DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 478 516   CS 512 292

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TITLE   An Inquiry Study of Early Literacy. NCTE Reading Initiative.
INSTITUTION   National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana, IL.
PUB DATE   2002-00-00
NOTE   41p.; Contains small print. See CS 512 291-302 for related
                 documents.
AVAILABLE FROM   National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 W. Kenyon Road,
                 Urbana, IL 61801-1096. Tel: 800-369-6283 (Toll Free); Web
                 site: http://www.ncte.org. For full text:
                 http://www.ncte.org/ readinit/curriculum/inqstudies.shtml.
PUB TYPE   Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE   EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS   *Classroom Techniques; Curriculum Development; Early
                 Childhood Education; *Emergent Literacy; *Inquiry; Knowledge
                 Base for Teaching; *Models; *Professional Development;
                 Teacher Role
IDENTIFIERS   *Critical Literacy; Reflective Practice

ABSTRACT
         The focus of this inquiry study is young children's learning,
and specifically, their use of literacy from their preschool years through
age eight. The inquiry study is designed to function simultaneously on two
levels: the first level (figure 1) invites study group members to think about
themselves as learners, teachers, and scholars. At the outset of the study,
the whole group considers the conditions necessary to support all members in
collegial, professional conversations throughout the full year inquiry. With
colleagues and interested others (the children in the classroom, other
members of the school community, parents) each member will be engaged in six
interconnected inquiry cycles (figure 2). Through professional conversations,
readings, demonstrations, writing, viewing, and representing, study group
members will be building upon their current early literacy knowledge base. At
all times, members will be urged to critically reflect on their present
beliefs and practices and to strive to bring them into alignment. Because,
ultimately the purpose of this inquiry is to make a difference in the
literacy learning of young children, there will be many opportunities to
experiment with--or "try on"--new teaching and learning strategies with young
learners, within a supportive learning context. Finally, the inquiry study
invites members to explore "critical literacy"--the opportunity to use
language in powerful ways to get things done in the world--and to decide what
this literacy concept means for members personally and as a member of a
professional and school community. An extensive list of professional reading
references are appended. (NKA)

NCTE Reading Initiative

An Inquiry Study of Early Literacy
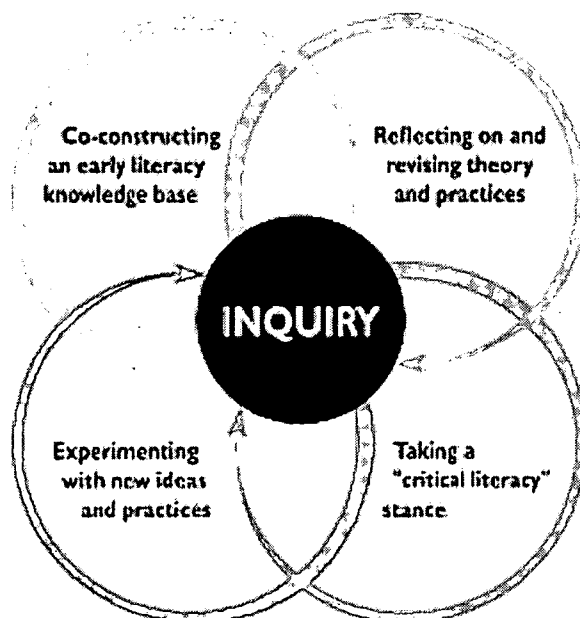
Figure 1
Professional Education Curriculum Inquiry Model

The focus of this study is young children's learning, and specifically, their use of literacy from their preschool years through age eight. The study is designed to function simultaneously on two levels. The first level (figure 1) invites you, as a study group member, to think about yourself as a learner, teacher, and scholar. At the outset of the study, the whole group considers the conditions necessary to support all of you in collegial, professional conversations throughout the full year inquiry. With your colleagues and interested others (the children in your classroom, members of the school community who are not part of this study group, parents and other caregivers, and others beyond your immediate school community), each of you will be engaged in six, interconnected inquiry cycles (figure 2). Through professional conversations, readings, demonstrations, writing, viewing, and representing (expressing your ideas in a wide range of different ways), you will be building upon your current early literacy knowledge base. At all times, you will be urged to critically reflect on your present beliefs and practices and to strive to bring them into alignment. Because, ultimately the purpose of this inquiry is to make a difference in the literacy learning of the young children you teach, there will be many opportunities to experiment with— or "try on"—new teaching and learning strategies with young learners, within a supportive learning context. Finally, this study invites you to explore "critical literacy"—the opportunity to use language in powerful ways to get things done in the world (Comber, 2001)—and to decide what this literacy concept means for you personally and as a member of a professional and school community.

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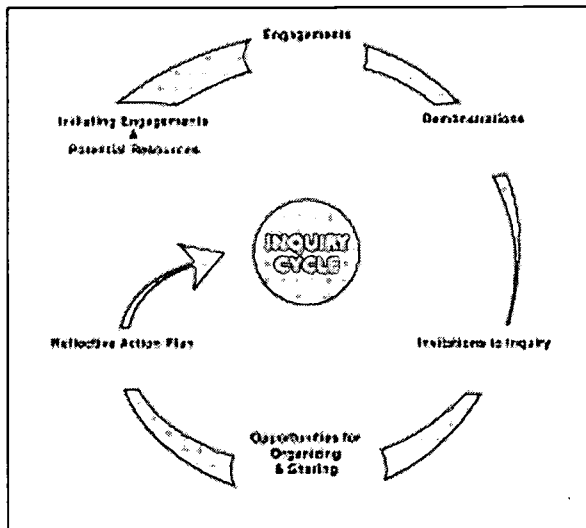Winnipeg

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Figure 2
Inquiry Cycle

Inquiry 1
How do we begin and sustain new professional conversations with colleagues and with children's families?

Inquiry 2
Constructing a knowledge base: What do we know about young children's literacy learning, the reading process, and supportive early literacy learning environments?

Inquiry 3
What are the new visions of a "balanced" literacy curriculum?

Inquiry 4
Learning, teaching, and evaluating reading in the early school years

Inquiry 5
Learning, teaching, and evaluating writing in the early school years

Inquiry 6
Inquiry-based, interdisciplinary and critical literacies curriculum in the early school years

The second level of this study is focused on young children's learning. In the second inquiry cycle, you will explore basic understandings of how young children learn language and literacy; the nature of the reading process, and the kinds of literacy-rich learning environments that nurture young children's learning and literacy development.

In the third inquiry cycle, you bring these theoretical understandings of learning and language processes into your thinking about literacy curriculum in the early school years (the focus here is on the "big picture"). We refer to "curriculum" in this study not as a predetermined document to be covered, but instead as a collaborative inquiry process planned *with* and *for* specific young learners. Responsive, emergent curriculum of this kind represents a teacher's beliefs about learning, language/literacy, what is worth knowing, and an intimate knowledge of the children in the class both as individuals and as a social group.

The primary intention of such a curriculum is to support young learners in becoming the people whom they hope to be. From here, the fourth and fifth inquiry cycles highlight the teaching, learning, and evaluation of reading and writing processes. The final inquiry cycle locates literacy learning within the broader curriculum context. In this sixth inquiry cycle study group members are challenged to think about: alternative ways in which young children view and represent what they know beyond oral and written language; how young children use literacy as a tool for learning within inquiry-based and interdisciplinary studies; and, how literacy both creates and can be used to interrogate and address inequities, injustices, and the invisible or "taken for granted" assumptions that can negatively impact young children's everyday lives.
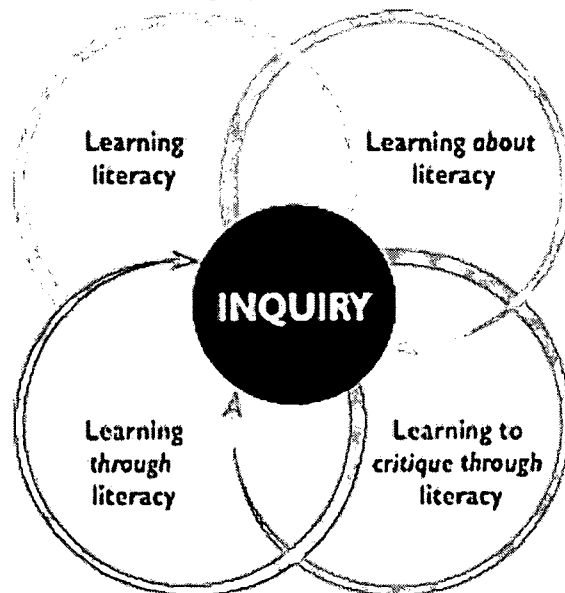
In conceptualizing and organizing this study, the authors have drawn upon the influential research of linguist Michael Halliday. Halliday's (1982) research describes how young children, engaged in authentic and meaningful language events, are simultaneously involved in: *learning language* (as they listen to it and use it with others in their everyday lives), *learning about language* (as they try to figure out how it works), *and learning through language* (as they use it to learn about or do something else). Halliday's thinking about oral language also applies to written language. While all three literacy functions—*learning literacy, learning about literacy, learning through literacy*—operate in any literacy event that makes sense to a child, Kathy Short (1999) suggests that teachers may find it instructionally useful to highlight one of these functions at a time (at least in their minds) so that they can consider which curriculum experiences are most likely to engage learners in that specific literacy function. For example, as a way of establishing a reading-writing community at the beginning of the school year, a third grade teacher might read aloud several poems about summer memories and invite the children to draw and write in their writer's notebooks/sketchbooks about a significant, summer memory of their own (learning reading, writing and drawing). After the children had shared some of their sketches and written ideas, their teacher might decide that it would help some of them if she used an overhead transparency of an excerpt from one of the summer memory poems she had already read—as a mini-lesson about using descriptive details to "show rather than tell" about an experience (learning about writing). The children might then sign-up for a literature circle discussion about one of a collection of memoir picture books their teacher had introduced and displayed. Subsequently, the children might choose another book from this collection and form a second literature circle. Later on, this literature circle group might decide to respond to their reading and conversations about memoir by creating a poetry anthology about their own summer memories (learning through reading and writing).

Following this line of thinking, several of the authors whose writings appear in this study have recast Halliday's idea as a framework for sorting through and selecting literacy curriculum engagements. Jerry Harste (2001) extends Halliday's thinking by adding a fourth literacy function–*learning to critique through language* (see figure 3).

Figure 3
Curriculum inquiry model for literacy learning

While literacy users are able to fulfill this function through the other three literacy functions, Harste argues that teachers need to highlight the critical role literacy plays in enabling learners to question what "seems normal and natural." If we agree with Harste that children should be seen and heard as members of a democratic society, then he challenges us to help them take a critical stance in relation to what they read and view and to help them use writing and representing as ways of creating alternative social worlds. If we apply this thinking practically to our third grade example, it might mean that a group of children in the class could decide—based on their shared, summer memories—to compose a letter to the recreation department of the city, advocating for a safe and relevant summer program for children their age who live in the neighborhood (learning to critique through literacy by taking social action).

*The lead author of the study is from Manitoba; you may recognize Canadian spellings within the study.

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TERMS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS INQUIRY

In addition to the upcoming concepts and questions that come to mind when teachers act as active inquirers into their own teaching practices, the following table represents an initial list of words and phrases related to early literacy. You may decide to add to this list or begin your own list—graffiti-style—on a large piece of paper that can be added to over time. Such a list helps frame the territory of your study group's inquiry.

Conversation	Literacy	Inquiry	Curriculum	Diversity
Demonstrations	Approximations; Risk-taking	Play	Reading-like Behavior	Socio-cognitive Strategies/ Intersubjectivity
Emergent Literacy	Cue Systems	Miscue/ Miscue Analysis	Kidwatching	Responsive Teaching; Strategy Instruction; Mini-lessons
Authentic Texts; Real Purposes	"Balanced Literacy Curriculum"	Authoring Cycle	Skills vs. Strategies	Deliberate vs. Direct Instruction
Discourse Patterns	Literature Circles/ Grand Conversations	Phonics / Phonemic Awareness	Onset and Rime	Guided Reading
Conferring	Genre Studies/ "Touchstone Texts"	Writing Craft Lessons	Invented/Functional/ Constructed Spelling	Interdisciplinary
Multimodal; Alternate Sign Systems	Transmediation	Audit Trail/ Inquiry Map	Critical Literacy	Positioning and Perspective

READING INITIATIVE LEARNING STRANDS

The Reading Initiative professional development experiences can be envisioned as a complex tapestry of beliefs, engagements, readings, questions, and reflections. Each engagement is woven onto a foundation provided by the following strands.

Personal Literacy as Part of a Cultural Community	Knowledge Base	Close Observation	Supportive Literacy Contexts	Professional Culture
Focused observations and analysis by each participant of his/her own literacy processes and theories, including the forces that impact those theories	The concepts and experiences explored and supported by professional reading	Focused observations and analysis of students as literacy learners	Exploration and development of contexts that support and encourage young, literacy learners	Exploration and development of procedures and contexts that encourage professional collegiality

LANGUAGE AND LEARNING CONCEPTS

The following is a list of learning concepts that will be explored in this study. You are encouraged to add additional concepts, as this list is not meant to be exhaustive.

- Educators have different beliefs and values with respect to early literacy learning; being a professional educator means developing a personal stance that can be supported with theoretical and practical evidence.
- What one believes and values in early literacy learning determines the kind of learning environment that is created.
- Curriculum decisions are the responsibility of teachers (informed by children and their families and supported by informed administrators).
- Language learning is social; it involves active observation and inter-subjective negotiation of meaning with others.
- Language serves both cognitive and communicative functions. Language use generates new learning.
- Children's language/literacy use, while different from adults' use, is systematic and organized.
- Active participation and experimentation (risk-taking) are central to language/literacy learning.
- Children do not "outgrow" particular strategies or "stages"; rather, they refine and fine-tune language/literacy strategies over time.
- Children learn the processes of literacy through authentic and personally meaningful use of those processes.
- Children socially construct meanings based on what makes sense to them already.
- Young language users, through attention to complex cues, form theories about how literacy works on a daily basis. As a result, all children come to school with knowledge about reading and writing.
- In play environments, young children bring their out-of-school worlds into the classroom, including their views of themselves and others.
- Choice and multiple opportunities to revisit experiences are key elements of successful literacy learning.
- The learning contexts in which children interact, conjecture and entertain themselves involve the use of print in multiple forms.
- There is no context-free use of language; language is never just a "neutral" skill to be learned.
- If we carefully observe and interact with children in the process of literacy learning, they will help us learn what else they need to know.
- Literacy instruction is grounded in powerful and varied literature resources, opportunities to talk, listen, write, view and represent thinking in diverse ways, combined with frequent, focused rituals that invite critical reflection and conversation about the literacy learning process.
- Explicit information about language cueing systems is demonstrated through read alouds, shared and guided reading engagements, reading and writing strategy and mini-lessons, and individual conferences—all of which provide young children with opportunities to make, confirm, and revise meanings.
- Young children compose writing using "invented" and emergent forms before they develop conventional forms.
- The sophistication of children's ideas in writing is not readily apparent in the marks they make on a page.
- Literacy learning is a multi-modal process.
- Learning, teaching and evaluation processes inform one another and are guided by the same learning and language beliefs and processes.
- As growing citizens in a democracy, young children learn not only learn to use literacy, but also learn how literacy works to construct and position them.

- A school community's literacy learning assumptions privilege some children's family literacy backgrounds over others and guarantee them positions of power in the classroom, unless these assumptions are interrogated and challenged.

Language Concepts
- Readers use information from all of the cue systems (pragmatic, semantic, syntactic and grapho-phonic), in an integrated way, to construct the meaning of a text.
- Readers bring meaning to and take meaning from a text.
- The syntactic system—the relationships of words, sentences, and paragraphs (in this example, the function words, word order, word endings, punctuation, stress and pitch, etc.)—contributes information about the meaning of the text.
- Readers attempt pronunciation of words based on analogies to words (or "chunks" of the word) that they already know (this is not a letter-by-letter process).
- Being able to "decode" or reproduce a syntactic pattern does not mean that the reader has comprehended the text.
- Beliefs, practices, and theories about the reading process are interwoven and develop within readers' particular linguistic and social/cultural communities.
- Readers operate upon intuitive beliefs about the reading process; change in a reader's practice arises out of change in his or her beliefs.
- Any two teachers or learners will work with the same reading process concept or experience in different ways, depending on the underlying beliefs each holds.
- Effective teachers of reading use their knowledge and beliefs about reading to tailor instruction to individual needs and differences among learners.
- Shared literacy experiences, within a supportive classroom community, provide a non-competitive, risk-taking, learning environment in which all learners can make the contributions they are presently prepared to make.
- Shared literacy involves the teacher and the children in demonstrations and participation; in such conditions children learn to read by reading and by observing others actively involved in the reading process.
- Learners must believe an experience is worth doing and feel some sense of self-confidence to be willing to risk engaging in learning how to do it.
- Teaching is a process of "kidwatching" (Goodman, 1978) that leads intentionally to creating the necessary support for learners.
- New, puzzling and surprising events (even small ones) draw learners' attention.
- Writing and talking with others about "anomalies" enables learners to identify, reconsider and gain perspective on them on.
- Young children's language forms become increasingly more like those of the adults with whom they interact without specific and intentional adult reinforcement (including negative reinforcement—correction) for forms; adults respond to the intent (meaning) of the child's language.
- Young children may have difficulty even recognizing what aspect of their language is being corrected.
- Language development follows a predictable sequence in children's learning, and this development occurs over a remarkably short period of time at a very young age.
- Young children are not simply repeating what they have heard; rather, they invent language according to their own rule systems and figure out the underlying structures of the system by actively listening and using language with others—not by being instructed in this complex and abstract system.
- Young children gradually fine-tune their understandings of underlying language structures and consequently their language becomes more conventional.

- Shared reading experiences enable readers to contribute to the reading when they have the confidence to do so, while sharing the meaning-making responsibility with others and learning from their demonstrations.
- Enjoyment of reading and the willingness to experiment and take risks are compromised when learners feel pressured to "be right" and when they fear that they will appear incompetent in the eyes of others.
- Situations where individuals must perform (without choosing to do so) in front of others can lead to feeling inferior or superior to other learners.
- Readers draw upon prior knowledge of and experience with texts.
- Reading is made easier when the readers' focus is on units of meaning (chunks or phrases) where the language is authentic and readers are able to use their knowledge of how language works.
- Inauthentic language texts—even if they are composed of high-frequency words with which the readers are familiar—are more difficult to read because the readers are not able to draw upon their knowledge of sentence structure cues, semantic cues (meaning) and non-visual information to the same degree for support.
- Reading becomes increasingly more difficult as the unit of analysis—a meaningful chunk of text, a word, a sound/letter pattern—becomes the focus of reading and reading instruction.

FOCUSING QUESTIONS

These are questions that have been generated to focus the experiences provided in this inquiry study. Everyone in the study group should feel welcome to add questions throughout the study.

- What is our definition of literacy? What does it mean for a young child to be literate?
- How is early literacy embedded in and inseparable from the values, beliefs and social practices of children's family and community settings?
- How do families facilitate children's language and literacy learning?
- What knowledge about literacy do young learners bring to school? How can that knowledge be identified and built upon?
- What kinds of engagements and environments help educators to learn about the complex and diverse language and literacy knowledge that young learners bring to school?
- In what ways can family and home literacy support our work with young learners?
- How can teachers acknowledge and honor family and community language/literacy while, at the same time, helping young children to bridge the differences between family/community literacy and school literacy?
- How are the development of reading and writing connected? What instructional strategies support this development for young learners?
- How can print-rich, play environments facilitate children's language and literacy learning?
- What are the essential elements of a supportive early school literacy curriculum?
- How can our literacy curriculum experiences support the success of every learner?
- How does our curriculum help children expand their meaning-making and meaning-sharing potential through the use of literacy, as well as other systems (such as art, music, movement, etc.)?
- How is inquiry a learning stance? What roles do connections and anomalies play in galvanizing learners (children and teachers) to set off on individual and collaborative learning journeys?
- How can literacy and alternate communication systems be tools for learning across the curriculum?

Standards for the English Language Arts
Sponsored by NCTE and IRA

The vision guiding these standards is that all students must have the opportunities and resources to develop the language skills they need to pursue life's goals and to participate fully as informed, productive members of society. These standards assume that literacy growth begins before children enter school as they experience and experiment with literacy activities—reading and writing, and associating spoken words with their graphic representations. Recognizing this fact, these standards encourage the development of curriculum and instruction that make productive use of the emerging literacy abilities that children bring to school. Furthermore, the standards provide ample room for the innovation and creativity essential to teaching and learning. They are not prescriptions for particular curriculum or instruction. Although we present these standards as a list, we want to emphasize that they are not distinct and separable; they are, in fact, interrelated and should be considered as a whole.

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.

3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.

7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

10. Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.

11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

11

Overview
An Inquiry into Early Literacy

Initiating Engagements	I1 What Teachers Need	I2 Collections: Finders & Keepers

Initiating Engagements

Shared experiences that help group members reflect on their personal experiences and knowledge—getting those out into the class conversation—as the group predicts the direction of the study.

I1
What Teachers Need
Group members individually "quick write" about the intellectual, social and emotional conditions they need if they are to become involved in challenging and thoughtful professional conversations during this inquiry study. (p38)

I2
Collections: Finders & Keepers
As one way of making this inquiry their own, group members contribute their "personal signatures" from the outset. The participants use literacy to support their own professional learning, by generating the following collections:

- questions about early literacy
- provocative or puzzling terms which come to light during the study that need to be further "unpacked"
- "quotable quotes" that powerfully express ideas study group members do not want to forget. (p.38)

I3
Establishing a Baseline: Defining Literacy
Group members quick write to define "literacy." These definitions are considered as the group views a video of the Manhattan New School. This initial definition serves as one way in which group members visibly track the growth in their learning. (p39)

I4
Reaching Out to Families
Study group members brainstorm two charts: 1) ways in which the school informs families about their children and the learning that is going on at school; 2) ways in which families inform the school about their children and the learning that is going on outside of school; the group then assesses how well the school is doing at creating a reciprocal relationship with families. (p39)

I5
Picturing Cambourne's Learning Conditions
One member reads aloud a picture book such as *Why is the Sky Blue?* The story is read for enjoyment the first time and read a second time so group members can connect the story events to Cambourne's language/literacy learning conditions. Individuals then consider how Cambourne's conditions were or were not "at play" during a personal learning experience. (p40)

I6
Read Together: A Partnership of Parents & Teachers
Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting enthusiastic and confident readers. The group reviews the recommendations made in NCTE's "Read Together" guidelines and determines how to share these recommendations with children's families. (p44)

I7
Reviewing the Big Picture: A Framework for Thinking About Your Literacy Curriculum
Using a large copy of the "Curriculum Model for Literacy Learning" as a framework, plot your current literacy curriculum engagements within each of the four overlapping circles. Where do they fit? Is there a balance? (p45)

I8
Read Aloud Favorites: a la Reading Rainbow
The study group watches the PBS series Reading Rainbow and watches the children's book talks at the end of one episode. For the next meeting, group members bring along and share three of their all-time favorite read aloud books. (p46)

I9
Just What *is* Phonics?
After reading Weaver's article "What about learning to read? And what about phonics?" brainstorm a list of phonics related words and draw from their experiences, to talk through a definition of what "phonics" means, the role of phonics in reading, and ways of helping children learn phonics. (p47)

I10
Pre-Planning Writing Workshops and Selecting "Touchstone Texts"
After reading an article by Isoke Nia, group members work in grade groups using her "Sample Yearlong Curriculum Chart" to brainstorm tentative writing workshop inquiries they would like to pursue with their classes over the year. (p48)

I11
Reading and Writing Short Genres
Shelley Harwayne writes about how short genres enable the youngest learners to experience the success and satisfaction of completing a piece of writing. Consult Shelley's list of children's books where the main character is a writer and where the writing demonstrates a variety of short and authentic genres. Add resources of your own to the list. (p52)

I12
Inquiry-Based, Interdisciplinary Curriculum: What are the Personal and Professional Implications?
Group members individually read NCTE's "Position Statement on Interdisciplinary Learning, Pre-K to Grade 4" and consider what they will need to learn and do, both personally and professionally, if they are to feel comfortable creating interdisciplinary inquiry learning opportunities with the children in their classrooms. (p54)

I13
Experiencing a Focused Study: Color as an Element of Design
Group members read Carolyn Burke's "A Focused Study as a Curricular Organization" and together create the invitations offered as a way of experiencing, firsthand, the power of interdisciplinary inquiry and alternate ways of knowing (beyond language), from the perspective of learners. A video on kidwatching demonstrates how a second grade teacher draws upon her knowledge of students in making curricular decisions and revisions throughout her teaching. (p56)

I14
Transforming Reading-Writing Workshops into Viewing-Representing Workshops
Group members chart the ways in which they could transform the components of their reading-writing workshop into viewing-representing workshops. (p57)

Potential Resources
Multiple and varied sources of information that provide alternative perspectives and create opportunities for complex connections.

R1
Quick Writes
Quick writes are brief, focused bursts of writing, the purpose of which is to help writers discover what they know about a given topic. What appears on the page generates further ideas. Writing supports meaning-making and becomes a way of thinking. (p60)

R2
Creating an Evolving Professional Text Set
Group members create an evolving professional "text set" in response to group member's early literacy questions. The text set includes professional books, children's books, journal articles, articles in the popular press, copies of school/family newsletters, reading/writing continua. (p60)

R3
Dialogue Journal Responses
Group members exchange and respond to another member's "thinking with" responses to the NCTE professional resources and the group's evolving "text set." (p60)

R4
Inviting Families In
Group members contribute readings such as Shelley Harwayne's "Reaching out to Families," to a text set focused on how the school might invite more reciprocal family-school participation. (p61)

R5
Perspectives on Learning
Group members contribute one or more of the following book chapters which compare and contrast learning models to the evolving professional text set: Mayher's "commonsense vs. uncommon sense learning models"; Weaver's "transmission vs. transaction learning models"; Smith's "official theory vs. classic view," or models of their own selection. (p61)

R6
Read Aloud Titles: Beginning From Home Base
This list of read aloud titles reflects cultural and communicative systems operating in some children's home communities. These inform children's language and literacy social practices and ways of learning. (p62)

R7
Using Graphics to Gain Perspective
A set of graphics represent modifications of Halliday's *learning language, learning about language, and learning through language*: the "Curriculum Model for Literacy Learning" (Serebrin); "Curriculum Model for Integrated Language learning" (Short); "Rethinking a Balanced Curriculum" (Harste) and "Literacy Workshop Across the Day" (Egawa). Compare, contrast and use these four literacy curriculum models to examine your own literacy curriculum and to plan changes. (p65)

R9
It's as Easy as ABC...
Beginning with a preliminary list of alphabet books, group members add their own favorites to the list. The books serve as a resource for helping children learn grapho-phonic relationships in meaningful contexts. (p67)

R8
Read Aloud "Hot" List
For read aloud recommendations, see articles by Egawa & Katahira and Doiron. Also, refer to: Adventuring with books: A booklist for pre-K-Grade 6, (12 ed.), and The read aloud handbook. (p66)

Engagements
Opportunities to test out and explore multiple perspectives on the language process

E1
A Metaphor to Know Me By
Group members share a poem, a musical selection, a visual image, a story, an artifact or object that metaphorically represents who they are as learners. The group considers how the diversity of "learner strengths" can enrich the whole group's learning process. Individuals set personal goals to expand their learning strategy repertoire. (p76)

E2
Poetry Potluck
Group members make copies of several favorite children's poems. The poetry is distributed randomly on tables. The group members browse poems, until they find one to which they feel a personal connection. Each reads the poem to a colleague seated nearby, shares his/her connection to the poem, and invites the partner to respond. The group notes how meaning-making is enhanced through social dialogue and interpersonal response. (p76)

E3
"Taking Stock" of Our Own Literacy Use
Group members collect artifacts from home that represent use of literacy in their everyday lives outside of school, share these artifacts and "take stock" of questions like: how and why their home literacy practices are similar to or different from their school literacy practices; what is missing and why from the range of their home literacy resources; how and why their literacy practices have changed over the years. (p77)

E4
A Mardsan Giberter for Farfie: The Integration of Cue Systems in Reading
The site leader reads aloud Goodman's "A Mardsan Giberter for Farfie" without revealing the topic of the passage. Group members read their copies and answer the accompanying questions. In small groups, participants translate the passage into English. Everyone reads their translation aloud at the same time and a discussion ensues about the contributions made by each of the cue systems to the meaning constructed by the readers. (p78)

E5
Comparing/Contrasting Two Literacy Curriculum Engagements
Group members use Short's "Comparison of Guided Reading and Literature Circles" and the criteria for assessing literacy curriculum to compare and contrast two of their own literacy engagements. This experience invites movement from practice to underlying theoretical principles, consideration of the "fit" between beliefs, values and practice. Realignment is planned. A video of Elena Castro's 3rd grade classroom offers a new vision of a "balanced" literacy curriculum. (p80)

E6
Transforming State or District Curriculum Mandates
Working in the opposite direction from E5, in this experience group members—working in grade level groups—consider how they can transform state or district curriculum mandates into inquiry-driven curriculum engagements that fit within one or more of the four language learning circles. (p81)

E7
A Relationship With a Young Reading Partner
The group views a video of Josh's Burke Interview and his reading and retelling of a story. Interpretations are made about his understanding about reading and the strategies he uses. Each group member establishes a read-together relationship with a young reader: his/her own child, a child s/he knows outside of school, or a child at school. The group readings and experiences are used to help think more deeply about the child's reading interests, strengths, and development. "Critical incidents" are noted and interpreted. (p82)

E8
Burke Reading Interview
Although young children may not be able to articulate the model of reading they have constructed based on their prior literacy experiences, this does not mean that they don't have beliefs about how the reading process works. The Burke Reading Interview responses illustrate these beliefs. The group discusses the interview and the "Burke Interview Questions and Their Significance" documents. Video clips of children's responses to the Burke Interview are provided. (p83)

E9
Shared Reading with Big Books (and Other Genres)
The study group explores the concept of "shared reading" with an emphasis on a cycle of reading and re-reading. A video from a kindergarten classroom on shared reading with big books is provided as one example of the strategy in use. (p87)

E10
Rimes with Rhymes (and Onsets Too)
Group members gather and exchange rhyming songs, poems and finger plays they predict children will enjoy and that can also be used to teach common onsets and rimes. Songs and poems are written on chart paper or overheads and used for strategy lessons. Group members experiment with the Moustafa's "w(hole) to part" phonics instruction ideas. (p90)

E11
Guided Reading Lesson Plan
Effective teachers take their instructional cues from readers' responses and their best predictions about what will help children move forward as readers. A lesson plan offers a framework and criteria for conducting and evaluating guided reading lessons. Groups view a video and consider how one teacher moves guided reading beyond skills instruction. (p91)

E12
Testing Out Phonics Rules
Working in partners, group members test out one of the four vowel phonics/spelling rules. For each rule, study group pairs list examples and exceptions to the rule. The discussion that follows explores the difficulties children experience when they attempt to use such "rules." (p93)

E13
1ˢᵗ of 4 Writing Engagements: The ABCs of What I Know Well
Participants add comments to a piece of folded paper. In section "A" they list topics about which they are experts. In section "B," they choose one of these topics and write it down. Underneath the topic, they list significant ideas or details about this topic. In section "C," they begin free writing about this topic. A video on writing workshop informs group members' thinking. (p96)

E14
2nd of 4 Writing Engagements: Supporting *Writing Share Meetings*
One group member volunteers to share his/ her draft with the group. The writer is asked to leave the room. With the support of the site leader, group members discuss questions or comments they could make to help this writer with his/her writing, considering what questions or comments would help with their own writing. The writer returns to the room and shares his or her writing using the overhead or an enlarged copy. (p96)

E15
3ʳᵈ of 4 Writing Engagements: Conferring: 1, 2, 3 ...
The site leader sits with the writer in the second engagement; the rest of the group observes. The writer is asked: (1) where s/he is "up to" with this piece of writing; (2) if s/he "needs any help"; and (3) what s/he plans to do next with the piece. Acting as a conferring partner - based on the responses to the previous 3 questions - the site leader 1) acknowledges a strength s/he observes in the writer's work, 2) offers a "helpful" recommendation, and 3) suggests strategies that could help the writer to act on the recommendation. (p97)

E16
4ᵗʰ of 4 Writing Engagements: Transforming Expertise Into a Genre Format
Group members consider which writing patterns would best express the ideas they have begun to draft in the first writing engagement: question-answer, true-false, enumeration (e.g. five important considerations for marathon running...), cause-effect, sequence, comparison-contrast, problem-statement and then discuss which of these formats might be useful/adaptable with young children, and what other short genre writing formats they might suggest. Group members display their "published" books. (p97)

E17
Family Backpack: "Help Your Child Become a Better Writer"

Small groups develop a backpack to help families support their children's writing development. The backpack could include: a copy of NCTE's "How to Help Your Child Become a Better Writer" (available in English and Spanish); a read aloud book with a character who is a writer (see I2); writing materials; a disposable camera to record the writing experience the child and his or her family participate in together, etc. Other family backpacks may be developed to support a variety of language/literacy learning processes. (p98)

E18
From Facts to Family Communication

Using Constance Weaver's fact sheet "on the teaching of spelling" and Katie Wood Ray's "How do I teach spelling without resorting to lists and drills?" along with other resources, grade groups develop a parent newsletter inviting conversation about the learning and teaching of spelling. A follow-up newsletter demonstrates children's spelling development, addresses parents' questions and worries, and offers further suggestions to support children's writing at home. (p99)

E19
We Are Always Learning Spelling: What Strategies Do You Use?

In a 50-word spelling list/test compiled by copyeditor Mindy McAdam, preferred American conventional dictionary spellings are listed beside common misspellings of these words. Study group pairs visit this site and take turns selecting the conventional spelling from the two choices offered. Each thinks aloud about his/her spelling decisions while the other takes observational notes. At the end of the list, partners try to identify the spelling strategies they have used ("spelling as it sounds"; "spelling as it looks"; meaning; analogies; rules, etc.) as well as any patterns of spelling miscues. (p100)

E20
Reading Pictures: *Zoom/Re-Zoom*

Istvan Banyai's wordless picture book *Zoom* or *Re-Zoom* (or another complex, wordless picture book) is taken apart. The images are "shuffled" and randomly distributed (as unrelated images; without mention of the story) among the members of the study group. Group members are asked to share their images with 3 or 4 others and to consider how these images are related and to predict a storyline. Next, this small group gets together with another group of 3 or 4 others. Finally, all of the images are placed and the whole group works together to discover the relationship among the images and to order the images into a cohesive story. A conversation follows about what this experience demonstrates about the reading process and the role of images as alternative meaning-making and meaning-sharing "signs." (p101)

E21
Words and Images Tell Different Tales—Using Drama to Add Another Perspective

Multiple copies of Mem Fox's book *Tough Boris* are distributed among small groups. One person reads the story aloud, showing the illustrations. After responding to the story, the small group returns to the front cover illustration. This time the group "reads" the illustrations only. Group members discuss the parallel but different stories told in the two meaning-making systems (visual art and written language), then re-author the story through drama as a whole group. (p102)

Demonstrations

Examination of language concepts and the learning process. Build from learners' questions and help to generate new insights

D1
Shoe Inquiry: A Question-Inspired Process

The study group divides into groups of 4-5. Each group member removes a shoe and places it in the center of the group. Group members examine and discuss the various shoes, and determine what they already know about them. Each selects a shoe to sketch as a way of "looking more closely" at it. The small group brainstorms and categorizes the questions they have about these shoes: e.g. What are they made of? Where and who manufactured them? Why were they purchased (advertising, style, comfort)? How do they affect the wearer's body and movement? Members discuss the best ways to investigate questions, possible data sources, and the means by which they might gather, analyze and share findings. Insights into the power of questions and collaborative inquiry are documented. (p104)

D2
Sharing Resources: Conversations With Families

Group members select materials they have used to begin and continue conversations with children's families, including home visit information, invited letters or post-cards from families describing their child, lists of multilingual/multicultural home reading program resources, newsletters that address parents' questions, resources used in "open-house" or family nights," portfolios and/or student-led conference materials used with families, descriptions of family "expert" sessions, or school visits involving family input. (p105)

D3
Using "Critical Incidents" to Reflectively Examine Teaching

Group members read Newman's excerpt "Checker Games with Danny," and use one side of a 3 x 5 index card to record their insights about this critical incident. Judith Newman's "critical incident" questions serve as a possible guide for writing and learning from critical incidents. (p106)

D4
Facilitating Language Acquisition vs. Teaching Young Children to Talk

Adults facilitate children's oral language acquisition in multiple ways. In the accompanying text *Playing by My Own Linguistic Rules*, group members observe young children operating linguistically within a developmental rule system which they have constructed for themselves and during which adult "teaching" corrections are confusing and not helpful. Group members are invited to consider implications for literacy teaching. (p109)

D5
Your Theory of Reading Can Make It Easier or More Difficult

The study group divides into 3 groups. Each group is given a different text, with no explanation of the group texts until they are used. The site leader works from a different learning and teaching belief systems with each group. At the end of the 3 experiences, the study group examines the different models of reading and learning underlying these experiences and the impact of the experiences on study group members as learners. (p111)

D6
Read Aloud Rituals: Falling in Love with Books Everyday

Books that are of interest to children capture their minds and imaginations; classroom rituals may also be established that signal to children that they are about to enter the special world of literature. Group members read aloud to small groups from the read aloud collection. Readers "think aloud" (what they notice, expectations, connections) as they read. Group members are invited to jot down their own expectations, connections and wonderings on a bookmark. Transparencies of the stories invite group members to share their comments. A video clip allows groups to look in on the read aloud rituals in four classrooms. (p117)

D7

Reading is More than Knowing Words: Bow/Bow

The site leader asks one of the group members to read aloud an overhead of the "Bow/Bow" text. Group members make note of the reader's miscues. In the discussion that follows, participants explore why reading cannot be a word-by-word, left-to-right, linear process and how the meaning and pronunciation of a word depends on the context of the sentence and passage. (p118)

D8

Fish Bowl: Literature Circles

After reading two articles about literature circles, a small group gathers multiple copies of a book about which they wish to have a "grand conversation." The site leader or one of the group members assumes the role of "participating teacher" along with the small group. They conduct their literature circle in the center of the room as other group members record observations, i.e. *What was talked about? How was everyone involved? How were readers included in the conversation? What made this a 'good' literature circle? How could this literature circle have been improved?* The group completes a debriefing response based on the same set of questions. Follow-up discussion explores insights into classroom application. (p120)

D9

Listing/Webbing and Demonstrating Strategies

Group members compile a list of reading strategies that readers use to: draw upon prior knowledge in making effective predictions; orchestrate language cue systems in order to make sense and to fulfill their reading purposes; to monitor their meaning and to self-correct when what they have read does not make sense. Back in their classrooms, teachers compile a parallel list with children. Throughout the year they collaboratively add to, reconsider, and revise this posted list or web as the children's strategy use becomes more flexible. (p121)

D10

High Quality Miscues Are a Good Thing

After reading the Goodman article on miscue analysis for classroom teachers, group members study Wendy Hood's miscue markings of Kelly's reading and Alan Flurkey's miscue markings of Shari's reading sample of *Dr. De Soto*. The group explores why these samples—which are not read accurately—provide examples of strategies "good" readers use. From your discussion generate a list of characteristics of "good" readers. (p122)

D11

Selecting Books That Define Us as Readers

In the article "I am a level 3 reader: Children's perceptions of themselves as readers," Pierce outlines a procedure for inviting young children to locate 3 books in the classroom collection that are reflective of who each of them is as a reader. The next involves the children asking their classmates a series of questions about the kinds of books they like to read. This procedure enables the classroom community to become more consciously aware of its members as readers and learners. A video offers multiple demonstrations on how teachers might create structures and procedures for "choice" reading. (p125)

D12

Matching Readers w/ the Right Books

Study group members use language and textual features criteria to sort books into three categories: Beginning Reader books, Developing Reader books, and Independent Reader books. These three categories of books may be further sorted according to how the books will be used: read aloud, shared reading, independent reading, guided reading, etc. The books may also be sorted by genre, author/illustrator, thematic text sets. After teachers sort some of their classroom collection of books, they use a class list to note the individual children's learning/reading interests and current inquiries. Missing resources from their classrooms are noted and plans made to create a class collection that supports and encourages *all* readers. (p126)

D13
The Architecture of a Mini-lesson
Calkins writes that mini-lessons are five to 15 minute explicit instructional responses, designed by teachers to pull the "classroom community together to take on a problem." Such lessons are intended to make a difference in children's literacy lives. She further identifies five mini-lesson components. Group members are invited to use these components to create a writing mini-lesson in response to a writing "problem" they have observed in their own classrooms. (p128)

D14
Wondrous Words Wall
Tannis Nishibata-Chan, an early years teacher, transformed the idea of a word wall into a strategy that fits better with her theoretical orientation and calls it a "wow" wall. On a large sheet of paper divided into sections, children record, e,g, lovely language they cannot keep to themselves, unexpected or interesting spellings that caught their attention as readers that day, or examples of phonics/spelling patterns which they have studied, examples of spelling strategies the children have used to address problematic spelling words. The predictable structure supports children in taking responsibility for bringing their inquiries to the wall. (p131)

D15
Repeated Monthly Reading-Writings
Andrea Stuart and Donna Massey-Cudmore, two multi-age teachers, invite children to read, enjoy, and commit to memory favorite songs, poems, riddles, tongue-twisters, or 'did-you-know facts.' As the children learn the text, select words and punctuation marks are covered. The children predict and confirm these covered areas and attempt to spell the words on their own. After several practice runs, their writing samples are dated and analyzed by their teacher to inform her lesson planning. Samples are accompanied by teacher commentary and placed in the children's literacy portfolios. (p133)

D16
Know 1...Spell 3 & Have-a-Go **Forms**
Teacher-leader Sharon Taberski uses a variation of these two forms to support the spelling development of the children in her class. Given the group's understandings of children's writing development, you are invited to create a form of your own that will encourage reflective spelling self-study. (p134)

D17
The 3 Pigs Have Choices and So Do Readers
After browsing a 3-Little-Pigs text set aloud where the illustrations can be seen, discussion follows that explores the power of the pigs to "step out of the page" and author a different perspective from the "official storyline" being told by the main text. This demonstration creates an opportunity for study group members to explore how texts position characters and readers and how to help children become more aware of how characters and readers are manipulated. (p136)

D18
Turning the Tables: Literacy and Social Action
Paired books Click, Clack, Moo and Giggle, Giggle, Quack are read aloud as demonstrations of the use of literacy in an effort to right an imbalance of power. (p137)

Invitations to Inquiry

Experimenting by applying questions, tools, and methods of inquiry to a specific issue.

Q1
Sharing What We Do Best

"Good" teaching is complex and difficult to figure out on our own. Elliot Eisner suggests that we can improve the quality of our teaching by gaining access to colleagues' classrooms. Group members choose a partner and arrange a visit to the other's classroom to observe an aspect of early literacy teaching that the host teacher believes is working well. The visiting teacher videotapes, audiotapes or makes notes/sketches about an observed literacy teaching episode that caught his/her attention. Both teachers look closely at the process of teaching and the relationship between teaching and literacy learning in the episode. New connections, questions and curricular decisions are noted. (p140)

Q2
Book handling Knowledge Task

After studying Doake's "Reading-like behavior: Its role in learning to read," study group members conduct the "book handling" assessment. (p141)

Q3
Approximations to Text Assessment

Children read to regularly often "re-enact" this reading for themselves. With repeated opportunities to listen to and "read" the same stories over and over again, these readings become increasingly similar to the written text. Close observation of these readings reveals that children are doing much more than merely "memorizing" the story line. In this procedure, preschool aged children are read an unfamiliar, short text 3 times. After each read aloud, they are invited to "read" the text for themselves and each of the readings is recorded and transcribed. Using four focus areas identified by Pappas, the changes in the readings are analyzed and discussed in terms of what the child is doing and how s/he is growing as a reader. (p144)

Q4
Home and Community Literacy Studies

Group members plan a series of home and community literacy studies their students. Young children may be supported in this study by pairing with older ones. The purpose of these studies is to explore print used by the children, their families and communities to conduct their daily lives. A video clip demonstrates one way to highlight children's knowledge of environmental print. (p146)

Q5
Literacy-Enriched Play Environments

Long-standing practice and research support literacy-enriched play environments that make a significant difference in children's socio-cognitive development. Using the materials collected from the home and community literacy studies, teachers and young children design intimate, well-defined, literacy play environments where such materials can be meaningfully and interactively used (kitchen, gas station, market, store, library). Teachers brainstorm a list of appropriate and functional literacy props. The video clip "letter writing with Jossie" provides a demonstration of one supportive "play" engagement. (p147)

Q6
Permission to Respond

When response to read alouds are constrained by a whole class format and/or very limited time, young children have few opportunities to do more than answer teacher questions. Within such structures, some children's responses are not validated. Group members visit each other's classrooms to observe read aloud discourse patterns and help one another hear what is being valued. Colleagues collaborate to create classroom structures (e.g. partner or small group read aloud response circles), within which children are invited to respond in multiple ways. Critical incidents recorded during this invitation are shared with the whole study group. (p148)

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Q7
Predictable vs. Decodable Text
In Watson's article "Beyond decodable texts—Supportive and workable literature," she challenges the concept of decodable texts with a review of contemporary children's books that support readers' learning with predictable features. With their young reading partners, group members compare the child's engagement with the text, prediction and inferring strategies, meaning-making and retelling, when the text is predictable or decodable. (p149)

Q8
Kidwatching: What to Look for and How to Prompt Readers
Using Watson's four categories and accompanying questions, group members create a profile of their reading partner and choose one way in which this young reader needs support if s/he is to become more independent. Group members get together with colleagues whose young partners have similar reading instructional needs and generate prompts in response to the reader's primary need for support. Pairs share with other members of the study group. The video clip "coaching Devon as a reader" demonstrates how kidwatching can inform teacher response or instruction. (p150)

Q9
Reading Conference Focus
Group members "try out" a reading conference format in their classrooms to help their reading partners build on their strengths and to know more clearly what they could be "working at" next as readers. Individual reading conference books are a good way of tracking instruction and children's development as readers. The video clip "reading conference with Victoria" provides one demonstration of supporting a young learner's reading. (p152)

Q10
Snap and Share Strategic Reading
Following any of the class reading experiences, children take time to reflect on the problems they have faced and the effectiveness and efficiency of their strategy use. They may use a disposable camera or Polaroid to take a snapshot of themselves using a reading strategy with a particular text during that reading session; these are shared and displayed, and later added to the child's literacy portfolio. (p153)

Q11
Trying Out Mini-lessons that "Lift the Quality" of Children's Writing
Using Harwayne's "working with our youngest writers" and mini-lessons "that lift the quality of children's work," participants choose a partner with whom to "try out" one of these lessons in their classrooms. Partners visit each other's rooms to observe and record "critical incidents." They discuss observations and record and exchange reflections in dialogue journals. The video clip "tools for writing: literature-based mini-lessons" demonstrates another set of lessons. (p154)

Q12
Assessing Spelling in Process Writing
After reading "Assessment first: Planning for a writing curriculum that deals responsibly with spelling," the group uses the authors' guidelines to observe several children who they would like to know better as writers and spellers. They interview the children and use the "Index of Control" formula to analyze the spelling. Teachers create a profile of two children and design one spelling mini-lesson for each of them. (p156)

Q13
Curricular Participation: Do We See Ourselves in the Books in Our Class/School Libraries?
Group members read aloud Vasquez's article, "Building Community Through Social Action" to a partner, stopping to "say something" when they have made a connection they wish to share with their partner. In grade groups, group members browse: A multicultural booklist for grades K-8 for potential text set, literature circle, and curriculum inquiry resources that raise inequities, injustices and invisible and unquestioned assumptions "about the way things are supposed to be." (p159)

Q14
Framework for Observing Socio-cultural Features of the Classroom
Study group partners arrange a series of visits to each other's classrooms to observe and help each other learn more about how learners are positioned within the classroom's literacy curriculum. Rowe, Fitch and Bass's chart is used as a tool to support this kidwatching. Critical incidents are written, interpreted and shared with the whole group. (p162)

Opportunities for Organizing & Sharing

Public displays—charts, webs, lists, notes—or accumulating ideas, knowledge, and plans. These are used at different places in the study and are saved to revisit over time.

With I4 and D2
Three New Ideas
Group members identify and make public three ideas they plan to put in place this year to initiate new conversations with children's families. (p165)

With I1, R1, E1 and E2
New Plans
Group members display and discuss what is significant about the thinking they have done in these engagements. They identify the questions they have for one another and the aspects of literacy curriculum they intend to investigate more thoroughly . (p165)

At the study's end
Reading/Writing Relationship Chart
This inquiry cycle has highlighted reading process curriculum, yet reading and writing processes inform one another, and are not artificially separated in a "balanced" literacy curriculum. Group members are invited to create a 2-step chart: "If I believe I can support children's reading development by ..." "This means that I could support children's writing development by..." (p167)

With RA1
Where Are We Up To? Professional Education Curriculum Inquiry
The principal of the school works with the study group to "pencil in" potential PD initiatives that will sustain and enrich the professional conversations that have been happening throughout this study. The four-circle "Professional education curriculum model" in figure 1 of this early literacy inquiry study is used as a pre-planning framework. (p165)

At the study's end
Re-Defining Literacy
Participants engage in a final quick write to again define "literacy." Pairs compare their initial baseline definitions of literacy (I3) with their new definitions and together talk about how their definitions have changed and what is significant about this change. (p165)

With R3, Q11, RA4
Dialogue Journals
Group members reread their responses to professional readings and their partners' responses to their reflections . (p165)

With D1 and Q1
A Mini-lesson Scrapbook
Participants copy and archive the mini-lessons they have taught in this inquiry and continue to add to their collection throughout the school year. Included are titles and excerpts from literature resources they have used and examples of children's attempts to "try out" these lessons. (p165)

At the study's end
Theory-in-Practice Chart
In grade groups, participants work with a theory-in-practice framework. Using the two columns, they record and display the reading curriculum engagements currently in place in their classrooms and those new engagements that they are committed to revising or planning anew. (p168)

With RA2
Where Are We Up To? Curriculum Inquiry Model for Literacy Learning
Study group members work in small, grade groups to record their literacy curriculum intentions using the 4-circle model in figure 2 at the beginning of this early literacy inquiry. (p165)

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Reflective Action Plan

Activities that help the participants reflect on their current experience and opinions in constructing their understanding of the unit of study and subsequent new practice. An opportunity to take new action based on new knowledge, and an opportunity to reflect on future directions the group or individual learning might take.

RA1
Setting Goals

Group members review the list of what the study group has decided they need to support themselves and each other in professional conversations (I1) during this inquiry, revisiting the goals they set to expand their learning strategy repertoire (E1). Each writes a brief personal goal statement based on being a learner functioning within a collaborative inquiry group. (p170)

RA3
Choose 3 Literacy Curriculum Processes You Plan to Change

Group members select 3 early literacy processes they feel are inconsistent with the beliefs and values they have been developing through the study to date and which they plan to address in the upcoming inquiry cycles focused on reading and writing processes. (p170)

RA5
Highlighting Learning Reading, Learning About Reading, and Learning Through Reading

Using *learning reading, learning about reading, and learning through reading* intersecting circles (based on Halliday), group members identify the engagements in this inquiry that belong principally to each of the three circles, and decide which engagements fit best in the intersecting areas of the circles. (p171)

RA7
Highlighting Learning Writing, Learning About Writing, and Learning Through Writing

Using *learning writing, learning about writing, and learning through writing*, intersecting circles (based on Halliday), group members identify the engagements in this inquiry that belong principally to each of the three circles, and decide which engagements fit best in the intersecting areas of the circles. (p172)

RA2
What do we believe about learning language/literacy?

The study group creates a draft of beliefs and goals for early literacy learners in response to the beliefs provoked by the professional readings and experiences. The purpose of this reflection is to invite critical thinking about how learning and language/literacy beliefs inform decisions about early literacy curriculum. (p170)

RA4
Revisiting Questions, Terms, Quotes & Critical Incidents: What's On Top?

Participants review the materials and responses they have written in their dialogue journals during this inquiry. They participate in a written conversation about "what's on top," or what are the perplexing anomalies/burning questions" on their minds as they move into the next inquiry. (p171)

RA6
Communicating with Families

The study group decides how to actively involve the children's families in the learning they have been engaged in. (p171)

RA8
Are There Any Questions?

This inquiry is "formally" brought to a close by reading aloud Cazet's *Are there any questions?* Group members respond to the story by identifying 3 pluses (significant ideas and practices they have made their own throughout this study) and by identifying one significant wish or question they intend to pursue next. The pluses and wishes are shared on an overhead and study group members seek out partners whose questions or interests will support them in continuing their professional inquiries and conversations. (p172)

Inquiry 1

How do we begin and sustain new professional conversations with colleagues and with children's families?

Initiating Engagement 1
What Teachers Need
Group members individually "quick write" about the intellectual, social and emotional conditions they need if they are to become involved in challenging and thoughtful professional conversations during this inquiry study. (p38)

Initiating Engagement 2
Collections: Finders & Keepers
As one way of making this inquiry their own, group members contribute their "personal signatures" from the outset. The participants use literacy to support their own professional learning, by generating and sharing the following ongoing collections: 1) questions about early literacy, 2) provocative or puzzling terms, 3) "quotable quotes" that powerfully express ideas. (p38)

Initiating Engagement 3
Establishing a Baseline:
Defining Literacy
Group members quick write to define "literacy." These definitions are considered as the group views a video of the Manhattan New School. This initial definition serves as one way in which group members visibly track the growth in their learning. (p39)

Initiating Engagement 4
Reaching Out to Families
Study group members brainstorm two charts: the first outlines the ways in which the school informs families about their children and the learning that is going on at school; the second outlines the ways in which families inform the school about their children and the learning that is going on outside of school; the group then assesses how well the school is doing at creating a reciprocal relationship with families. (p39)

Resources 1
Quick Writes
Quick writes are brief, focused bursts of writing, the purpose of which is to help writers discover what they know about a given topic. What appears on the page generates further ideas. Writing becomes a way of thinking. (p60)

Resources 2
Creating an Evolving
Professional Text Set
Group members create an evolving professional early literacy "text set" in response to group member's individual and shared early literacy questions. The text set might include professional books, children's books, journal articles, articles in the popular press, copies of school/family newsletters, reading/writing continua. (p60)

Resources 3
Dialogue Journal Responses
Group members exchange and respond to another member's "thinking with" responses to the NCTE professional resources and the group's evolving "text set." (p60)

Resources 4
Inviting Families In
Group members contribute readings such as Shelley Harwayne's "Reaching out to Families," to a text set focused on how the school might invite more reciprocal family-school participation. (p61)

Engagement 1
A Metaphor to Know Me By
Group members share a poem, a musical selection, a visual image, a story, an artifact or object that metaphorically represents who they are as learners. The group considers how the diversity of "learner strengths" can enrich the whole group's learning process. Individuals set personal goals to expand their learning strategy repertoire. (p76)

Engagement 2
Poetry Potluck
Group members make copies of several favorite children's poems. The poetry is distributed randomly on tables. The group members browse poems, until they find one to which they feel a personal connection. Each reads the poem to a colleague seated nearby, shares his/her connection to the poem, and invites the partner to respond. The group notes how meaning-making is enhanced through social dialogue and interpersonal response. (p76)

Demonstration 1
Shoe Inquiry: A Question-Inspired Process
The study group divides into groups of 4-5. Each group member places a shoe in the center of the group. Group members examine and discuss the shoes and determine what they already know about them. Then each selects a shoe to sketch as a way of "looking more closely." On chart paper, the small group brainstorms and categorizes the questions they have about these shoes: e.g. what are they made of? Where and who manufactured them? Why were they purchased (advertising, style, comfort)? How do they affect the wearer's body and movement? Members discuss the best ways to investigate questions, data sources, and the means by which they might gather, analyze and share findings. Insights into the power of questions and collaborative inquiry are documented. (p104)

Demonstration 2
Sharing Resources: Conversations With Families
Group members select materials they have used to begin and continue conversations with children's families, including home visit information, invited letters or post-cards from families describing their child, lists of multilingual/multicultural home reading program resources, newsletters that address parents' questions, resources used in "open-house" or family nights," portfolios and/or student-led conference materials used with families, descriptions of family "expert" sessions, or school visits involving family input. (p105)

Demonstration 3
Using "Critical Incidents" to Reflectively Examine Teaching
Group members read the excerpt "Checker Games with Danny" by Judith Newman (1998), and use one side of a 3x5 index card to record their insights about this critical incident (Newman's, 1992, "critical incident" questions serve as a possible guide for writing and learning from critical incidents). (p106)

Invitation to Inquiry 1
Sharing What We Do Best
"Good" teaching is complex and difficult to figure out on our own. Elliot Eisner suggests that we can improve the quality of our teaching by gaining access to colleagues' classrooms. Study group members choose a partner and arrange a visit to the other's classroom to observe an aspect of early literacy teaching that the host teacher believes is working well. The visiting teacher videotapes, audiotapes or makes notes/sketches about an observed literacy teaching episode that caught his/her attention. Both teachers look closely at the process of teaching and the relationship between teaching and literacy learning in the episode. New connections, questions and curricular decisions are noted. (p140)

Reflective Action 1
Setting Goals
Group members review the list of what the study group has decided they need to support themselves and each other in professional conversations (I1) during this inquiry, revisiting the goals they set to expand their learning strategy repertoire (E1). Each writes a brief personal goal statement based on being a learner functioning within a collaborative inquiry group. (p170)

Organizing & Sharing
Notes/sketches w/ Q1
Pairs visiting each other's classroom share their connections, questions and curricular decisions about the process of teaching and the relationship between teaching and literacy learning gleaned from their visits. (p165)

Organizing & Sharing
New ideas w/ I4, D2
Group members identify and make public three ideas they plan to put in place this year to initiate new conversations with children's families. (p165)

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Inquiry 2

Constructing a knowledge base: What do we know about young children's literacy learning, the reading process, and supportive early literacy learning environments?

Initiating Engagement 5
Picturing Cambourne's Learning Conditions
One member reads aloud a picture book such as *Why is the Sky Blue?* The story is read for enjoyment the first time and read a second time so group members can connect the story events to Cambourne's language/literacy learning conditions. Individuals then consider how Cambourne's conditions were or were not "at play" during a personal learning experience. (p40)

Initiating Engagement 6
Read Together: A Partnership of Parents & Teachers
Parents *and* teachers share the responsibility for supporting enthusiastic and confident readers. The group reviews the recommendations made in NCTE's "Read Together" guidelines and determines how to share these recommendations with children's families. (p44)

Resources 5
Perspectives on Learning
Group members contribute one or more of the following book chapters which compare and contrast *learning models* to the evolving professional text set: Mayher's "commonsense vs. uncommon sense learning models"; Weaver's "transmission vs. transaction learning models"; Smith's "official theory vs. classic view," or models of their own selection. (p61)

Resources 6
Read Aloud Titles: Beginning From Home Base
This list of read aloud titles reflects cultural and communicative systems operating in some children's home communities that inform children's language and literacy social practices and ways of learning. (p62)

Engagement 3
"Taking Stock" of Our Own Literacy Use
Group members collect artifacts from home that represent use of literacy in their everyday lives outside of school, share these artifacts and "take stock" of questions like: how and why their home literacy practices are similar to or different from their school literacy practices; what is missing and why from the range of their home literacy resources; how and why their literacy practices have changed over the years. (p77)

Engagement 4
A Mardsan Giberter for Farfie: The Integration of Cue Systems in Reading
The site leader reads aloud Goodman's *A Mardsan Giberter for Farfie* without revealing the topic of the passage. Group members read their copies and answer the accompanying questions. In small groups, participants translate the passage into English. Everyone reads their translation aloud at the same time and a discussion ensues about the contributions made by each of the cue systems to the meaning constructed by the readers. (p78)

Demonstration 4
Facilitating Language Acquisition Vs Teaching Young Children to Talk
Adults facilitate children's oral language acquisition multiple ways. In the accompanying text "Playing by My Own Linguistic Rules," group members observe young children operating linguistically within a developmental rule system which they have constructed for themselves and during which adult "teaching" corrections are confusing and not helpful. Group members are invited to consider implications for literacy teaching. (p109)

Demonstration 5
Your Theory of Reading Can Make It Easier or More Difficult
The study group divides into 3 groups. Each group is given a different text, with no explanation of the group texts until they are used. The site leader works from a different learning and teaching belief systems with each group.
At the end of the 3 experiences, the study group examines the different models of reading and learning underlying these experiences and the impact of the experiences on study group members as learners. (p111)

Invitation to Inquiry 2
Book handling Knowledge Task
After studying Doake's "Reading-like behavior: Its role in learning to read," study group members conduct the "book handling." (p141)

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Invitation to Inquiry 3
Approximations to Text Assessment
Children read to regularly often "re-enact" this reading for themselves. With repeated opportunities to listen to and "read" the same stories over and over again, these readings become increasingly similar to the written text. Close observation of these readings reveals that children are doing much more than merely "memorizing" the story line. In this procedure, preschool aged children are read an unfamiliar, short text 3 times. After each read aloud, they are invited to "read" the text for themselves and each of the readings is recorded and transcribed. Using 4 focus areas identified by Pappas, the changes in the readings are analyzed and discussed in terms of what the child is doing and how s/he is growing as a reader. (p144)

Invitation to Inquiry 4
Home and Community Literacy Studies
Group members plan a series of home and community literacy studies their students. Young children may be supported in this study by pairing with older ones. The purpose of these studies is to explore print used by the children, their families and communities to conduct their daily lives. After conducting several literacy walks, children discuss and share collected artifacts and are invited to compose a language-experience story, or reproduce the neighbourhood in a miniature. Family support is solicited. A video clip demonstrates one way to highlight children's knowledge of environmental print. (p146)

Invitation to Inquiry 5
Literacy-Enriched Play Environments
Long-standing practice and research support the belief that literacy-enriched play environments make a significant difference in children's socio-cognitive development. Using the materials collected from the home and community literacy studies, teachers and young children design intimate, well-defined, literacy play environments where such materials can be meaningfully and interactively used (kitchen, gas station, market, store, library). Teachers brainstorm a list of appropriate and functional literacy props. The video clip "letter writing with Jossie" provides a demonstration of one supportive "play" engagement. (p147)

Organizing & Sharing
Dialogue Journals w/ R3
Group members reread their responses to professional readings and their partners' responses to their reflections. Important early literacy questions, provocative or puzzling terms, and quotable quotes are identified and contributed to the group's collections. The whole group considers how to use this data to plan inquiry experiences that will address their emerging questions, interests and concerns. (p165)

Reflective Action 2
What do we believe about learning language/literacy?
The study group creates a draft of beliefs and goals for early literacy learners in response to the beliefs provoked by the professional readings and experiences. The purpose of this reflection is to invite critical thinking about how learning and language/literacy beliefs inform decisions about early literacy curriculum. (p170)

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Inquiry 3

What are the new visions of a "balanced" literacy curriculum?

Initiating Engagement 7
Reviewing the Big Picture: A Framework for Thinking About Your Literacy Curriculum
Using a large copy of the "Curriculum Model for Literacy Learning" as a framework, plot your current literacy curriculum engagements within each of the 4 overlapping circles. Where do they fit? Is there a balance? (p45)

Resources 7
Using Graphics to Gain Perspective
A set of graphics represent modifications of Halliday's *learning language, learning about language, and learning through language*: the "Curriculum Model for Literacy Learning" (Serebrin); "Curriculum Model for Integrated Language learning" (Short); "Rethinking a Balanced Curriculum" (Harste) and "Literacy Workshop Across the Day" (Egawa). Compare, contrast and use these four literacy curriculum models to examine your own literacy curriculum and to plan changes. (p65)

Engagement 5
Comparing/Contrasting Two Literacy Curriculum Engagements
Group members use Short's "Comparison of Guided Reading and Literature Circles" and the criteria for assessing literacy curriculum to compare and contrast 2 of their own literacy engagements. This experience invites movement from practice to underlying theoretical principles, consideration of the "fit" between beliefs, values and practice. Realignment is planned. A video of Elena Castro's 3rd grade classroom offers a new vision of a "balanced" literacy curriculum. (p80)

Engagement 6
Transforming State or District Curriculum Mandates
Working in the opposite direction from E5, in this experience group members - working in grade level groups - consider how they can transform state or district curriculum mandates into inquiry-driven curriculum engagements that fit within one or more of the 4 language learning circles. (p81)

Organizing and Sharing New thinking with I7, R7, E5 and E6
Group members display and discuss what is significant about the thinking they have done in these engagements. They identify the questions they have for one another and the aspects of literacy curriculum they intend to investigate more thoroughly. (p165)

Reflective Action 3
Choose 3 Literacy Curriculum Processes You Plan to Change
Group members select 3 early literacy processes they feel are inconsistent with the beliefs and values they have been developing through the study to date and which they plan to address in the upcoming inquiry cycles focused on reading and writing processes. (p170)

Inquiry 4

Focused study into learning, teaching, and evaluating reading in the early school years.

Initiating Engagement 8
Read Aloud Favorites: A la Reading Rainbow
The study group watches the PBS series Reading Rainbow and watches the children's book talks at the end of one episode. For the next meeting, group members bring along and share 3 of their all-time favorite read aloud books. (p46)

Initiating Engagement 9
Just What is Phonics?
After reading Constance Weaver's online article What about learning to read? And what about phonics? group members brainstorm a list of phonics related words and draw from their experiences as teachers, to talk through a definition of what "phonics" means, the role of phonics in reading, and ways of helping children learn phonics. (p47)

Resources 8
Read Aloud "Hot" List
For read aloud recommendations, see articles by Egawa & Katahira and Doiron. Also, refer to: Adventuring with books: A booklist for pre-K-Grade 6, (12 ed.), and The read aloud handbook. (p66)

Resources 9
It's as Easy as ABC...
Beginning with a preliminary list of alphabet books, group members add their own favorites to the list. The books serve as a resource for helping children learn grapho-phonic relationships in meaningful contexts. (p67)

Engagement 7
A Relationship With a Young Reading Partner
The group views a video of Josh's Burke Interview and his reading and retelling of a story. Interpretations are made about his understanding about reading and the strategies he uses. Each group member establishes a read-together relationship with a young reader: his/her own child, a child s/he knows outside of school, or a child at school. The group readings and experiences are used to help think more deeply about the child's reading interests, strengths, and development. "Critical incidents" are noted and interpreted. (p82)

Engagement 8
Burke Reading Interview
Although young children may not be able to articulate the model of reading they have constructed based on their prior literacy experiences, this does not mean that they don't have beliefs about how the reading process works. The Burke Reading Interview responses illustrate these beliefs. The group discusses the interview and the "Burke Interview Questions and Their Significance" documents. Video clips of children's responses to the Burke Interview are provided. (p83)

Engagement 9
Shared Reading with Big Books (and Other Genres)
The study group explores the concept of "shared reading" with an emphasis on a cycle of reading and re-reading. A video from a kindergarten classroom on shared reading with big books is provided as one example of the strategy in use. (p87)

Engagement 10
Rimes with Rhymes (and Onsets Too)
Group members gather and exchange rhyming songs, poems and finger plays they predict children will enjoy and that can also be used to teach common onsets and rimes. Songs and poems are written on chart paper or overheads and used for strategy lessons. Group members experiment with the Moustafa's "w(hole) to part" phonics instruction ideas. (p90)

Engagement 11
Guided Reading Lesson Plan
Effective teachers take their instructional cues from readers' responses and their best predictions about what will help children move forward as readers. A lesson plan offers a framework and criteria for conducting and evaluating guided reading lessons. Groups view a video and consider how one teacher moves guided reading beyond skills instruction. (p91)

Engagement 12
Testing Out Phonics Rules
Working in partners, group members test out one of the four vowel phonics/spelling rules. For each rule, study group pairs list examples and exceptions to the rule. The discussion that follows explores the difficulties children experience when they attempt to use such "rules." (p93)

Demonstration 6
Read Aloud Rituals: Falling in Love with Books Everyday
Books that are of interest to children capture their minds and imaginations; classroom rituals may also be established that signal to children that they are about to enter the special world of literature. Group members read aloud to small groups from the read aloud collection. Readers "think aloud" (what they notice, expectations, connections) as they read. Group members are invited to jot down their own expectations, connections and wonderings on a bookmark. Transparencies of the stories invite group members to share their comments. A video clip allows groups to look in on the read aloud rituals in four classrooms. (p117)

Demonstration 7
Reading is More than Knowing Words: Bow/Bow
The site leader asks one of the group members to read aloud an overhead of the "Bow/Bow" text. Group members make note of the reader's miscues. In the discussion that follows, participants explore why reading cannot be a word-by-word, left-to-right, linear process and how the meaning and pronunciation of a word depends on the context of the sentence and passage. (p118)

Demonstration 8
Fish Bowl: Literature Circles
After reading two articles about literature circles, a small group gathers multiple copies of a children's book about which they wish to have a "grand conversation." The site leader or one of the group members assumes the role of "participating teacher" along with the small group. They conduct their literature circle in the center of the room as other group members record observations, i.e. what was talked about? How was everyone involved? How were readers included in the conversation? What made this a 'good' literature circle? How could this literature circle have been improved? The group completes a debriefing response based on the same set of questions. Follow-up discussion explores insights into classroom application. (p120)

Demonstration 9
Listing/Webbing and Demonstrating Strategies
Using the included reading, along with their own ideas, group members compile a list of reading strategies that readers use to: draw upon prior knowledge in making effective predictions; orchestrate language cue systems in order to make sense and to fulfill their reading purposes; to monitor their meaning and to self-correct when what they have read does not make sense. Back in their own classrooms, teachers compile a parallel reading strategies list with children. (p121)

Demonstration 10
High Quality Miscues Are a Good Thing
After reading the Goodman article on miscue analysis for classroom teachers, group members study Wendy Hood's miscue markings of Kelly's reading and Alan Flurkey's miscue markings of Shari's reading sample of Dr. De Soto. The group explores why these samples—which are not read accurately—provide examples of strategies "good" readers use. From your discussion generate a list of characteristics of "good" readers. (p122)

Demonstration 11
Selecting Books That Define Us as Readers
In the article "I am a level 3 reader: Children's perceptions of themselves as readers," Pierce outlines a procedure for inviting young children to locate 3 books in the classroom collection that are reflective of who each of them is as a reader. The next involves the children asking their classmates a series of questions about the kinds of books they like to read. This procedure enables the classroom community to become more consciously aware of its members as readers and learners. A video offers multiple demonstrations on how teachers might create structures and procedures for "choice" reading. (p125)

Demonstration 12
Matching Readers with the Right Books
Study group members use language and textual features criteria to sort books into 3 categories: Beginning Reader books, Developing Reader books, and Independent Reader books. These 3 categories of books may be further sorted according to how the books will be used: read aloud, shared reading, independent reading, guided reading, etc. The books may also be sorted by genre, author/illustrator, thematic text sets. After teachers have sorted some of their classroom collection of books, they use a class list to note the individual children's learning/reading interests and current inquiries. Missing resources from their classrooms are noted and plans made to create a class collection that supports and encourages *all* readers. (p126)

Invitation to Inquiry 6
Permission to Respond
When response to read alouds are constrained by a whole class format and/or a very limited time span, young children have few opportunities to do more than answer teacher questions. Within such structures, some children's responses are not validated, becoming silenced or marginalized. Group members visit each other's classrooms to observe read aloud discourse patterns and help one another to hear what is being validated/valued. Colleagues collaborate to create a classroom structure (e.g. partner or small group read aloud response circles), within which children are invited to respond in multiple ways. Critical incidents recorded during this invitation are shared with the whole study group. (p148)

Invitation to Inquiry 7
Predictable vs. Decodable Text
In Watson's article Beyond decodable texts—Supportive and workable literature, she challenges the concept of decodable texts with a review of contemporary children's books that support readers' learning with predictable features. With their young reading partners, group members compare the child's engagement with the text, prediction and inferring strategies, meaning-making and retelling, when the text is predictable or decodable. (p149)

Invitation to Inquiry 8
Kidwatching: What to Look for and How to Prompt Readers
Using Watson's 4 categories and the accompanying questions, group members create a profile of their reading partner and choose one way in which their young reader needs support if s/he is to become more independent. Group members get together with colleagues whose young partners have similar reading instructional needs and generate prompts in response to the reader's primary need for support (e.g. "If my reader isn't self-correcting for meaning, what could I suggest?"). Pairs share their prompts for other members of the study group. The video clip "coaching Devon as a reader" demonstrates how kidwatching can inform teacher response or instruction. (p150)

Invitation to Inquiry 9
Reading Conference Focus
Group members "try out" a reading conference format in their classrooms to help their young reading partners build on their strengths and to know more clearly what they could be "working at" next as readers. Individual reading conference books are a good way of tracking individualized instruction and children's development as readers. The video clip "reading conference with Victoria" provides one demonstration of supporting a young learner's reading. (p152)

Invitation to Inquiry 10
Snap&Share Strategic Reading

Following any of the class reading experiences, children take time to reflect on the problems they have faced and the effectiveness and efficiency of their strategy use. They may use a disposable camera or Polaroid to take a snapshot of themselves using a reading strategy with a particular text during that reading session and add a caption to the snapshot; these are shared and displayed, and later added to the child's literacy portfolio. (p153)

Organizing & Sharing
Reading/Writing Relationship
chart at the study's end

This inquiry cycle has highlighted reading process curriculum, yet reading and writing processes inform one another, and are not artificially separated in a "balanced" literacy curriculum. Group members are invited to create a 2-step chart: "If I believe I can support children's reading development by ..." "This means that I could support children's writing development by..." (p167)

Organizing & Sharing
Theory-in-Practice chart at the
study's end

In grade groups, participants work with a theory-in-practice framework. Using the two columns, they record and display the reading curriculum engagements currently in place in their classrooms and those new engagements that they are committed to revising or planning anew. (p168)

Reflective Action 4
Revisiting Questions, Terms, Quotes and Critical Incidents: What's On Top?

Participants review the materials and responses they have written in their dialogue journals during this inquiry. They participate in a written conversation with a partner from the group about "what's on top," or what are the perplexing anomalies/burning questions/"can't wait" intentions on their minds as they move into the next inquiry? (p171)

Reflective Action 5
Highlighting Learning Reading, Learning About Reading, and Learning Through Reading

Using *learning reading, learning about reading, and learning through reading* intersecting circles (based on Halliday), group members identify the engagements in this inquiry that belong principally to each of the three circles, and decide which engagements fit best in the intersecting areas of the circles. (p171)

Reflective Action 6
Communicating with Families

The study group decides how to actively involve the children's families in the learning they have been engaged in. (p171)

Inquiry 5

Focused study into learning, teaching, and evaluating writing in the early school years.

Initiating Engagement 10
Pre-Planning Writing
Workshops & Selecting
"Touchstone Texts"
After reading an article by Isoke Nia, group members work in grade groups using her "Sample Yearlong Curriculum Chart" to brainstorm tentative writing workshop inquiries they would like to pursue with their classes over the year. (p48)

Initiating Engagement 11
Reading & Writing Short
Genres
Shelley Harwayne writes about how short genres enable the youngest learners to experience the success and satisfaction of completing a piece of writing. Consult Shelley's list of children's books where the main character is a writer and where the writing contained demonstrates a variety of short and authentic genres. Add resources of your own to Shelley's list. The video clip "tools for writing: literature-based mini-lessons" demonstrates another set of lessons. (p52)

Engagement 13
1st of 4 Writing Engagements:
The ABCs of What I Know Well
Participants add comments to a piece of folded paper. In section "A" they list topics about which they are experts. In section "B", they choose one of these topics and write it down. Underneath the topic, they list significant ideas or details about this topic. In section "C", they begin free writing about this topic. A video on writing workshop informs group members' thinking. (p96)

Engagement 14
2nd of 4 Writing Engagements:
Supporting "Writing Share
Meetings"
One group member volunteers to share his/ her draft with the group. The writer is asked to leave the room. With the support of the site leader, group members discuss questions or comments they could make to help this writer with his/her writing, considering what questions or comments would help with their own writing. The writer returns to the room and shares his or her writing using the overhead or an enlarged copy. (p96)

Engagement 15
3rd of 4 Writing Engagements:
Conferring 1, 2, 3...
The site leader sits with the writer in the second engagement; the rest of the group observes. The writer is asked: (1) where s/he is "up to" with this piece of writing; (2) if s/he "needs any help"; and (3) what s/he plans to do next with the piece. Acting as a conferring partner - based on the responses to the previous 3 questions - the site leader 1) acknowledges a strength s/he observes in the writer's work, 2) offers a "helpful" recommendation, and 3) suggests strategies that could help the writer to act on the recommendation. (p97)

Engagement 16
4th of 4 Writing Engagements:
Transforming Expertise Into a
Genre Format
Group members consider which writing patterns would best express the ideas they have begun to draft in the first writing engagement: question-answer, true-false, enumeration (e.g. five important considerations for marathon running...), cause-effect, sequence, comparison-contrast, problem-statement and then discuss which of these formats might be useful/adaptable with young children, and what other short genre writing formats they might suggest. Group members display their "published" books. (p97)

Engagement 17
Family Backpack: "Help Your
Child Become a Better Writer"
Small groups develop a backpack to help families support their children's writing development. The backpack could include: a copy of NCTE's "How to Help Your Child Become a Better Writer" (available in English and Spanish); a read aloud book with a character who is a writer (see I2); writing materials; a disposable camera to record the writing experience the child and his or her family participate in together, etc. Other family backpacks may be developed to support a variety of language/literacy learning processes. (p98)

Engagement 18
From Facts to Family
Communication
Using Constance Weaver's fact sheet "on the teaching of spelling" and Katie Wood Ray's "How do I teach spelling without resorting to lists and drills?" along with other resources, grade groups develop a parent newsletter inviting conversation about the learning and teaching of spelling. A follow-up newsletter demonstrates children's spelling development, addresses parents' questions and worries, and offers further suggestions to support children's writing at home. (p99)

Engagement 19
We Are Always Learning
Spelling: What Strategies Do
You Use?
In a 50-word spelling list/test compiled by copyeditor Mindy McAdam, preferred American conventional dictionary spellings are listed beside common misspellings of these words. Study group pairs visit this site and take turns selecting the conventional spelling from the two choices offered. Each thinks aloud about his/her spelling decisions while the other takes observational notes. At the end of the list, partners try to identify the spelling strategies they have used ("spelling as it sounds"; "spelling as it looks"; meaning; analogies; rules, etc.) as well as any patterns of spelling miscues. (p100)

Demonstration 13
The Architecture of a Mini-lesson

Calkins writes that mini-lessons are five to 15 minute explicit instructional responses, designed by teachers to pull the "classroom community together to take on a problem." She further identifies 5 mini-lesson components. Group members are invited to use these components to create a writing mini-lesson in response to a writing "problem" they have observed in their own classrooms. (p128)

Demonstration 14
Wondrous Words Wall

Tannis Nishibata-Chan, an early years teacher, transformed the idea of a word wall into a strategy that fits better with her theoretical orientation and she calls it a "wow" wall. On a large sheet of paper divided into sections, children record, e.g., lovely language they cannot keep to themselves, unexpected or interesting spellings that caught their attention as readers that day, or examples of phonics/spelling patterns which they have studied, examples of spelling strategies the children have used to address problematic spelling words. The predictable structure supports children in taking responsibility for bringing their inquiries to the wall. (p131)

Demonstration 15
Repeated Monthly Reading-Writings

Andrea Stuart and Donna Massey-Cudmore, two multi-age teachers, invite children to read, enjoy, and commit to memory favorite songs, poems, riddles, tongue-twisters, or 'did-you-know facts.' As the children learn the text, select words and punctuation marks are covered. The children predict and confirm these covered areas and attempt to spell the words on their own. After several practice runs, their writing samples are dated and analyzed by their teacher to inform her lesson planning. Samples are accompanied by teacher commentary and placed in the children's literacy portfolios. (p133)

Demonstration 16
Know 1...Spell 3 & Have-a-Go Forms

Teacher-leader Sharon Taberski uses a variation of these two forms to support the spelling development of the children in her class. Given the group's understandings of children's writing development, you are invited to create a form of your own that will encourage reflective spelling self- study. (p134)

Invitation to Inquiry 11
Trying Out Mini-lessons that "Lift the Quality" of Children's Writing

Using Harwayne's "working with our youngest writers" and mini-lessons "that lift the quality of children's work," participants choose a partner with whom to "try out" one of these mini-lessons in their classrooms. Partners visit each other's rooms to observe and record "critical incidents" during their visit. They discuss their observations and record and exchange reflections in dialogue journals. (p154)

Invitation to Inquiry 12
Assessing Spelling in Process Writing

After reading "Assessment first: Planning for a writing curriculum that deals responsibly with spelling," the group uses authors Laminack and Wood's guidelines to observe several children who they would like to know better as writers and spellers. They interview the children about their spelling and use the "Index of Control" formula to analyze the spelling. Teachers create a vignette or profile of these two children and design one spelling mini-lesson for each of them. (p156)

Organizing & A Mini-lesson Scrapbook Sharing w/ D1 & Q1

Participants copy and archive the mini-lessons they have taught in this inquiry and continue to add to their collection throughout the school year. Included are titles and excerpts from literature resources they have used and examples of children's attempts to "try out" these lessons. (p165)

Reflective Action 7
Highlighting Learning Writing, Learning About Writing, and Learning Through Writing

Using learning writing, learning about writing, and learning through writing, intersecting circles (based on Halliday), group members identify the engagements in this inquiry that belong principally to each of the three circles, and decide which engagements fit best in the intersecting areas of the circles. (p172)

Inquiry 6

Focused study into inquiry-based, interdisciplinary and critical literacies curriculum in the early school years.

Initiating Engagement 12
Inquiry-Based, Interdisciplinary Curriculum: What are the Personal and Professional Implications?

Group members individually read NCTE's "Position Statement on Interdisciplinary Learning, Pre-K to Grade 4" and consider what they will need to learn and do - both personally and professionally - if they are to feel comfortable creating interdisciplinary inquiry learning opportunities with the children in their classrooms. (p54)

Initiating Engagement 13
Experiencing a Focused Study: Color as an Element of Design

Group members read Carolyn Burke's "A Focused Study as a Curricular Organization" and together create the invitations offered as a way of experiencing, firsthand, the power of interdisciplinary inquiry and alternate ways of knowing (beyond language), from the perspective of learners. A video on kidwatching demonstrates how a second grade teacher draws upon her knowledge of students in making curricular decisions and revisions throughout her teaching. (p56)

Initiating Engagement 14
Transforming Reading-Writing Workshops into Viewing-Representing Workshops

Group members chart the ways in which they could transform the components of their reading-writing workshop into viewing-representing workshops. (p57)

Engagement 20
Reading Pictures: *Zoom/Re-Zoom*

Istvan Banyai's wordless picture book *Zoom* or *Re-Zoom* (or another complex, wordless picture book) is taken apart. The images are "shuffled" and randomly distributed (as unrelated images; without mention of the story) among the members of the study group. Group members are asked to share their images with 3 or 4 others and to consider how these images are related and to predict a storyline. Next, this small group gets together with another group of 3 or 4 others. Finally, all of the images are placed and the whole group works together to discover the relationship among the images and to order the images into a cohesive story. A conversation follows about what this experience demonstrates about the reading process and the role of images as alternative meaning-making and meaning-sharing "signs." (p101)

Engagement 21
Words and Images Tell Different Tales—Using Drama to Add Another Perspective

Multiple copies of Mem Fox's book *Tough Boris* are distributed among small groups. One person reads the story aloud, showing the illustrations. After responding to the story, the small group returns to the front cover illustration. This time the group "reads" the illustrations only. Group members discuss the parallel but different stories told in the two meaning-making systems (visual art and written language), then re-author the story through drama as a whole group. (p102)

Demonstration 17
The 3 Pigs Have Choices and So Do Readers

After browsing a 3-little-pigs text set aloud where the illustrations can be seen, discussion follows which explores the power of the pigs to "step out of the page" and author a different perspective from the "official storyline" being told by the main text. This demonstration creates an opportunity for study group members to explore how texts' position characters and readers and how to help children become more aware of how characters and readers are manipulated. (p136)

Demonstration 18
Turning the Tables: Literacy and Social Action

Paired books *Click, Clack, Moo* and *Giggle, Giggle, Quack* are read aloud as demonstrations of the use of literacy in an effort to right an imbalance of power. (p137)

Invitation to Inquiry 13
Curricular Participation: Do We See Ourselves in the Books in Our Class/School Libraries?

Group members read aloud Vasquez's article, "Building Community Through Social Action" to a partner, stopping to "say something" when they have made a connection they wish to share with their partner. In grade groups, group members browse Kaleidoscope: A multicultural booklist for grades K-8 and Adventuring with books: A booklist for pre-k to grade 6 for potential text set, literature circle, and curriculum inquiry resources that raise inequities, injustices and invisible and unquestioned assumptions "about the way things are supposed to be." (p159)

Invitation to Inquiry 14
Framework for Observing Socio-cultural Features of the Classroom

Study group partners arrange a series of visits to each other's classrooms to observe and help the host teacher learn more about how learners are socially positioned within the classroom's literacy curriculum. Rowe, Fitch and Bass's chart is used as a tool to support this kidwatching. Critical incidents are written, interpreted and shared with the whole group. (p162)

Organizing & Sharing
Where Are We Up To?
Curriculum Inquiry Model for
Literacy Learning w/ RA2
Study group members work in small,
grade groups to record their literacy
curriculum intentions using the 4-circle
model in figure 2 at the beginning of this
early literacy inquiry. (p165)

Organizing & Sharing
Where Are We Up To?
Professional Education
Curriculum Inquiry Model
w/RA1
The principal of the school works with the
study group to "pencil in" potential PD
initiatives that will sustain and enrich the
professional conversations that have been
happening throughout this study. The 4-
circle "Professional education curriculum
model" in figure 1 of this early literacy
inquiry study is used as a pre-planning
framework. (p165)

Reflective Action 8
Re-Defining Literacy
Participants engage in a final quick write
to again define "literacy." Pairs compare
their initial baseline definitions of literacy
(13) with their new definitions and
together talk about how their definitions
have changed and what is significant
about this change. (p172)

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Professional Reading

Inquiry Cycle #1

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Video clip #1: A tour of the Manhattan New School

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Video clip #2: You are a reader

Video clip #12: Letter writing with Jossie

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Video clip #5: Tour of Elena Castro's third grade classroom

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Video clip #3: Shared reading in Dori Gilbert's kindergarten classroom
Video clip #4: Burke Reader Interview
Video clip #6: Josh's Burke Interview
Video clip #7: Josh reading and retelling *Alexander and the Wind-Up Mouse*
Video clip #8: Reading conference with Victoria
Video clip #9: Wondrous possibilities of read aloud
Video clip #10: Four variations of self-selected reading
Video clip #11: Coaching Devon as a reader
Video clip #15: Curricular structures: Guided reading and literature discussions

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Video clip #13: Writing workshop: A community of writers at work
Video clip #14: Tools for writing: Literature-based mini-lessons

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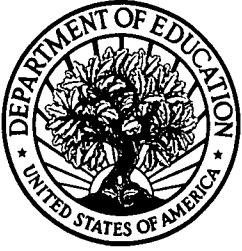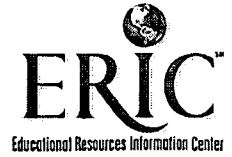Harwayne, S. (2001). *Writing through childhood*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

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Video clip #16: Building on kidwatching: Thinking curricularly

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