

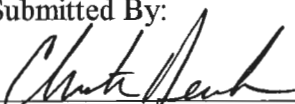
**A Qualitative Study of Personal
Philosophies and Teaching Methods
Regarding Whole Language**

Thesis

**Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the
Department of Education and Human Development
State University of New York
College at Brockport
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Masters of Science in Education**

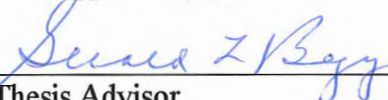
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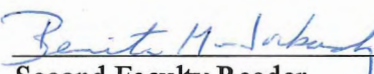

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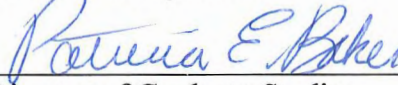
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Abstract

The term whole language is broad and open to many interpretations. This study examined two aspects of interpretation regarding whole language. The first aspect examined is the personal philosophy teachers hold regarding whole language. Secondly, this study looked at how teachers apply their philosophy into their actions in the classroom.

The purpose of this descriptive study is to compare these perceptions and actions with the current body of research on whole language. This goal was accomplished by administering a survey to teachers. This survey consisted of questions regarding personal whole language philosophies and actions.

The data collected were analyzed qualitatively to determine how closely personal actions and beliefs coincide with the current body of research regarding whole language.

Research has indicated that there are three dimensions that must be incorporated for the understanding of whole language. The first dimension involved research behind the philosophy of whole language. The strong basis in research has been traced in this paper. The second dimension for understanding of whole language has been met. The pedagogical theory that has resulted from the research is equally sound. The third dimension of understanding of whole language the practice of the definition has been partially met. Evidence has been found to support the practice of a whole language definition but clear evidence was not found to show clear understanding of the philosophy of whole language by all practitioners.

Dedication

This is dedicated to my husband, Kurt F. Devlin. Without his love and support I would not be where I am today.

Special thanks also go to Dr. Begy. He is the person who introduced me to whole language and supported me throughout this project.

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CHAPTER I

Statement of the Problem

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the personal philosophies and teaching methods of elementary classroom teachers regarding whole language. These perceptions and actions were compared qualitatively with the current body of research on whole language.

Questions to be Answered

1. How do elementary classroom teachers define whole language?
2. How is this definition of whole language applied in the classroom?
3. How closely do personal actions and beliefs coincided with the current body of research regarding whole language?

Need for the Study

Research has indicated that the definition of whole language is vague and inconsistent (Bergeron, 1990; Groff, 1991; Hillerich, 1990). The lack of a concise definition has raised concerns from opponents of the whole language movement. They feel the variety of definitions reflects misunderstanding and

confusion. Bergeron (1990) believes "that the term whole language has become too widely defined and used in the professional literature, a factor that may result in its misuses and or loss of credibility as a source of change in elementary reading instruction" (p. 301). Bergeron maintains that "the need to define whole language is a realistic and important issue as educators attempt to communicate and collaborate in response to innovative change" (p. 302).

Advocates for whole language disagree that there should be one definition for whole language (Watson, 1989). The formation of a definition of whole language is a complicated thought process. Watson (1989) states there are three dimensions that incorporate understanding of whole language before a definition can be formed. The first dimension is based on research, research read and studied on literacy and how children learn. The second dimension is based on pedagogical theory. Pedagogical theory is a way of thinking about teaching that develops from research. The final dimension is the actual practice of the definition in the classroom reflective of both research and theory.

Watson (1989) states that "definitions reflect . . . personal and professional growth" (p. 131). Formation of a definition of whole language demands introspection into oneself. When all three dimensions of whole language are considered, definitions will vary, but they "never go outside the boundaries of an acceptable definition of whole language" (p. 132). As an educator undergoes

profession growth, his/her definition of whole language will change to reflect that growth.

Watson stresses that, "...it is not enough to define whole language, educators must make sure that what occurs in classrooms is supported by and consistent with their definition" (p.131).

This study provided a means of obtaining information regarding local educators' definitions of whole language, the practices they use within this definition and their knowledge of the pedagogical theory behind the practices.

Definition of Terms

Literacy - For the purpose of this study, literacy refers to using reading, writing, speaking and listening to communicate clearly.

Philosophy - For the purpose of this study, philosophy is used interchangeably with the term definition.

Practice - For the purposes of this study, practice refers to the actions that occur in the classroom that are part of the process of learning to be literate.

Research - For the purposes of this study, research refers to the studies and information known and proven about how children learn language and literacy.

Theory - For the purposes of this study, theory refers to the teaching rationale for the practices in the classroom. This theory is developed from research.

Whole Language - For the purposes of this study, this general definition will serve for boundaries. "Whole language is a perspective on education that is supported by beliefs about learners and learning, teachers and teaching, language and curriculum." (Watson, 1989, p. 133).

Limitations of the Study

The subjects of this study consisted of 32 elementary teachers. Seventeen of the respondents are from the State University College at Brockport. They are graduate students. Fifteen of the respondents are elementary educators from central New York (Kingston area). The voluntary nature of this survey limits the number of responses received. Results also may have varied if the population of the survey was more widespread.

Summary

Research shows that there are many varied definitions of whole language. Although definitions vary, there are basic principles all proponents of whole language follow. These principles are based on research, theory and practice. This study investigated the philosophies and actions of classroom teachers to see

if they were according to whole language theory. This was accomplished by a survey. The results were analyzed qualitatively.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the personal philosophies and teaching methods of elementary classroom teachers regarding whole language. These perceptions and actions were compared qualitatively with the current body of research on whole language.

Roots of Whole Language

The roots of the whole language movement can be traced back to the work of early philosophers in education (Bergeron, 1990). John Amos Comenius, a philosopher of the seventeenth century, touched on many of the facets of whole language. Comenius believed that education should be enjoyable and reflect real life experiences. He maintained that schools should allow students to manipulate objects and talk about what they are learning as part of the learning process. Comenius also mandated giving students opportunities to discover information on their own using information they already know (Goodman, Y. 1989).

Another philosopher, John Dewey, studied how knowledge forms. He discovered the importance of integrating curriculum and language. Dewey

learned that the more related to a child's life school was the stronger the ability to learn (Goodman, Y., 1989). Dewey believed that learning should "start where the learner is" (Goodman, K. 1989, p. 209). Learning should have meaning and be relevant to something in the learner's life (Goodman, K., 1989). These ideas of integration of curriculum and child centered learning are all part of the whole language philosophy today (Goodman, Y., 1989).

Lev Vygotsky, a Soviet psychologist, built his theories upon the work of Jean Piaget. Vygotsky started with Piaget's perceptions on thought processes of children and expanded them. Vygotsky felt that thinking developed based on interactions with others not as separate stages as Piaget believed (Cordeiro, 1992). Through his studies, Vygotsky learned that interactions between the learner and the teacher in a social context enhanced learning capability (Goodman, Y., 1989).

Vygotsky called this interaction between learner and teacher the zone of proximal development. He asserted that when interacting with a teacher, the learner will be able to achieve higher levels of learning due to the teacher support. These levels are higher than the learner was capable of achieving while working independently. Vygotsky maintained that the social aspect that occurs during the interacting process enhances learning (Cordeiro, 1992).

M. A. Halliday, a systemic linguist, also took a social view of learning. He focused on how language is learned. He discovered that language is learned

through its use in a natural environment (Weaver, 1994). He described "language learning [as] 'learning how to mean' because in the process of learning language people learn the social meaning language represents" (Goodman, K., 1989, p. 210).

Three types of learning occur through language, "learning language, learning through language, and learning about language" (Goodman, K., 1989 p. 210).

The work of these early educators has laid the groundwork of research and theory for current models of learning. These philosophers have touched on whole language's aspects involving language and environment. Later theorists will use the work of these men as a backbone for their own models of learning and literacy.

Models of Learning and Literacy Development

Whole language educators have been influenced by two models of learning and literacy development. The two models are Holdaway's natural learning model and Cambourne's model of learning (Weaver, 1994).

Holdaway's natural learning model is based on the principle that learning is innate. Through the process of learning, individual parts are mastered unconsciously while working toward the result. This is called learning from whole to part (Weaver, 1994).

Holdaway described natural learning, or learning from whole to part, as consisting of four steps. The first step in this process is an observational one. The learner observes a model engaging in an activity in a natural setting. In the next step, guided participation, the learner expresses an interest in engaging in the same activity. The model assists and guides the learner through the activity. The third step, unsupervised role-playing practice, allows the learner to practice the activity independently, but with assistance available if desired. The final step is performance. The learner engages in demonstrating the new skill to the model, who acts as an audience and delivers praise for the accomplishment of the new skill (Routman, 1991; Weaver, 1994).

Brian Cambourne developed a model for learning that is "based on the way that human brains create meaning in the real world of language use" (Cordeiro, 1992, p. 222). Cambourne expands on the steps Holdaway outlines in his natural learning model to describe his own model of learning. According to Cambourne, there are eight conditions necessary for learning. These conditions are immersion, demonstration, engagement, expectations, responsibility, approximation, use, and response (Cordeiro, 1992).

The first condition is immersion. Immersion refers to the learner being surrounded by the material to be learned. The environment is saturated. This

saturation involves all forms of language. Reading, writing, listening and speaking are all part of this process (Cambourne, 1988).

The second condition for learning is demonstration. In demonstration, an expert models what is to be learned. It is important for the expert to be someone the learner wants to emulate (Cordeiro, 1992). Learners observe the models and what they do. It is the responsibility of the model to describe aloud the thought processes that are unobservable to the learner. This thinking out loud helps the learner understand all aspects of the process to be learned. The demonstration process is complex and must be repeated frequently to allow the learner time to understand all the nuances involved (Cambourne, 1988).

The third condition for learning is engagement. Immersion and demonstration are not enough. The learner must become engaged in the learning. Three aspects must be met before a learner will attempt something new. First of all, the learner must feel that the learning is something that he or she is capable of doing. Secondly the learner must see a purpose or reason for the learning. Lastly the learner must feel that the risk involved in attempting the learning is worth the result. One way to influence the learner is through the expectations of the model (Cambourne, 1988).

Expectations are the fourth condition for learning. "Expectations are messages that are communicated to learners in a variety of very subtle ways"

(Cambourne, 1988, p. 57). Cambourne goes on to describe two types of expectations. Expectations that are set for all learners and expectations that are set for individual learners. Expectations for all learners involves building self esteem and believing all students can learn. Expectations for individual learners involve understanding a student's developmental level and building expectations from there.

The fifth condition for learning is responsibility. According to Cambourne responsibility lies with both the learner and the teacher. It is the responsibility of the teacher to create an environment of demonstrations and learning opportunities. The teacher then puts trust in the student to make selections from this environment. The student makes these choices based on independent decisions regarding his/her own learning.

The sixth condition for learning is approximation. "Freedom to approximate is an essential ingredient of all successful learning" (Cambourne, 1988, p. 70). Cambourne states that each approximation and error that a student makes is a potential learning situation. The students adjust and refines thinking based on their mistakes. This gradual process evolves through practice and use.

Use is the seventh condition for learning. Use involves the learner's experimentation through approximation with the material to be learned.

Opportunities arise naturally in the learner's life that allow the practice of this material. Approximations are tested and adjusted as they are used.

Testing and refinement of approximations are enhanced through the final condition for learning, response. As the learner practices the material to be learned, he/she receives responses from the audience. The responses generally involve accepting what is approximated and encouraging its continuance. The audience listens and evaluates the approximation and then demonstrates the corrected form for the learner.

These two models of learning have set up a framework for the philosophy of whole language. Research in the field of reading and writing has been developed from these models.

Research on Reading and Writing

Many researchers today have based their work on the theories of educators in the past. Much work has been done in the past 40 years to help in the understanding of how children learn to read and write. Donald Graves and Kenneth Goodman are two men who have contributed much to this area. Many of their findings are the basis of the principles of whole language.

Donald Graves brought much insight into the field of writing in the 1970's. He found that children learn to write by writing. His research showed that children developed improved writing ability when they were writing in a

classroom that supported and encouraged their writing skills (Goodman, Y., 1989).

Kenneth Goodman began his reading research in the area of miscue analysis. Through this research he discovered that children were more successful reading material in a whole text as opposed to reading lists of words. He also discovered that in some cases the miscues, although incorrect, made sense in the overall context of the material. The results of this research indicated to Goodman that readers read for meaning. During reading there is an interaction between the reader, the text, and the author. This interaction involves the construction of meaning (Goodman, K., 1992a). The meaning formed is established from previous knowledge and experiences of the reader (Goodman, K., 1992b).

Goodman collected data that assisted him in developing a model for reading. This model is called the psycholinguistic model of the reading process. Goodman based his model on the three language cueing systems. These systems are semantic, syntactic, and graphophonemic. All three systems are used interchangeably to decode language (Fountas & Hannigan, 1989).

Syntactic cues are used when a reader uses the parts of a sentence to decode words. Grammar rules, word order, and word endings are all syntactic cues. Semantic cues are used when a reader uses the context of the sentence, or paragraph to help make sense out of unfamiliar words. Graphophonemic cues are

used when a reader uses knowledge of letters, sounds, and patterns to decode unfamiliar words (Weaver, 1994).

All of the early research and models of learning, reading, and writing has been used to develop a framework for the principles of whole language. K.

Goodman (1989) stated it best when he described whole language as . . . :

recombin[ing] the scientific and humanistic traditions in education. It builds solidly on Dewey's epistemology, his philosophical theories of how knowledge develops, how we learn by doing what is functional and relevant. It also expands on the psychological research and theories of Piaget and Vygotsky. Whole language incorporates the concepts of language as social semiotic and language learning, as 'learning how to mean' from the theory and research of Halliday . . . It builds on and contributes to the research on reading and writing from print awareness, miscue analysis, process writing, schema theory . . . It draws on ethnography and descriptive and collaborative research in building curriculum and methodology that supports natural language learning (p. 214).

This background of the history of whole language has paved the way for understanding how the principles of whole language have developed.

Basic Principles of Whole Language

Although many people disagree on an exact definition for whole language there are some basic assumptions to which all supporters of whole language adhere. A organization known as the Whole Language Umbrella (WLU) has created a constitution that outlines these basic beliefs (Watson, 1994).

1. A holistic perspective to literacy learning and teaching.
2. A positive view of all learners.
3. Language as central to learning.
4. Learning as easiest when it is from whole to part, in authentic contexts, and functional.
5. The empowerment of all learners, including students and teachers.
6. Learning as both personal and social, and classrooms as learning communities.
7. Acceptance of whole learners including their languages, cultures, and experiences.
8. Learning as both joyous and fulfilling (Watson, 1994, p. 602).

These are the beliefs that whole language is based on. The principles that define these beliefs are developed from research and theory.

The first principle of whole language, a holistic perspective to literacy learning and teaching, is the heart of whole language. Reading, writing, speaking and listening are incorporated into each content area. Math, science, social studies, art, and music are tied together into a theme that supports the curriculum (Watson, 1989).

Skills are taught in the context of the theme based on the needs of each student (Weaver, 1994). Rules of grammar, punctuation, and spelling are pulled from actual text (Goodman, K., 1986). Teaching skills in context helps the

students see the connection between the skill and when it needs to be used (Fountas & Hannigan, 1989).

Children are taught that reading and writing is part of the language process. Language is a form of communication between two or more people. It has purpose and meaning. Through whole language students learn that reading and writing are forms of communication (Goodman, K., 1986).

The second principle of whole language states that all learners are viewed positively. This principle supports the concept that all students can and want to learn. Whole language accepts that learning is developmental. All students do not learn at the same pace. There are levels of development for speaking, reading, listening, and writing. Whole language teachers realize that students are at different levels and they accept all students at the level they are (Routman, 1991).

Along with acceptance comes expectation. Teachers have high expectations of their students. They believe that their students are capable of learning to read and write. The students are aware of these expectations and they live up to them (Routman, 1991).

The process of learning to read and write is more important to a whole language teacher than the product. It is through this process that learning takes

place. The act of working through a process gives valuable information to the teacher concerning that student's development level (Routman, 1991).

Mistakes are acceptable and are viewed as tools for learning. Mistakes demonstrate risk taking and thinking on the part of the student. Risk taking and critical thinking are valuable tools for extending learning (Watson, 1989).

The third principle of whole language describes language as central to learning. The whole language classroom is organized to teach through language. Language is incorporated into every subject as much as possible. Students engage in reading, writing, speaking, and listening as they learn (Fountas & Hannigan, 1989). Students "learn through language while they learn language" (Goodman, K., 1986, p. 10).

The fourth principle of whole language states that learning is easiest when it is from whole to part, in authentic contexts, and functional.

Whole language takes a top down or whole to part approach to learning. This means that language is looked at in its entirety. It is not broken up into rules, sounds, or letters. Language is kept in its natural form. Students learn language rules, sounds and letters while they use language (Fountas & Hannigan, 1989). Learning language in this fashion is authentic.

Whole language advocates use the term authentic to describe activities that incorporate language used naturally in the classroom. Students learn to

communication through reading, writing, speaking and listening. They are given opportunities to share what they are working on and what they have accomplished. The natural desire to communicate with others motivates students to work. Because their work is shared with others, it is authentic and it has a function. Sharing what they have learned gives students a reason and a purpose for learning (Weaver, 1994).

The fifth principle deals with empowerment of both students and teachers. Empowerment drives the motivation of students and teachers.

Students are empowered by whole language. "Using language for real purposes and functions . . . [allows students to] develop an understanding of its potential" (Fountas & Hannigan, 1989, p. 135). Students see how powerful language is as they experiment with it.

Students are also empowered through choice. According to Routman, (1991) trust and responsibility develops when students are allowed to select their own books to read and their own topics to write about. Self selection of material also builds motivation. Students see they are responsible for their own learning. Ownership over learning evolves over time as the student sees the teacher trusting them to make their own learning choices.

Just as whole language is empowering to students, it is equally empowering to teachers. Teachers use what they know about their students and

how learning occurs to create an environment. This environment offers choices and options to students. Teachers entrust their student to make choices about learning. This act of entrusting students to define their own learning is empowering to teachers (Routman, 1991).

The sixth principle of whole language states that learning is both personal and social. The whole language classroom is described as a learning community. Weaver (1994) describes how "individual learning is promoted by social collaboration: by opportunities to work with others, to brainstorm, to try out new ideas and get feedback, [and] to obtain assistance" (p. 334). This act of working and talking together is valuable for strengthening communication skills. Students can act as models for one another as they become stronger in the use of language (Weaver, 1994). Goodman (1986) describes "language as both personal and social. It's driven from inside by the need to communicate and shaped from the outside toward the norms of the society" (p. 26).

The seventh principle of whole language deals with the acceptance of whole learners including their languages, cultures, and experiences. Routman (1991) states whole language works off the premise that all students can learn. Whole language focuses on the strengths of students. "Focusing on the strengths also means focusing on the possibilities, appreciating and valuing culture" (p. 15) each student brings into the classroom to add to the community of learners.

The community of learners has a lot to do with the success of whole language. According to Weaver (1994) the environment of the classroom must be one in which a student feels safe. Once that safe environment is established then a student will be comfortable and willing to take risks in the learning process. Ken Goodman (1986) states that without risk taking, students will not make predictions or educated guesses as they engage in language.

The final principle of whole language describes learning as both joyful and fulfilling. Students are making their own choices about their learning. These choices involve authentic activities with real audiences (Weaver, 1994). Students are intrinsically motivated because they want to communicate. Students are actively involved in their activities (Goodman, K., 1986). Students have control over their learning. This makes learning both joyful and fulfilling.

Asked what makes whole language whole, Ken Goodman (1986) writes:

Whole language learning builds around whole learners learning whole language in whole situations.

Whole language learning assumes respect for language, respect for the learner, and for the teacher.

The focus is on meaning and not on language itself, in authentic speech and literacy events.

Learners are encouraged to take risks and invited to use language, in all its varieties, for their own purposes.

In a whole language classroom, all the varied functions of oral and written language are appropriate and encouraged. (p.40)

One Misunderstanding of Whole Language

One misunderstanding of whole language has to do with the teaching of skills. Whole language does not teach skills as a traditional teacher might but skills are taught. Every skill that students learn is embedded in the curriculum. The students are taught skills such as punctuation, grammar, phonics, and spelling while they are engaged in language. Because every student works at his/her own developmental level the skills are taught as the student needs them in context with what s/he is working on. Whole language does work in subskills but these subskills are approached from a whole to part (Weaver, 1994).

Components of Whole Language

The eight main principles of whole language serve as the boundaries from which teachers organize their classroom. Although each classroom is different, main components can be found (Moss & Naden, 1994). These main components consist of activities revolving around reading and writing (Cramer, 1992).

According to Routman (1991) "A balanced reading program includes the following components: reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, and language opportunities to respond critically and thoughtfully [to what has been read]" (p. 31 - 32). Together these components work together to create the reading program.

"Reading aloud is seen as the single most influential factor in young children's success in learning to read" (Routman, 1991, p. 32). Reading aloud is a group reading experience. The teacher, or model, reads from one book while the audience listens. The reader uses expression to enhance the experience. Reading aloud enables students to hear stories they are unable to read independently. They are exposed to new vocabulary and writing styles while their listening skills are enhanced. Reading aloud demonstrates to the students how enjoyable reading is (Routman, 1991).

Shared reading is similar to reading aloud. In shared reading, the text of the material being read is visible to the audience. The model reads the text aloud and the audience is allowed to join in if it chooses. The audience is supported in its reading by the model (Routman, 1991).

Reading aloud and shared reading work to build the students' positive attitudes toward reading. Reading is presented as pleasurable. Guided reading, on the other hand, teaches students to "think critically about a book" (Routman, 1991, p. 38). While in groups, students read the same book and talk about it. Each student has his/her own copy. The teacher guides the students with questions as the book is read. The emphasis here is on reading for meaning, not getting all of the words correct. The students think about and discuss what they are reading as a group (Routman, 1991).

Independent reading, the fourth component of a whole language reading program, allows the students to control their own learning. Students select their own books to read from the variety of materials in the classroom. Everyone in the class, including the teacher, reads his/her individually selected book. Studies have shown that "ten minutes a day of independent reading can increase reading proficiency" (Routman, 1991, p. 42).

Tying all of these components together is responding critically and thoughtfully to what has been read. No matter what reading component is being followed, the students have opportunities to talk, think, and respond to what they have read. Sometimes these responses are oral and sometimes these responses are written (Routman, 1991).

A balanced writing program has the following components: "writing aloud, shared writing, guided writing, and independent writing" (Routman, 1991, p.32). Although these approaches are separated, "in a balanced writing program, writers regularly interact with and overlap all of these approaches" (Routman, 1991, p. 51).

Writing aloud involves modeling writing for the students. This process is performed where the text can be seen by the students. The students observe the writing process from beginning to end. The teacher describes everything that is involved in writing as it occurs. Through seeing and hearing how writing is

constructed, students begin to understand how reading and writing are connected (Routman, 1991).

Shared writing involves a group writing experience also. In this case, however, the teacher writes what the class composes. The teacher models the act of writing while the students create the content. This manner of instruction allows student to participate in the thinking part of the writing process without having to put words on paper (Routman, 1991).

Guided writing involves the switching of roles of the teacher and student. The students compose and write while the teacher guides. Throughout this process, the ownership of the writing remains with the student. The teacher assists the students in getting their meaning across through their writing. The students has opportunities to conference with peer and the teacher on their writing (Routman, 1991).

In independent writing, the student writes without "teacher intervention or evaluation" (Routman, 1991, p.67). "The purpose of independent writing . . . is to build fluency, establish the writing habit, make personal connections, explore meanings, promote critical thinking, and use writing as a natural, pleasurable, self-chosen activity (Routman, 1991, p. 67).

Role of the Teacher

The philosophy of whole language has changed the role of teachers.

To implement a whole language philosophy, teachers need to know about language and literacy development, about language itself, about collaborative learning, about children's literature, about the reading and writing process, and about language for learning across subject disciplines (Church, 1994, p. 368).

This new knowledge about learners and learning involves changing teacher actions in the classroom. Teachers need to "accept responsibility for assuring that the maximum amount of learning takes place for each learner" (Goodman, K., 1992, p. 359).

According to K. Goodman (1992) key teaching roles have emerged as whole language evolves to educate students. The teacher must assume the role of initiator, mediator, kidwatcher, liberator, and curriculum maker in his/her classroom. These five roles, different from traditional teaching roles, empower teachers and students to take control of learning.

As an initiator, the teacher must provide opportunities for the students to learn from that are relevant to them. The teacher provides the experiences and the students pick and chose what they will do. These experiences may include procedures for classroom organization or they may include actual activities. The students work around the framework the teacher has created, selecting and initiating their own learning (Goodman, K., 1992).

As a mediator, the teacher must guide the students learning without taking the power away from the student. Control must remain with the student. Mediation occurs through thoughtful discussion between the teacher and student. The teacher makes gentle suggestions to help the student. The teacher never tells the student the answer. Every effort is made for the student to discover the answer on his/her own (Goodman, K., 1992).

The third role a teacher must take on is that of kidwatcher. This means that the teacher must know every learner in the classroom. Watching the students while they work gives valuable information to the teacher, information regarding developmental levels and areas where they need assistance. The teacher can then take this information and use it to maximize the potential of that student to learn (Goodman, K., 1992).

As a liberator, the teacher must allow students to take control of their learning. The classroom must be a place where the student has power. Activities in the classroom are functional and have meaning for the student. This liberation and power does not mean that the students are free to do whatever they choose. The students are free to choose from activities and experiences the teacher has initiated through the classroom environment. These activities provide opportunities for true learning experiences not wasted ones (Goodman, K., 1992).

As a curriculum maker, the teacher has the responsibility to create activities and curriculum that has meaning to the students. This curriculum must be developmental and relevant. Life experience, culture, and interests all play a part in curricular development (Goodman, K., 1992).

These roles of a whole language teacher do not happen automatically. According to Routman (1991), there is a process or set of stages a teacher follows moving toward whole language. This involves first believing that whole language is too difficult or impossible to understand. Eventually after some thought, a teacher decides to do some reading and research about whole language. The reading and research gives the teacher some ideas to try. The teacher follows exactly what the experts suggest. As growth occurs, the teacher begins to adapt ideas to fit with his/her own beginning ideas. Finally the teachers begins to trust themselves and their knowledge of how learners learn and develops curriculum independently based on their individual students.

Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter shows that whole language has developed from research and theory about how children learn. Understanding this research has lead to many of the beliefs upon which whole language teachers base their actions. Although definitions of whole language vary, the principles behind those definitions are the same. Whole language teachers use many

techniques to make learning meaningful for their students. These techniques revolve around reading and writing. Skills are drawn from the reading and writing of the student so the student can see how everything is connected. The teacher's role in the classroom is to facilitate each student's learning.

CHAPTER III

Design

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the personal philosophies and teaching methods of elementary classroom teachers regarding whole language. These perceptions and actions were compared qualitatively with the current body of research on whole language.

Questions to be Answered

1. How do elementary classroom teachers define whole language?
2. How is this definition of whole language applied in the classroom?
3. How closely do personal actions and beliefs coincided with the current body of research regarding whole language?

Methodology

Subjects -- The subjects for this study consisted of 32 elementary teachers. Seventeen of the respondents are from the State University College at Brockport. They are graduate students. Fifteen of the respondents are elementary educators from central New York (Kingston area).

Materials -- The material used for this study was designed by the researcher. The survey is entitled *Survey of Reading Instruction*. Questions focused on the teachers' methods, materials, roles and actions during reading instruction. The respondents defined whole language in their own words and stated how that definition has developed. Lastly the respondents answered questions that measured their knowledge of whole language principles.

Procedure -- Approximately 50 copies of the survey were delivered by the researcher to professors and educators to be administered. Respondents included graduate students from SUNY Brockport, educators from central New York, and first time attendees at a whole language seminar.

Analysis

The responses of the returned surveys were descriptively analyzed.

CHAPTER IV

Analysis of Data

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the personal philosophies and teaching methods of elementary classroom teachers regarding whole language. These perceptions and actions were compared qualitatively with the current body of research on whole language.

Tables

Table 1	Years of teaching experience
Table 2	Self ranking of degree consider a whole language teacher
Table 3	Self ranking of understanding of whole language
Table 4	Comparison of degree consider a whole language teacher with self ranking of understanding of whole language
Table 5	Methods and Materials used in a typical reading day
Table 6	Comparison of components of a whole language classroom
Table 7	Role of teacher as defined by educators in survey
Table 8	Comparison of role of teacher with the role of a whole language teacher
Table 9	Phrases used to describe whole language
Table 10	Comparison of phrases used to describe whole language and basic principles of whole language.
Table 11	Development of participants whole language definition
Table 12	Comparison of understanding of the philosophy of whole language with whole language statements
Table 12a	Reading is a language process
Table 12b	Guessing is a part of reading
Table 12c	Mistakes are to be avoided
Table 12d	Whole language looks at sub skills
Table 12e	Phonics is an essential part of whole language

Findings and Interpretations

Table 1

Years of Teaching Experience

0 - 2 years	2
3 - 5 years	16
6 - 8 years	6
9 - 11 years	3
12 - 14 years	2
15+ years	3

This chart shows the years of teaching experience of the participants in the survey. It is significant that over 50% of the participants have been teaching for five years or less.

Table 2

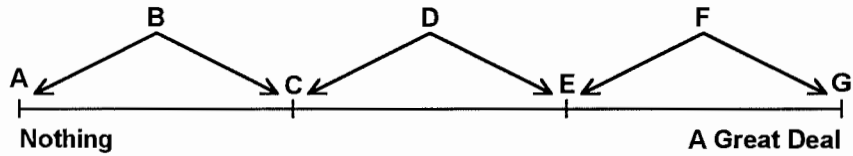
Self Ranking of degree a whole language teacher

Not at all	0%
Somewhat	28%
More so than not	59%
Between	3%
Completely	9%

This chart shows how the participants in the survey ranked themselves regarding the degree they consider themselves a whole language reading teacher. Approximately 60 % of the participants consider themselves to be a whole language reading teacher more so than not. No one participating in the survey selected not at all.

Table 3

Self ranking of understanding of whole language



A	0%
B	0%
C	0%
D	16%
E	22%
F	44%
G	19%

This chart shows the results of the scale the participants in the survey marked to indicate where they felt they fit regarding their understanding of the philosophy of whole language. No one participating in the survey ranked themselves in the lowest three areas. The majority of people that responded ranked themselves in area F. Nineteen percent of the respondents ranked themselves at the highest level of the continuum.

Table 4

**Comparison of degree a whole language teacher
with self ranking of understanding of whole language**

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Not at all (NAA)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Somewhat (sw)	0%	0%	0%	22%	44%	11%	22%
More so than not (MSTN)	0%	0%	0%	16%	16%	53%	16%
Between (B)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Completely (c)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	67%	33%

This chart compares the degree the participants consider themselves a whole language reading teacher with the self ranking of their understanding of the philosophy of whole language.

Table 5

The abbreviations in the following chart illustrate how participants ranked themselves regarding the degree they consider themselves a whole language reading teacher. The initials stand for: NAA = not at all, SW = somewhat, MSTN = more so than not, B = between more so than not and completely, and C = completely.

Methods and Materials used in a typical reading day

Activity/Material	NAA	SW	MSTN	B	C
Using basals	0	3	5	0	0
Using tradebooks	0	0	2	0	2
Combination of basal/trade	0	0	3	0	0

Homogeneous grouping	0	3	1	0	0
Heterogeneous grouping	0	0	0	0	0
Whole group instruction	0	6	5	0	0
Small group instruction	0	1	7	1	1
Discussion of literature comprehension	0	4	4	0	1
Discussion of literature reaction/feelings	0	0	0	0	1
Written readers response	0	0	2	0	2
Read aloud by teacher	0	1	6	0	1
Choral group reading	0	0	3	0	1
Self selected reading	0	0	2	0	0
Self selected writing	0	0	1	0	0
Teacher models reading	0	2	4	0	0
Teacher models writing	0	0	2	0	0
Skills in context	0	0	4	1	1
Skills in isolation	0	2	8	0	0
Learning related to students	0	2	1	0	0
Thematic teaching	0	2	7	0	2
Morning message	0	2	4	0	0
DEAR	0	0	6	0	0
Centers	0	0	3	0	0
Reading and Writing related	0	1	0	0	3
Invented spelling	0	1	1	0	0
Story dramatization	0	0	1	0	1
Mapping	0	2	3	0	0
Rich environment	0	0	1	0	1
Hands on activities	0	0	1	0	1
Cloze procedure	0	1	0	0	0
Vocabulary pretaught	0	4	4	0	0

This chart shows the methods and materials used in a typical reading day.

The methods and materials are grouped according to the degree the teacher

considers him/herself a whole language reading teacher. The teachers that consider themselves somewhat whole language teachers describe using basals, homogeneous grouping of students and whole group instruction as methods and materials for teaching. They described using textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets to teach skills. During reading emphasis on comprehension is stressed with vocabulary being pretaught.

Teachers who ranked themselves as whole language reading teachers more so than not used combinations of basals and tradebooks in their program. Students are taught in both large and small groups. Subjects are taught in themes. Skills are taught through context and in isolation. Teachers model reading. The students participate in centers and DEAR.

Teachers who ranked themselves between more so than not and completely use small group instruction and skills taught in context as their methods and materials.

Teachers who ranked themselves as whole language teachers completely use tradebooks, small group instruction and written reader's response as teaching methods. Reading and writing are seen as related. Reactions to literature are discussed as well as comprehension.

Table 6

Comparison of components of whole language classroom
with the methods and materials used in a typical day

	NAA	SW	MSTN	B	C
Reading aloud	0	1	6	0	1
Shared reading	0	0	3	0	1
Guided reading	0	1	7	1	1
Independent reading	0	0	6	0	0
Writing aloud	0	0	2	0	0
Shared writing	0	0	0	0	0
Guided writing	0	0	1	0	0
Independent writing	0	0	1	0	0
Reading and writing are connected	0	1	2	0	3

This chart compares the components of a whole language classroom with the methods and materials used in a typical day. These are grouped according to how the participants ranked themselves the degree they consider themselves whole language teachers. It is significant to note that no one indicated sharing writing as part of his/her typical day. The teachers who consider themselves whole language teachers did not indicate using all components of whole language in a typical day.

Table 7

Role of teacher as defined by educators in survey

	NAA	SW	MSTN	B	C
Monitor, Oversee	0%	0%	83%	0%	17%
Instruct (traditional)	0%	35%	59%	6%	0%
Encourage and Support	0%	20%	80%	0%	0%
Manage	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%
Model reading and writing	0%	18%	64%	0%	18%
Facilitate and Guide	0%	36%	50%	0%	14%
Observe and Listen	0%	0%	50%	0%	50%
Question	0%	0%	25%	0%	75%
Motivate	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Evaluate	0%	0%	33%	0%	66%

This chart shows the role of teacher as defined by the participants of the survey. These results are grouped according to how the participants ranked themselves regarding the degree they consider themselves whole language teachers.

Most teachers who consider themselves whole language teachers somewhat describe their role as instructors or facilitators.

Teachers who consider themselves whole language teachers more so than not see their role in the classroom as overseers, monitoring and encouraging the students. One hundred percent of the participants describe their role as to motivate the students.

The participants who indicated themselves between more so than not and completely in the self ranking see their role in the classroom as managing.

The teachers who consider themselves as whole language teachers completely indicate their role in the classroom is to question and to evaluate. Observing and listening are other roles these teachers play.

Table 8

Comparison of role of teacher as defined by educators in survey

with the role of the whole language teacher as defined from research

	NAA	SW	MSTN	B	C
Initiator	0	0	0	0	0
Mediator	0	0	1	0	1
Kidwatcher	0	0	2	0	2
Liberator	0	0	0	0	0
Curriculum maker	0	0	1	0	2

This chart compares the role of teacher as defined by the educators in the survey with the role of the whole language teacher as defined by research. It is significant to note that no one indicated the role of initiator or liberator in his/her descriptions of the role of the teacher.

Table 9

Phrases used to describe whole language

	NAA	SW	MSTN	B	C
Philosophy	0	0	2	1	0
Approach	0	0	3	0	0
Literature based	0	2	9	1	1
Integrated curriculum	0	2	2	0	2
Themes	0	1	4	0	2
Empowering	0	0	1	1	1
Learning about life	0	0	4	0	3
Language is central	0	4	3	1	1
Meaningful	0	1	2	0	1
Whole to part	0	2	5	0	1
Creates interest	0	0	1	0	0
Hands on	0	1	1	0	0
Purposeful	0	0	2	0	0
Communicating	0	1	0	0	0
Meaning from reading	0	1	2	0	0
Model/facilitate	0	0	3	0	0
Cooperative groups/centers	0	1	1	0	0
Process not product	0	0	1	0	0
Based on level of student	0	2	1	0	0
Includes phonics	0	1	3	0	0
Reading and writing together	0	1	0	0	1
Natural	0	0	2	0	0
Skills in context	0	2	6	1	0

This chart shows the phrases the participants used to describe whole language in their own words. The data are grouped according to the degree in which the participants consider themselves whole language teachers. The two most commonly used phrases were literature based and skills in context.

Table 10

Comparison of phrases used to describe whole language
and the basic principles of whole language

	NAA	SW	MSTN	B	C
Holistic perspective	0	6	15	1	3
Positive view of learners	0	1	0	0	2
Language is central	0	1	4	1	0
Whole to part	0	2	5	0	1
Authentic	0	2	3	0	2
Empowering	0	0	2	0	1
Personal/social learning	0	2	3	0	0
Acceptance of learners	0	0	1	0	0
Joyous and fulfilling	0	0	0	0	0

This chart compares the definitions of whole language given by the participants in the survey with the basic principles of whole language. The data are grouped according to the degree the participants consider themselves whole language teachers. The majority of the people indicated in their definitions that whole language is holistic. It was the only phrase that was common in every grouping.

Table 11

Development of participants whole language definition

	NAA	SW	MSTN	B	C
Courses	0	4	8	1	3
Reading	0	0	6	0	1
Workshops	0	2	7	0	0
Discussion	0	1	4	0	0
Observing	0	1	3	0	1
Reflection	0	0	0	0	0
Through teaching experience	0	2	10	1	1

This chart shows how the participants in the survey developed their definitions of whole language. The majority of the participants developed their definitions through classes and teaching experience. No one described using reflection as part of the development process.

Table 12

Comparison of understanding of the philosophy of whole language with whole language statements

The following charts indicate the answers the participants gave to five statements. The participants were to read and select words that indicates whether they strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), agree (A), or strongly agree (SA) with each statement. The answers are grouped according to where the participants ranked themselves on the continuum regarding their understanding of the

philosophy of whole language. The answer that coincides with the whole language philosophy is starred on each chart.

12A. Reading is a language process

self ranking (continuum scale)	SD	D	A	SA
D	0%	0%	40%	60%*
E	0%	0%	43%	57%*
F	14%	0%	36%	58%*
G	0%	0%	50%	50%*

This chart shows the participants response to the statement, "Reading is a language process." The majority of people in each grouping strongly agree that reading is a language process. It is significant to note that 50% of the people who completely understand the philosophy of whole language only agree with this statement.

12B. Guessing is a part of reading

self ranking (continuum scale)	SD	D	A	SA
D	0%	20%	80%	0%*
E	0%	0%	71%	29%*
F	7%	0%	64%	29%*
G	0%	0%	67%	33%*

This chart shows the participants response to the statement, "Guessing is a part of reading." For this statement the majority of people in every grouping selected agree. Two thirds of the people who completely understand the philosophy of whole language selected agree.

12C. Mistakes are to be avoided

self ranking (continuum scale)	SD	D	A	SA
D	40%*	60%	0%	0%
E	57%*	29%	14%	0%
F	64%*	29%	7%	0%
G	83%*	17%	0%	0%

This chart shows the participants response to the statement, "Mistakes are to be avoided." The majority of people strongly disagree with this statement.

12D. Whole language looks at subskills

Self ranking (continuum scale)	SD	D	A	SA
D	0%	0%	80%	20%*
E	14%	43%	29%	14%*
F	8%	0%	69%	23%*
G	17%	17%	33%	33%*

This chart shows the participants response to the statement that "Whole language looks as subskills." This chart is significant in that it shows a wide range of answers across the board. Only 33% of the people who completely understand the philosophy of whole language strongly agree with this statement and 34% disagree or strongly disagree.

12E. Phonics is an essential part of whole language

Self ranking (continuum scale)	SD	D	A	SA
D	0%	0%	80%	20%*
E	0%	33%	33%	33%*
F	0%	7%	50%	43%*
G	0%	0%	50%	50%*

This chart shows the participants response to the statement, "Phonics is an essential part of whole language." Fifty percent of the people who completely understand the philosophy of whole language only agree with this statement.

Summary

This chapter organized and presented the data collected from the survey entitled "Survey of Reading Instruction." It was analyzed descriptively.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Implications

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the personal philosophies and teaching methods of elementary classroom teachers regarding whole language. These perceptions and actions were compared qualitatively with the current body of research on whole language.

Discussion

The participants in this study filled out surveys that measured where they felt they fit regarding their use of whole language in the classroom and also their understanding of the philosophy of whole language. Twelve percent of the people surveyed indicated they considered themselves a whole language teacher above the category of more so than not. Nineteen percent of the people in this survey indicated they understand the philosophy of whole language a great deal. This group of teachers is where I am focused. I want to see if teachers are practicing whole language with a basic understanding of the principles.

The results of my survey have indicated to me that there are gaps in the understanding of some educators who call themselves whole language teachers.

These gaps could arise from a variety of sources including omissions in the survey to simple misunderstanding.

Complete whole language teachers indicated that reading and writing are connected, but when methods and materials were examined gaps arose. Many common components to the writing aspect were missing. Writing aloud, shared writing, guided writing, and independent writing were not mentioned as part of a typical day.

Along with the omission of writing into the reading program, independent reading was also missing. Self selection of tasks is an important component of the whole language philosophy. I have not seen much evidence of it at the highest levels of whole language understanding in this survey.

The lack of self selection of tasks is confirmed in Table 8, *Comparison of the role of teacher with the role of a whole language teacher as determined by research*. This comparison showed two components, the role of the initiator and the role of the liberator, to be missing. Both of these roles liberate the curriculum and allow students to make choices.

The phrases used to describe whole language were compared with the basic principles of whole language in Table 10. Those teachers who consider themselves complete whole language teachers did not include all principles in their definitions. Most significant is the omission of the principles which

describe learning as personal/social, accepting of all learners, joyous, and fulfilling. It is not expected to include and to remember all principles when describing a philosophy, but there is evidence to support the fact that some of these principles are not being carried out in some whole language programs. The missing principles include allowing students to make choices about their own learning. Also, giving students control over their learning is not evident by this survey.

The final section of the survey consisted of statements to which the participants reacted. Each statement was based on a basic whole language principle. The results of the questioning gives support to the idea that there are educators stating they are whole language teachers without an understanding of all of the principles of whole language.

Table 12A, *Reading is a language process*, depicts the reactions to the statement "reading is a language process." In every grouping, the majority of people responded with strongly agree. Participants who indicated they know a great deal about the philosophy of whole language were divided by this statement. Fifty percent of the teachers indicated strongly agree and the other 50% indicated agree. Participants who ranked themselves the lowest on the scale of understanding of whole language had the highest percentage of correct answers in this category.

Table 12B, *Guessing is a part of reading*, shows the results of the statement "guessing is a part of reading." For this statement every groupings' majority indicated agree. Only 33% of the teachers who understand whole language a great deal indicated strongly agree, the correct answer. The rest of the teachers in this grouping indicated agree.

The statement "mistakes are to be avoided" showed the most consistency for each grouping in table 12C *Mistakes are to be avoided*. The more complete the understanding of the philosophy of whole language the higher the number of people who strongly disagreed with this statement. Eighty-three percent of the people who understand whole language a great deal indicate they strongly disagree with this statement. The rest of this grouping disagree.

The statement "whole language looks at subskills" brings in completely different results. The answers are completely across the board in every grouping. Most significant is the answer given by the teachers who claim to understand whole language a great deal. They indicated everything from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Only 33% strongly agree and 17% strongly disagree. This is an area where understanding is lacking. The people who indicated the lowest understanding of the philosophy of whole language on the continuum scale were the most accurate on this statement. Everyone in their grouping indicated agree or strongly agree for language looks at subskills.

Table 12E, *Phonics is an essential part of whole language*, shows the results of the statement "phonics is an essential part of whole language." This statement reflects a basic misunderstanding regarding whole language. Advocates against whole language use this as an argument to discredit whole language. The results of this statement is very telling in that only 50% of the people who understand whole language strongly agree with this statement. The other 50% only agree.

Questions arise regarding the gaps in knowledge reflected by these statements. There is evidence to suggest that teachers who feel they know a great deal about the philosophy of whole language in fact do not. In some cases, teachers who felt they did not have a strong understanding of whole language did better on some statements than people who felt they understand a great deal. This suggests several possible explanations.

It is possible that the teachers who ranked themselves lower on the continuum for understanding of whole language philosophy are still in the process of building their understanding. It is also possible that those teachers who feel they know a great deal about whole language may have stopped their exploration and learning, feeling they know all they need to know, when in fact they do not.

Implications for classroom instruction

This survey indicates that the philosophy of whole language is not understood by everyone who is practicing it. There are parts that are understood while other parts are missing. The implications in the classroom are that if whole language is not completely understood and the basic principles are not being met fully than whole language is not happening. Classroom instruction will suffer because whole language is not being presented with all of its parts. Teachers who consider themselves whole language teachers will be sending incorrect messages and modeling for teachers who are exploring whole language.

Whole language is a process that works best if all of its parts are present. Gaps in understanding and execution hurt the process. Students passing from classroom to classroom with different teachers holding different levels of understanding and misunderstanding of the principles of whole language will suffer.

Implications for further study

This survey has brought up many implications for further study. A more in-depth analysis of methods and materials in the classroom may shed some light on some of the gaps found by this survey. It is possible that some of the teachers participating in the survey may be following more of the principles of whole language than they indicated. Further study is necessary into the depth of understanding of the theory behind whole language.

The writing portion of whole language was found to be lacking in this survey. Choice in the classroom was another area where evidence was not found. A second survey which is specific to writing in the classroom and student control and choice in the classroom will clarify some questions. Further delving into the understanding of the principles of whole language is evident from the results of the five statements administered. There is much possibility for further study in this field.

Conclusion

Research has indicated that there are three dimensions that must be incorporated for understanding of whole language. (Watson, 1989). The first dimension, research, has been met. In Chapter II, factual background of the research behind the theories of learning and language can be traced. The pedagogical theory that has resulted from this research is equally sound. My goal in this thesis was to see if the third aspect of understanding of whole language has been met, the practice of the definition of whole language in the classroom. I have found evidence to support the practice of a definition in the classroom but I have not found evidence of clear understanding of the philosophy of whole language especially from the teachers who consider themselves to know a great deal about the philosophy of whole language.

Questions Answered

1. How do elementary classroom teachers define whole language?
2. How is this definition of whole language applied in the classroom?
3. How closely do personal actions and beliefs coincided with the current body of research regarding whole language?

Summary

All three of my questions have been answered in this thesis. Questions 1 and 2 are dealt with in the survey and in Chapter IV. There is a consistency with the definitions given and the actions in the classroom. Many of the definitions and actions, however contain gaps in knowledge. There are areas where principles of whole language are missing. Most specifically in the areas of writing and the area of student control and choice over learning. Question three was the most interesting. I have found that the personal actions and beliefs of the participants in this survey do not always coincide with the current body of research regarding whole language. Most significant is the inconsistency between people who feel they know a great deal about the philosophy of whole language and their understanding of that same philosophy.

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Appendix

Whole language definitions from surveys.

Whole language definitions of people who consider themselves as somewhat a whole language teacher.

Whole language is teaching a child about language and communication through the use of literature, themes, and real life hands on experience to assist in creating and molding their understanding of various concepts. It allows a child to see skills as intertwined and interdependent on themselves rather than separate abstract entities.

My idea is not what text teaches. A good whole language teacher uses anything and everything in his/her arsenal to get across the meaning of the text.

Whole language is looking at the whole (meaning centered) versus looking at the parts (phonics and decoding skills). It involves rich language experience activities. It also involves incorporating reading, writing, listening, and speaking into each lesson. It also involves integrating subject areas- writing across the curriculum, etc.

Language is all encompassing - oral, (verbal) written, visual, - total all day long.

Whole language is working from whole to part when teaching skills. Whole language people teach the skills solely through books, not worksheets. Children work in centers around the room. Reading and writing are a major part of the day of a whole language teacher.

Whole language is written language for the level of student ability, including their reading, spelling, etc.

Whole language is literature based and is integrated across the curriculum.

To give an appropriate definition of whole language "on paper" is a difficult task. Whole language uses literature to impart reading skills. It does not use task oriented material specifically designed to reinforce selected skills. It does

not base learning on levels or steps. Skill instruction is included as a natural progression. Reading instruction can span subject areas and include other subjects.

Whole language definitions of people who consider themselves a whole language teacher more so than not.

Teaching reading from a whole - using real literature to teach reading - incorporating skills lessons into your daily whole language class which includes phonics lessons.

Teaching reading and writing in a natural way.

The inclusion of reading: skills, strategies, comprehension and writing around a central theme. The reading program becomes your instructional/educational day. It is not separated from any unit of study.

Language learning through a reading-writing approach.

The use of reading as a tool to encourage children to do it in their whole environment and not just a separate subject. The use of a whole book in its natural state and not as a phonics tool that breaks words down unnaturally. Using material that a child can choose to teach reading, rather than a reading book (dread). Use of real poetry, trade books, and signs so that children realize they're reading when they go by a billboard in their car.

Using theme approach in all academic subjects.

Whole language is a philosophy that reading should be learned through real experiences with literature that should be taught from whole to part.

Just as it is titled - keeping language whole - not chopping it up into separate lessons. Rolling math, reading, language, spelling, social studies, science, all together into themes that kids find interesting.

Whole language is an approach to the teaching of reading which focuses on the content of the material. Rather than breaking reading into pieces - such as word by word reading - it encourages readers to focus on the meaning of all the words together. It teaches them to use all of their strategies to get the whole picture.

You must be joking! Whole language is a philosophy (more so than an approach) of teaching language skills/strategies to children. In whole language the child is recognized as an important component of their own learning and the teacher is the facilitator.

Whole language is teaching reading skills through the use of literature books. It involves skills, phonics, and writing activities incorporated with "real" interesting meaningful literature.

Whole language encompasses many aspects to reading, writing, etc. The teacher uses literature from many different sources (usually based around a theme) to teach reading skills. The literature is used across the curriculum - in science, social studies, math etc. I believe that phonemic awareness should also be incorporated in this literature based type of program.

Whole language is bring all types of language (books, poems, songs) to the children and learning various things from them. For example, rhyming words, vocabulary, sight words, reading, writing, language rules.

Using language/literature based activities in class to teach all areas of curriculum. Group/cooperative/center activities set up with the teacher as model/facilitator. Use of mini lessons to teach skills use of invented spelling. Guided learning. Emphasis on student levels and present performance. Process not product. Use of students helping students.

It is an approach to teaching/learning reading whereby the emphasis is placed on how the student or reader gleans meaning from a text; that the meaning (the whole) is more important than its parts. The emphasis is placed on using real books for exposure.

Reading all around you. Encompassing all areas, including math, drama, music, etc.

Whole language is a method of teaching that incorporates a student's world. Everything may be used yet the user creates interesting, hands on, and purposeful learning.

Process of speaking reading, writing, communicating.

Whole language definitions of people who consider themselves not quite a complete whole language teacher

Whole language is a philosophy in which teachers can bring together the best of children's literature and skills based instruction to better the whole child in the area of language arts.

**Whole language definitions of people who consider
themselves a complete whole language teacher**

Integrated teaching of content areas (in-depth studies) where students and teachers are empowered. Learning academics is more like learning in life. Language is the center of the vehicle of learning.

Whole language is a study which starts at the whole and goes to the parts. It is study connected to the world.

Whole language is using real literature to read and write, learning in a meaningful way by reading, writing, integrating all subject areas are a central theme, developing reading comprehension and higher thinking processes.

7. Define whole language in your own words.

8. How have you developed this definition of whole language?

Please circle the statement that most closely fits how you feel about each sentence.

A. Reading is a language process.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

B. Guessing is a part of reading.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

C. Mistakes are to be avoided.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

D. Whole language looks at sub-skills.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree

E. Phonics is an essential part of whole language.

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree