	6	50
Teacher allowed time to consider alternatives/multiple solutions	30	50	2	100	4	44	8	66
Teacher asked open-ended questions with multiple answers	36	61	2	100	5	55	9	75
Teacher asked if/then, what if, or suppose that questions	18	30	0	0	4	44	3	25
Teacher related the subject matter to other contexts/everyday life	38	64	1	50	3	33	5	41
Mean percentage		53		75		48		50
Student-Mediated								
Students gathered and/or organized information	15	25	1	50	3	33	3	25
Students explained concepts/definitions/attributes	37	62	2	100	4	44	6	50
Students asked/pursued questions of their own	17	28	1	50	3	33	5	41
Students used manipulatives/active participation devices	14	23	0	0	9	100	3	25
Students worked together to explore ideas	18	30	1	50	NA[a]	NA[a]	2	16
Mean percentage		34		50		53		32

[a]NA = Not applicable. Students in Reading Recovery worked individually with a teacher.

The group comparisons displayed in Figure 4 show that teacher-mediated thinking occurred more often. This was a result of the prevalence of teacher-centered, whole-class instruction. Student-mediated thinking were more common in Success for All classes and Reading Recovery.

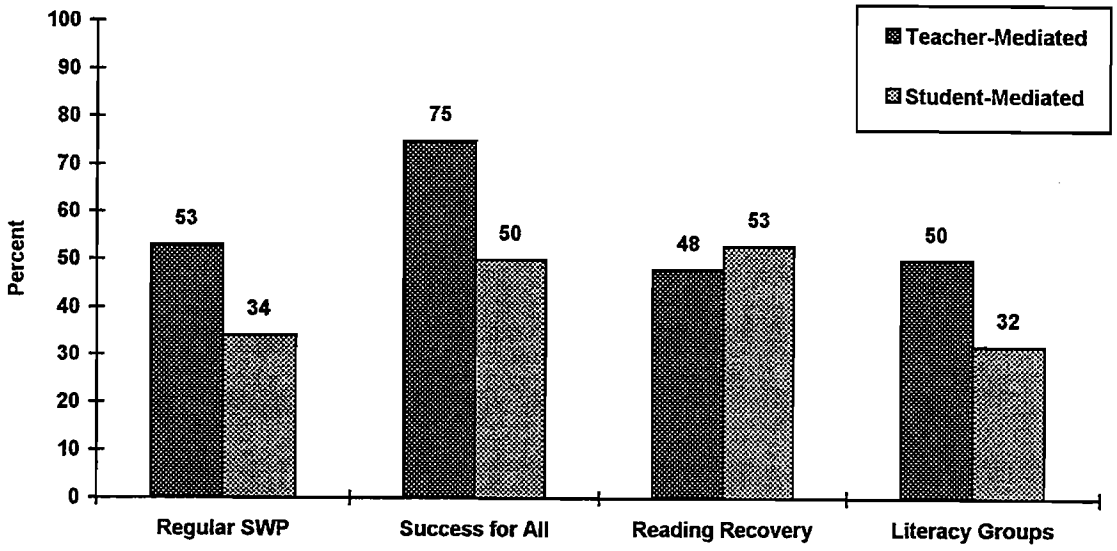

Figure 4. Mean percentages of teacher- and student-mediated thinking indicators.

Materials and Equipment Used by the Teacher and Student

The observers noted the materials and equipment used by both teacher and students. The number and percentage of materials and equipment used by the teachers and students during observations are presented in Table 5.

Teacher materials/equipment. Teachers selected materials and equipment to support their favored instructional approach. Clearly, the overhead projector and the chalkboard were the preferred equipment used by teachers in regular SWP classes. Overhead projectors were never used in Success for All, Reading Recovery, or Literacy Groups; however, chalkboards were frequently utilized for instruction.

Student materials/equipment. The materials and equipment students used during instruction revealed much about the manner and degree of student participation in learning. The observer learned whether students were expected to be active or passive participants in the learning process by the opportunities that were available. In a student-centered learning environment, students might be expected to use realistic manipulatives, to read real books, or perhaps to use references to research a topic. In a teacher-centered, skill-driven learning environment, students are more likely to have access to textbooks, basal readers, worksheets, and workbooks.

Table 5

Number and Percent of Materials and Equipment Used by Teachers and Students

	SWP Classes				SWP Pullout Components			
	Regular SWP (n = 59)		Success for All (n = 2)		Reading Recovery (n= 9)		Literacy Groups (n = 12)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Materials/Equipment Used by the Teacher								
Overhead projector	20	34	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chalkboard	26	44	2	100	2	22	7	58
CD Player/Video	1	1.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tape Recorder	3	5.1	1	50	0	0	1	8
VCR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Computer	3	5.1	0	0	0	0	1	8
Other	17	29	1	50	3	33	7	58
Materials/Equipment Used by the Student								
Manipulatives	4	7	0	0	5	56	1	8
Chalkboard	5	9	0	0	4	44	1	8
Computer	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Textbooks	12	20	0	0	0	0	1	8
Supplementary Literature	5	9	1	50	9	100	8	67
Basal Reader	11	19	1	50	1	11	0	0
References	4	7	0	0	1	11	0	0
Workbook/Worksheet	23	39	0	0	0	0	2	17
Charts/Maps	4	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Journals	8	14	0	0	3	33	0	0
Other	22	37	1	50	3	33	4	33

Note. Percents may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

The use of manipulatives was rare, except for the pullout component Reading Recovery (56%). Districtwide, the use of computers in the classroom was almost nonexistent. Supplemental literature was frequently used for reading in Reading Recovery (67%), Literacy Groups (67%), and Success for All (50%), but was seldom used in regular SWP classes (9%). The predominantly used materials in regular SWP classes were workbooks/worksheets (39%), textbooks (20%), and basal readers (19%). Data for materials/equipment showed that students in Success for All, Reading Recovery, and Literacy Groups were more likely to experience active, realistic learning while passive, skill-driven learning was often the norm for students in regular SWP classrooms.

Summary

The characteristics of *regular SWP classes* included in the present study were similar to the findings of other researchers who reported a minimal amount of student time for reading and extensive use of workbook-type assignments (Goodlad, 1984; Anderson et al, 1984). For example, teachers in *regular SWP classes* were likely to use overhead projectors or chalkboards as a means to facilitate teacher-centered, whole-group instruction. Following whole-group activities, students typically completed workbooks or worksheets as individual seatwork. Reading seldom occurred (only 10% of class time). When reading happened, students usually read grade-level basal readers, textbooks, or worksheets. Regular SWP teachers' methods could generally be characterized as discussing, assigning, having students complete assignments, and checking whether answers were right or wrong. Lower-order teacher questioning was the norm. When thinking indicators were evident, they were usually teacher-mediated.

Students in the SWP model *Success for All*, on the other hand, were more likely to experience learner-centered activities. Teachers emphasized whole-class presentation of content and guided discussion, but pairs and cooperative learning activities subsequently placed the student at the center of the learning process. Success for All students spent over one-third of their time reading (37%) and had the greatest amount of focused, silent reading time (9%). In Success for All classes, students had more opportunities to direct their own learning. As a result, there were fewer teacher questions per hour (both higher- and lower-order). Even though there were fewer questions, both teacher- and student-mediated thinking indicators were more prevalent in Success for All classes.

Reading Recovery teachers provided consistent, high-quality one-to-one tutoring for first-grade students. Students in Reading Recovery spent more time reading supplemental literature (50%) and writing (19%) than students in any other instructional approach. Students were actively engaged in using manipulatives and dryboards for letter/sound recognition activities. Teacher assessment of students' progress with Running Records was an integral part of each tutoring session. Teachers' questions generally emphasized lower-order thinking; however, a higher percentage of student-mediated thinking indicators reflected the learner-centered focus of the sessions. Reading Recovery has an established record of success nationally and in the district. Unfortunately, only a limited number of students ($N = 150$) were served in Reading Recovery; therefore, the cost-benefit factor has made the program unfeasible for many schools.

Students in *Literacy Groups* principally spent their time listening and responding to teachers' questions during guided reading discussions (41%) and reading supplemental literature (23%). Teachers individualized reading through small-group instruction. The authentic reading experiences offered by Literacy Groups were commendable; nevertheless, teachers frequently focused on lower-order, factual knowledge during guided discussions. Consequently, the presence of teacher-mediated and student-mediated thinking was limited.

Conclusions and Implications

Based on generalizations from research, elements that help students to succeed at reading include "large amounts of time for actual reading, teacher-directed instruction in comprehension strategies, opportunities for peer and collaborative learning, and occasions for students to talk to a teacher and one another about their responses to reading" (Fielding & Pearson, 1994, p. 62). Success for All, Literacy Groups, and Reading Recovery, respectively illustrated how high-quality student reading experiences were facilitated in large classes, small groups, and one-to-one tutoring to meet the needs of lower-achieving students. The following are shared elements of the programs that were generally absent from the regular SWP classes: (a) Students spent a greater percentage of their time reading; (b) students read materials at the appropriate reading level (either basal readers or supplementary books); (c) reading assessments were used to guide students' progress; (d) teachers varied their instructional activities to create individualized, learner-centered experiences; and (e) ongoing teacher training in prescribed instructional methods was provided. Training in appropriate instructional methods probably explains the greater emphasis on student reading, writing, and thinking experiences.

Overall, the instructional characteristics of regular SWP classes fell short of promoting proficient reading. Title I SWPs should consider the following instructional modifications: (a) place greater emphasis on content presentations that develop comprehension strategies; (b) devote less instructional time to guided discussions of multiple-choice, short-answer worksheets or test-like activities; (c) allocate more student time for purposeful, focused reading; (d) make greater use of small-group and one-to-one activities to support diagnostic, individualized instruction; (e) use creative, realistic learning experiences and manipulatives to promote active student engagement in learning; and (f) provide a balance of whole group, partner, cooperative learning, or small group instruction to create a stimulating environment in which students have a degree of self-responsibility for reading and learning.

If instructional change is to occur in SWPs, there must be a systematic plan. Success for All offers a model of how the entire instructional program can be improved so that students meet high academic standards. Professional development is a critical element of the transformation process. Teachers must be provided with focused, sustained professional development in reading methods, classroom management, diagnostic assessment, and so forth. Schools that have invested in training a Reading Recovery teacher have a valuable school asset. Reading Recovery teachers can use their expertise to provide valuable professional development at the school level or to mentor other teachers.

The gap in reading achievement between students in disadvantaged urban communities and more advantaged students continues to widen in the United States (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1996). This is certainly a concern in the Dallas Public Schools since over 70% of the students meet poverty guidelines. The data in the present study revealed that instructional activities within regular SWP classes may not provide effective "opportunities to learn" that support all students' achievement. Furthermore, eliminating pullout programs may deprive many students of individualized

instruction that is essential to ensure success, especially if those students do not receive appropriate instruction in the regular classroom. Title I legislation seeks to improve the teaching and learning of students in high-poverty schools by allowing schools the flexibility to plan and structure their instructional program to meet all students' needs. Additional focused evaluations of Title I reading programs are essential to narrow the "reading ability" chasm that presently separates advantaged and poverty students.

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Appendix

Program Observation Form

Observation #: _____

PROGRAM OBSERVATION FORM

1. School _____ 2. TEA# _____

3. Teacher _____ 4. Grade _____/Section _____

5. Date_____ 6. Start Time _____ End Time _____ 7. Scheduled length of class _____

8. Observer name _____# _____

9. Subject observed: Reading/Language Arts _____ Mathematics _____

10. Type of program/component observed: 11. Number of students present _____

01 Project Seed ___	06 Core Class ___	11 Foundations in Rdg. ___	16 Literacy Group ___
02 Magnet ___	07 Inclusion ___	12 HOSTS ___	17 Success for All ___
03 TAG ___	08 Josten's Lab___	13 Reading Recovery ___	18 Multi-age group ___
04 ML/MC ___	09 WTR ___	14 UTD Tutoring ___	19 Parallel block ___
05 Laureate Seminar ___	10 CCC Lab ___	15 Other Tutorial ___	

12. **PHYSICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:**

If statement is generally true for this class, √ *yes*. If statement is generally not true, √ *no*. If undecided, √ *unsure*.

Yes	*No*	*Unsure*	
___	___	___	a. **Adequate/appropriate furniture for number of students** • Each student and teacher have their own desks, chairs, computers, etc. • Students do not share equipment unless it is necessary to achieve the learning objective.
___	___	___	b. **Appropriate space for model of instruction** • Students, teacher, and others can easily hear, view, and participate in classroom activities. • Teacher and students are arranged so they can effectively communicate with each other.
___	___	___	c. **Appropriate light** • Students and teachers have adequate light so that shadows are not on books and papers, and eye strain will not occur.
___	___	___	d. **Appropriate temperature** • Rooms have a comfortable temperature. Teacher and students are neither too hot nor too cold.
___	___	___	e. **Appropriate noise level** • The teacher/students can hear each other without excessive noise from other sources. • The room is not too close to the playground, cafeteria, other students, etc.

Comments related to physical learning environment:

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. **MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT USED BY THE TEACHER:**

___ overhead projector (1)	___ CD player/video (2)	___ tape recorder (3)	___ VCR (4)
___ movie projector (5)	___ standard calculator (6)	___ graphic calculator (7)	___ computer (8)
___ chalkboard (9)			

Other (10) _____

_____

_____

14. **MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT USED BY THE STUDENTS:**

___ textbooks (1)	___ standard calculator (2)	___ graphic calculator (3)	___ computer (4)
___ chalkboard (5)	___ reference materials (6)	___ manipulatives (7)	___ supplemental literature (8)
___ worksheet/wbook (9)	___ charts/maps (10)	___ student journals (11)	

___ HBJ basal reader (12) Name/level of HBJ basal: _____

Other (13) _____

_____

_____

15. **PSYCHOSOCIAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:**

If statement is generally true for this class, √ *yes*. If statement is generally not true, √ *no*. If undecided, √ *unsure*.

Yes	*No*	*Unsure*	
___	___	___	a. **A climate of courtesy and mutual respect is established** • Teacher interacts with off-task, disruptive students in a calm, dignified manner. • Teacher and students avoid sarcasm and negative criticism. • Teacher and students listen to others' ideas/opinions. • Teacher stresses the importance of student respect, rights, and acceptance of responsibility.
___	___	___	b. **Enthusiasm for teaching and learning is communicated** • Content is related to students' interests and experiences. • The value and importance of activities is emphasized. • Student efforts are reinforced and praised. • Students are challenged, and there are high expectations for student performance.
___	___	___	c. **Patience, empathy, and/or understanding are evident during lesson** • Slow or reluctant learners are encouraged. • Reactions to incorrect answers are encouraging, supportive. • Students' cultural heritage is valued/appreciated. • A positive rapport is established and maintained with *all* students.
___	___	___	d. **The lesson is personalized** • Students are engaged in activities that meet their individual needs and learning styles, instead of every student involved in the same instructional tasks or activities. • Individualization may be facilitated by small groups, one-to-one, multi-age groups, team teaching, diversified curriculum, etc.

Comments related to the psychosocial learning environment:

16. **THINKING INDICATORS:**

If statement is generally true for this class, √ *yes*. If statement is generally not true, √ *no*. If undecided, √ *unsure*.

Yes	*No*	*Unsure*	
___	___	___	a. Teacher had students think about and relate examples from their own experience.
___	___	___	b. Students gathered and/or organized information (*used references, took notes, outlined, etc.).*
___	___	___	c. Teacher asked students to justify ideas and explain their thoughts (*Why do you think so?).*
___	___	___	d. Teacher allowed time to consider alternatives, points of view, multiple solutions.
___	___	___	e. Teacher asked open-ended questions with multiple answers.
___	___	___	f. Teacher asked *if/then*, *what if*, or *suppose that* questions.
___	___	___	g. Teacher related the subject matter to other contexts or to everyday life.
___	___	___	h. Students explained key concepts, definitions, and attributes in their own words.
___	___	___	i. Students asked and pursued questions of their own.
___	___	___	j. Students used manipulatives or other active participation devices.
___	___	___	k. Students worked together to explore ideas collaboratively.

Comments related to thinking indicators:

PROGRAM OBSERVATION RECORD

TEACHER ACTIVITY CODE CATEGORIES:

1. Teacher Presentation of Content 2. Guided Discussion 3. Test Preparation 4. Directions for Assignments 5. Student Presentation 6. Individual Seatwork 7. Pairs/Groups Seatwork 8. Small Group Instruction 9. One-on-one Instruction 10. Computer-assisted Instruction 11. Checking/Grading 12. Tests 13. Procedural/Behavioral 14. Transitions 15. Administrative Routines 16. Waiting time 17. Discipline 18. Non-academic Activity

STUDENT ACTIVITY CODE CATEGORIES:

1. Oral Reading 2. Choral Reading 3. Silent Reading 4. Writing 5. Organizing Information 6. Short-answer Exercise 7. Math Computation 8. Math Problem Solving 9. Chalkboard 10. Manipulatives 11. Game 12. Listening (3 min.+) 13. Listening & Responding 14. Interactive Discussion 15. Computer 16. Multiple Student Activities 17. Waiting 18. Non-academic Activity 19. Other

T-Act Code	S-Act Code	Time Points	Elpsd Min	DESCRIPTIVE NOTES		T Q	Q	Q	Q

Student Engagement	Student Engagement	Student Engagement	Student Engagement	Student Engagement	Student Engagement
Time:______	Time:______	Time:______	Time:______	Time:______	Time:______
# of Students______	# of Students______	# of Students______	# of Students______	# of Students______	# of Students______
On-task______	On-task______	On-task______	On-task______	On-task______	On-task______
Off-task______	Off-task______	Off-task______	Off-task______	Off-task______	Off-task______
Waiting______	Waiting______	Waiting______	Waiting______	Waiting______	Waiting______