

1962

Interpretation of the First Grade Program to the Public Through the Medium of the Press

Claire Andrews
University of Rhode Island

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/theses>

Terms of Use

All rights reserved under copyright.

Recommended Citation

Andrews, Claire, "Interpretation of the First Grade Program to the Public Through the Medium of the Press" (1962). *Open Access Master's Theses*. Paper 1344.
<https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/theses/1344>

This Thesis is brought to you by the University of Rhode Island. It has been accepted for inclusion in Open Access Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact digitalcommons-group@uri.edu. For permission to reuse copyrighted content, contact the author directly.

372.24

An26

INTERPRETATION OF THE FIRST GRADE PROGRAM TO THE PUBLIC
THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF THE PRESS

BY

CLAIRE ANDREWS

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE

IN

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

1962

MASTER OF SCIENCE THESIS

OF

CLAIRE ANDREWS

Approved:

Thesis Committee:

Chairman

Frank M. Pelton

Ernest Edwin Stiles

Robert W. McClelland

Dean of the Graduate School

Eric Starling

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

1962

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to present and discuss a series of ten feature articles which appeared in The Rhode Islander, the magazine section of The Providence Sunday Journal, as a means of informing the lay public of the activities of a first grade in the public schools. The series commenced in September, 1956, and was concluded in June, 1957.

The ten articles are included as Appendix A. A questionnaire shown in Appendix B, was constructed as a means of evaluating the effect the publication of the feature articles had upon the information of readers.

The first grade selected for the project was at the Point Street Elementary School in Providence, Rhode Island, a densely populated area in which housing and living conditions were very poor. The class consisted of thirty six children ranging in age from five to eight. They came from many national backgrounds and would probably be considered below average in mental ability, since more than half the class had intelligence quotients below ninety five.

Two problems have been considered in the study:

1. Serving the purposes of journalism while fulfilling the purposes or objectives in the instructional program of the first grade; and
2. Giving the public accurate and instructive information about the normal activities of a first grade as

developed for special journalistic purposes.

In planning the series of articles many questions had to be answered. What did the public want to know: What did the newspaper want for its series? What did the elementary school supervisor want? What could the teacher develop for suitable programs? Answers to these and other questions were sought through current literature in the field of public relations and primary education, and interviews with the education editor of the local press and the elementary school supervisor.

After completing the study the following recommendations were made:

1. The teacher must have complete freedom to select activities which she thinks are suitable and to employ whatever methods and procedures she thinks necessary. However, she must be forever mindful of what is good instruction for the children, for that is the reason for the articles.

2. The teacher selected must be enthusiastic about undertaking the task.

3. Persons representing the newspaper as reporter and photographer must have interest in and knowledge about the educational area which they are reporting.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I.	1
II.	5
III.	11
IV.	26
V.	40
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	51
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	52
APPENDIX A: TEN FEATURE ARTICLES.....	54
APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE.....	90

CHAPTER I

The purpose of this study is to present and discuss a series of ten feature articles which appeared in The Rhode Islander, a magazine section of The Providence Sunday Journal, as a means of informing the lay public of the activities of a first grade in the public schools. The study includes the reactions of selected persons who read the articles.

The series of feature articles which appeared from September, 1956, to June, 1957, inclusive, were designed to inform the lay public of the activities of a selected first grade class. Their content was limited to activities appropriate for first grade children. The selection of activities was determined and the needs dramatized and presented so as not only to demonstrate good journalistic procedures, but to meet certain journalistic standards.

Two problems have been considered in the study:

1. Whether or not serving the purposes of journalism interfered with fulfilling the purposes or objectives in the instructional program in the first grade.
2. Whether or not the articles as presented gave the public accurate and instructive information about the normal activities of a first grade when developed for special journalistic purposes.

Confidence in public education grows as the public is informed about its schools, and approval of the public school

programs underlies the support, financial and otherwise, that the public will give to education. An informed public is necessary for a confident or a supporting public.

Various mass media of communication have been used to give this information. News articles, editorials, television programs, and feature articles may be employed for giving some specific or detailed information to the public. Because they have not been adequately informed, many parents believe that the school is not fulfilling its obligations nor meeting its responsibilities with regard to educating their children. Many parents do not know what methods a teacher uses to teach reading nor why she is using them. They do not know the extent to which a school curriculum serves development and growth of children. They worry about possible deficiencies in a child's education. This attitude may reflect itself in carping criticisms of a child's schoolwork or needless questions. Consequently, effective ways of communicating facts about schools to parents are necessary.

Since changes are taking place in schools constantly, public relations must be a continuous program. Schools are dependent upon the public for support and encouragement. Any institution that is publicly supported must keep the public well informed.

In education, the story needs to be told in language that the people for whom it is told can understand. It is through the press that millions of people gain a greater

appreciation of the constantly changing educational system. Public opinion needs to be nourished on a community-wide scale with information that is accurate and which stimulates interest.

The teacher is the logical interpreter and translator, but she must have an opportunity for interpreting her work for the public. Although an observant reporter watching a group of primary youngsters work on their "pet shop" can readily report what they are doing, it is the teacher who explains the reasons. It is only the teacher who can explain the purposes behind the students' activity and this enables the reporter to comprehend and write what is really going on.

Hence, it is significant that this study is presenting feature articles the contents of which were selected, organized, presented and interpreted by the writer, a first grade teacher.

A questionnaire, shown in Appendix B, was constructed as the means of evaluating the effect the publication of the feature articles had upon the information of readers. The articles, themselves, as they appeared, shown in Appendix A, were examined to determine the extent to which they met the needs of both journalism and education.

For the purpose of this study the following terms shall have the following meanings:

Press shall refer to newspapers in general.

Journal shall refer to The Providence Journal.

Feature articles shall refer to the series designed for this study.

Curriculum shall refer to the planned activities for the selected first grade.

The public is interested in and concerned with literature in education. However, there is not available, as noted in the Educational Index and Reader's Guide from July, 1937, to November, 1941, any reference to a description of, or evaluation of, a first grade program which is this writer's work. Articles were found which covered grades four, five, and six. These articles had no particular bearing on this writer's work at the first grade level. Several recommended that schools have a public relations program.

Approximately eighty articles were examined: such as, "Publicizing Schools," American School Board Journal; "Working and Keeping Friends with the Press," National Schools; "Education and Publicity," The First Educational Supplement; "The Best Public Relations," American School Board Journal; "Educators and Editors," School and Society; and "Interpreting the Educational Program to the Public," Instructor. Inasmuch as in these articles there was no reference to specific procedures for publicizing a first grade program, it is evident that there is a scarcity of published materials about the interpretation of the first grade program through the press.

Letters were written to four leading newspapers--

CHAPTER II

Much has been written in both lay and professional magazines about education. Some of this literature describes classroom procedures. The public is interested in and consumes literature in education. However, there is not available, as cited in the Educational Index and Reader's Guide from July, 1932, to November, 1961, any references to a description of, or evaluation of, a first grade program such as this writer carried on. Articles were found which covered grades four, five, and six. These articles had no particular bearing on this writer's work at the first grade level. Several recommended that schools have a public relations program.

Approximately eighty articles were examined: such as, "Publicizing Schools," American School Board Journal; "Making and Keeping Friends with the Press," Nations Schools; "Education and Publicity," The Times Educational Supplement; "The Best Public Relations," American School Board Journal; "Educators and Editors," School and Society; and "Interpreting the Educational Program to the Public," Instructor. Inasmuch as in these articles there was no references to specific procedures for publicizing a first grade program, it is evident that there is a scarcity of published materials about the interpretation of the first grade program through the press.

Letters were written to four leading newspapers--

The Chicago Tribune, The New York Times, The Herald Tribune, and The Chicago American, inquiring about any educational material published over the previous three years dealing specifically with the first grade. The above papers were chosen because a Providence Journal writer had said they carried feature articles on education. However, very unsatisfactory results were obtained. One publisher sent a complete history of the paper; another, a statement that it does "not have a special section devoted to developments in elementary education"¹ excepting the "Education and Review" section of the Sunday News of the Week in Review; and the others did not reply. Consequently, from correspondence it was concluded that articles similar to those of The Providence Journal had not appeared in these four newspapers.

It is known that news items concerning school procedures do appear from time to time. It is possible that among such items there would be articles referring to first grade practices and procedures. Although some helpful information might have been obtained from examining newspapers on microfilm, this was not done for two reasons: newspaper indices were not available outside of the newspapers' libraries, and representatives of The Providence Journal news staff were practically unanimous in thinking that searching the library would be practically fruitless.

¹ Letter from Samuel A. Tower, Office of Educational Activities, The New York Times, July 14, 1959.

Most parents want to know what is happening to their children. Sigband, in studying the interests of parents in our schools, says "there is nothing in our society with which parents are more concerned than with their children and there is nothing which children are more concerned with than their schools."² Parents are appreciative when informed concerning the school curricula which most benefit his child.

Pease,³ studying what makes good public relations, states that the school interests more people than any other community agency. This is probably true. He suggests that fully three fourths of the people of our country are associated with the school in one way or another.

Morgan⁴ implies that the effectiveness of education depends upon a full understanding of it by the people themselves, since no school can carry out a better program than that which has public confidence and approval. The public cannot fairly judge the worth of the school program unless it knows all the facts. Seay,⁵ discussing a report of

² Norman B. Sigband, "Communication: Key to Effective Home-School Relations," The High School Journal, XLII (Feb., 1959), pp. 146-50.

³ J. E. Pease, "Good Public Relations Wins Support," Education, LXVI (June, 1946), pp. 610-13.

⁴ Joy Elmer Morgan, "The Interpretation of Education," National Education Association Journal, XXII (Oct., 1933), pp. 177-92.

⁵ Maurice F. Seay, "Interpreting the Schools," The Elementary School Journal, LII (Oct., 1951), pp. 65-9.

The Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association, states that a way must be found to constantly bring forth information for the purpose of developing an effective program which will interpret the schools to the public.

Jelinek,⁶ in studying newspaper coverage, lists five items of interest to parents: 1) aims of the school, 2) guidance of the schools, 3) instruction of students, 4) organization and management, and, 5) work of school with outside groups. His study of school news suggests that the job of interpreting schools to the public has not been too well accomplished, and he states after studying the relative importance of coverage as determined by certain lay and professional groups that:

It is disconcerting to observe how woefully inadequate are the techniques of public relations practiced by institutions in making this shared management of the schools a most meaningful and effective process. A review of recent research studies in the field of educational public relations makes several phases of this general problem apparent. But most important is the fact that the public has the feeling it is itself inadequately informed about what is going on in the schools.⁷

For a long time it has been recognized that schools have

⁶ James J. Jelinek, "A Comparison of Newspaper Coverage of Topics of School News and the Relative Importance of Those Topics According to Certain Lay and Professional Groups," Journal of Educational Research, XLIX (Dec., 1955), pp. 301-5.

⁷ Ibid.

not adequately employed the press for informing the public. In 1929, Farley made a study of school news topics and states that:

Parents were concerned with the real work of the school, such as pupil interest and achievement, methods of instruction, health of pupils, course of study, value of education, and discipline and behavior. Instead of giving people the appropriate space in this order, newspapers were playing up extra curricula activities such as athletics, which ranks last in patron interest.⁸

Foster's⁹ analysis of newspaper coverage of school news includes all editorial comment on education from twenty-five selected newspapers over the period 1930-1935. The data presented in his study suggest that American educational leadership in the past has done a rather poor job of informing the public about the problems and the needs of education. Foster found that the school matters, largely ignored by the press reporting school news were methods and procedures used in teaching. Less than nine percent of all editorial references to education was concerned with the curriculum. Although no reference to a comprehensive study such as Foster's has been reported recently, the evidence available does not indicate a marked improvement.

The most effective agency for informing the whole

⁸ Belmont M. Farley, What to Tell the People About Public Schools, (Teachers College, Columbia University, 1929).

⁹ Charles R. Foster, Jr., Editorial Treatment of Education in the American Press, (No. 21 of the Harvard Bulletin of Education, 1936).

community is the newspaper, as suggested by Grinnell.¹⁰ Petersen's¹¹ recent study shows the newspaper to be the most significant means of reaching the public, as compared with television, magazines and radio.

The success of our schools depends upon public confidence and public approval, wherein lie the interest and support needed to better our school program. Recognition of the need for interpretation is summarized by Brownell, et al, when he says, "Education sorely needs a continuous, honest, and comprehensive program of interpretation to the public and the enlistment of its cooperation."¹²

Consequently, the Providence School Department when approached concerning the building of a first grade program for The Rhode Islander, the magazine section of The Providence Sunday Journal, recognized the value of informing the public about its program. Hence, the school, teacher and grade around which the articles were to be developed were chosen.

¹⁰ J. Erle Grinnell, Interpreting the Public Schools, (New York; McGraw-Hill Company, Inc., 1937), p. 59.

¹¹ Evelyn F. Petersen, "Existing Public Relations Techniques," Chicago Schools Journal, (May-June, 1951).

¹² Clifford Lee Brownell, Leo Gans, and Tufie Z. Maroon, Public Relations in Education, (New York; McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1955). p. 249.

CHAPTER III

During the school year 1955-1956, The New York Herald Tribune sponsored a series of articles which featured an elementary classroom and depicted the school program for the lay public. These were considered by The Providence Journal Educational Department as suggestive for a similar series to be carried by The Providence Sunday Journal.

Mr. Henry H. Smith, Sunday Journal feature writer, met with Mr. Walter Brownsword, at that time acting head of Public Relations in the Providence School Department, to discuss the possibilities of such a program and the selection of a first grade teacher. Mr. Brownsword, having worked with many teachers for a television series the previous year, suggested Miss Claire Andrews, who is the writer of this thesis.

On September 5, 1956, arrangements were made for this writer to meet with Mr. Smith and four members of the Providence School Department to discuss both the program and future plans. It was decided that the journalist and the photographer would be present for the first day of school on Monday, September 9, 1956.

The first article appeared in The Rhode Islander, a magazine section of The Providence Sunday Journal, on Sunday, September 23. Articles at approximately monthly intervals followed, indicating the progress of the class throughout the school year. The Providence Sunday Journal at the time had a circulation of approximately 181,013.

The first grade selected for the project was at the Point Street Elementary School in Providence, R. I., a city with a population of approximately 250,000 people. Throughout the year the enrollment in this class varied from twenty-six to thirty-six children ranging in age from five to eight. The September enrollment included thirty-six children; twenty-two had attended kindergarten; four had been in school the previous year as pre-primary pupils and the remaining ten entered from home without any previous school experience.

The class consisted of a group which would probably be considered below average in mental ability, since the intelligence quotients ranged from seventy-six to one hundred and nineteen, with more than half the class having an intelligence quotient of below ninety-five.

The children came from national backgrounds of English, Irish, American Negro, German, Greek, Chinese, Italian, and Portuguese. This variance presented such major problems as language barriers, different religious beliefs, and racial discrimination. The school, therefore, became for many of these children the major factor in the amelioration of inter-group and human relations and was in a position to assist the child greatly in enrichment experiences so frequently found lacking in this particular locality.

The school was located in a densely populated area in which housing and living conditions were extremely poor. In many cases both parents were employed and during their

working hours the children were left without supervision. Several children came from broken homes. Although some parents were very much interested in the children's welfare and schoolwork, others cared little. Many times children were sent to school without breakfast, while others had fended for themselves.

Attendance was often a problem. Many times children were unable to attend school because of the lack of suitable clothing. Some of the ten children mentioned previously as not having attended kindergarten were in this category. Such irregular attendance, in addition to lack of kindergarten training, poor mental ability and poor home environment presented a handicap to school learning.

The home environments for many children were not conducive to school work. At home these children had few or no toys, and only small areas in which to play. Therefore, they had not learned to live together. Some youngsters came from foreign-speaking parentage, which also presented a handicap.

A number of children came from homes where there was little stimulation for learning. Most of them entered the first grade with negative attitudes or false conceptions of school life. The parents had neglected to teach emotional control, bodily behavior, self-discipline, and other desirable forms of behavior expected of children when they come to the first grade. Because of the poorness of the family

background many of the children had insufficient knowledge and social understanding for adjusting readily.

The school environment, therefore, frequently had to compensate for the deficiencies of family life so frequently found in congested city areas. For some children, school was the one place where they could find not only clean, comfortable living conditions, a heated building, soap and warm water, but also, even more important, a sympathetic adult and peers with whom to share their experiences.

In planning the series many questions had to be answered. What did the public want to know? What did the newspaper want for its series? What did the school supervisor expect? And what could the teacher develop for suitable programs? Answers to these and other questions were sought through current literature in the field of public relations and primary education, and interviews with the education editor of the local press and the elementary supervisor.

What did the public want to know? According to a review of literature which is quoted in the preceding chapter, three separate studies done by Jelinek,¹ Farley,² and Foster³

¹ Jelinek, op. cit.

² Farley, op. cit.

³ Foster, op. cit.

were found to support the belief that parents are concerned with the curriculum, which includes subject matter, method, and school and classroom organization. This supports the conclusion that as many subjects as possible within the first year curriculum should be included in the articles. Furthermore, it was felt that the articles should show the good teacher-pupil relationship which had been prevalent in previous years and to show the realistic program which was carried on within the class.

What did the newspaper want for its series? Inasmuch as the request had come from the paper, a conference with the educational editor of the local press was held. It was decided that the teacher would plan the program, setting it up each month as the year progressed. Consultation to discuss the suitability of the teacher's plan with the educational editor would occur prior to each month's visitation by the feature writer and the photographer. No suggestions or limitations were given whatsoever concerning the content of the articles. Therefore, the planning for the articles was left completely to the discretion of the writer of this paper. Not all phases of the first grade curriculum lent themselves equally well to feature writing, especially the teaching of reading and writing, which had slight pictorial appeal. However, one article on reading and another incorporating reading and writing were included in the series. To show that these subjects were of great

importance, something pertaining to reading and writing was incorporated in each article as a review of what had been accomplished during the preceding month. Subjects employing more action seemed more adaptable to feature writing. The public interest tended more toward the so-called "frills" of education, which included the use of animals, field trips, and plays. Many readers were not aware that these so-called "frills" were devised for instructional purposes. More interpretation in this area was, therefore, indicated. Attempts were made to present a balanced program. The three R's, however, were not neglected. The above activities were definitely integrated with the reading program.

What did the supervisor⁴ want? The supervisor's fundamental concern was that the content (as long as the material covered was within the realm of the curriculum) would be handled by the teacher and that the ultimate selection of program materials should rest with the teacher of this grade, who is the author of the study. However, some suggestions as to a unit on social studies were discussed. It was agreed that the third article would commence with social studies, and, therefore, a plan was made. The plan entailed a walk around the immediate community, to be followed by the making of a map which pictured the pupils' discoveries. The suggestion for the ninth article was for an entirely new

⁴ Miss Catherine E. Monahan, Elementary Supervisor, Providence Public Schools.

type of social studies program, to be developed in the first grade, using The United Nations as a topic.

What could the teacher develop for suitable programs? The teacher believed that some phase of all subjects normally included in the first grade, reading, writing, language, science, social studies, art, dramatics, health, music, gymnastics, and unit activities should be included in the articles. Furthermore, the articles should depict the first grade child's behavioral pattern, normal classroom procedures, methods of instruction, children's learning activities and life situations as explored through the curriculum.

The writer believed that throughout the series the public should be made aware of the characteristics of school beginners, that is, children between the ages of five and eight. Children in this age group show great capacity for growth and development. The child can handle himself skillfully at this age. He can skip, dance, climb, hop, and jump rope; he throws a ball fairly well; he has a sense of rhythm developed to the point where he can beat time with his hands or feet and walk or skip to music, and he is able to use a pencil or crayon fairly well.

The typical first grade child has a speaking vocabulary somewhat in excess of 2,500 words, while his sentence is usually comprised of a minimum of five words. His power of reasoning is amazing when given opportunity. He shows skill in putting together puzzles. Much of his play is spent in

make-believe and dramatization. He learns best through active participation and firsthand experience. His attention span is short, approximately fifteen minutes.

Socially this child has adopted many adult customs and carries them out with reasonable proficiency. These include his table manners, the use of a handkerchief, and less frequent crying. He has begun to make friends, both in adult and his own age groups.

Inasmuch as the children in the Point Street School, the subject of the feature articles, would be considered below average as a group each and every child would not measure up to the typical first grade child described above. This indicates the pressure placed upon the teacher in order to conduct the class in orderly and effective fashion.

His interests are primarily selfish and egocentric; he wants many "turns". He likes to take responsibility but has difficulty making decisions. He should not be held rigidly to set standards, as he needs opportunity to experiment and work in small groups.⁵

Emotionally the child shows an increasing desire for approval and security. The adult must show affection, understanding and, perhaps most important of all, great patience toward the child.

In a democratic classroom children learn to assume

⁵ Gertrude Hildreth, Readiness for School Beginners, (New York: World Book Co.), 1950, p. 113.

responsibility; to make choices and carry them out to the best of their ability; to share their ideas and possessions with others; to take turns; to receive the same treatment and not to ask for or to expect favoritism; to abide by group rules; to perform services for the group willingly; and to accept the consequences of their own actions.⁶

The atmosphere of the classroom is an important factor in creating a situation in which the best and most effective learning takes place. The teacher's attitude toward the children, his acceptance of the contributions of all children and his generous giving of praise and recognition are of great significance in establishing the atmosphere that will allow all children to be natural and at ease.⁷

When children plan together as a group, discuss their problems, give and take, and contribute to the success of an undertaking in which each feels that his part is important, a group feeling binds the class together. It is in this way that instruction organized around significant problems furnishes a natural setting in which cooperative behavior is stimulated.

Many educators believe the significance of this group living cannot be overemphasized. Here lies the hope of democracy and the ability of the people to cooperate and work

⁶ Lavone A. Hanna, Gladys L. Potter, Neva Hagaman, Unit Teaching in the Elementary School (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1955).

⁷ Ibid.

together for the good of all, whether it be for family, community, national, or world affairs.

In dealing with discipline, children are helped to feel at home quite early in the school year because problems of living together are talked over with them and they are helped to feel responsible for the cohesion of their school activities.

Through cooperative planning and discussion groups, standards are established for the development of responsibility in such activities as construction, dramatic play, and classroom behavior. Children learn that freedom exists only as the rights of others are respected and as responsibilities are carried out.

Some of the first responsibilities include taking care of one's own belongings; finding, using, and putting away materials; cleaning up after work periods; and taking turns in the various activities in the classroom.

School rules, such as classroom management, getting and passing materials, orderly passing, leaving the room, should be decided upon by the children themselves under the guidance of the teacher, just as laws are made by adult voters or by their representatives. Understanding "why" insures a more careful observance of rules.

Children soon realize that behavior patterns in the classroom must be geared to a consideration of others; they must be quiet because some of their classmates are reading,

whereas at certain times they are allowed to converse with their friends; each must wait, however, for his turn to speak or to use a piece of equipment. This is the kind of discipline that promotes desirable behavior in any group. Thus, they learn the ways of democracy under the guidance of a trained adult, the teacher.

The notion that control is no longer exerted in the classroom is most frequently voiced by visitors who have observed children engaged during the unit activities period. To these people discipline is synonymous with order, which may not be observed to a high degree during an activity period.

The classroom of another day had rows of seats arranged so that all children faced the front of the room and in these seats they stayed unless they "had permission" to move about the room. Good control was interpreted to mean that children were quiet and inactive; the teacher dominated the situation and told the children what to do and when to do it.⁸

Children should learn to move about in a natural, courteous way in a classroom, take care of themselves, and consider others who are sharing the classroom. All moving about, however, should be done with a purpose. Hanna states, "Children learn democracy only as they live it."⁹

Under the old theory, learning was an additive process, an accumulation of facts which it was hoped the learner would be able to remember and use as needed at a future time.

⁸ Ibid., p. 349.

⁹ Ibid., p. 64.

Learning was a preparation for adult life; therefore, schools could be unrelated to the child's world or to the factors operating in the community. Knowledge was acquired largely by memory from a textbook or teacher.¹⁰

Today's accepted theory of learning shows that learning is a complicated process in which the child responds physically, intellectually, and emotionally as a total organism to a whole situation. The learner must experience if he is to learn; he must interact with his environment; he cannot remain passive. In other words, learning depends upon his doing something although his doing need not always be observed.¹¹ The learner must have a desire to learn. Little learning takes place without a purpose or a goal. Learning, which also involves the child's readiness to learn, shows the stage of his development at that time. In reading, for example, there will be little or no progress until the child has reached a stage of maturity or readiness.

Research has proved that little learning results from mere facts as such, whereas when opportunities are provided for the child to experience, react, and do, there is a meaningful situation from which learning results. The younger and more immature the children, the more important firsthand experiences become to them.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 49.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 49.

Children just entering school are interested in what is around them, their immediate environment; concepts of time and space have little significance for them. They are unable to grasp ideas that are unrelated to their environment. They are interested directly in matters relating to their own problems. The child learns those things which have meaning for him: a rabbit to be cared for, a picture to be painted, a book to be read, or maybe a problem to be solved in social studies. Give them something vital and purposeful and they are eager to engage actively in the planning and solving of the problem. It is this for which they are ready and from which learning will accrue. With foresight, the teacher can develop a curriculum in which the actual needs, interests, and problems of the children will be met.

Each year this curriculum changes because each year the child changes. The choice and organization of the program for any one group will grow out of the problems, interests, and concerns faced by that particular group. The teacher must study these learners, raise questions, and bring new experiences into their lives.

There must be a variety of activities which have genuine meaning for the group and which will enrich the lives of the children. Each child has different interests and learns in his own way and at his own rate. When a rich, varied environment is provided, the desire to learn is stimulated in each child.

The opportunity for the enlightened first-grade teacher to use every possible means in order to give her beginning pupils the most valuable type of background lies in her initiative to explore, determine, and analyze all the possibilities available in planning the best possible curriculum for beginners.¹²

The above factors had to be pictured and explained to the public in a ten-month series of articles. Self-discipline, enjoyment, and interest could be shown in a picture, but the intangibles such as responsibility, respect, and classroom behavior patterns were difficult to convey. Yet, there had to be an awareness of the physical, emotional, mental and social patterns typical of the classroom. This created for the teacher the problem of how to put forth a true picture that could be shown to the public. Long and short range planning was employed so that the year's series would cover not only the child and his curriculum but also alert the public to the first grade program.

In preparing the materials for the feature articles several significant problems arose. How was one to convey the reading program which did not lend itself to pictorial treatment? How was one to motivate the children for certain holidays four weeks in advance, so that the newspaper would have time to prepare the article and still not spoil the excitement of the holiday for the children? It was extremely hard to prepare for both the Christmas and Easter holidays. For example, the reporter wanted everything for Christmas

¹² Hildreth, op. cit., p. 113.

before Thanksgiving had arrived. Another problem arose when the original news writer for the series left for another position, and a replacement was necessary. A field trip had been planned as the feature for November, and at the last minute the reporter was unable to cover it; something else, therefore, had to be decided upon immediately. This meant, unfortunately, that plans could not always be executed according to the writer's original intentions.

The first day of school in 1944, September 4, 1944, was a busy day for the school. The principal had been in the building at 7:30, with the members of the faculty. The school was in session at 8:00, and the first period was in session. The principal had been in the building at 7:30, with the members of the faculty. The school was in session at 8:00, and the first period was in session.

The principal's duties were prepared for the first day. They were to include a prayer and the "Gospel of St. John." The plans for the remainder of the series were as follows: to discuss school supplies—pencils, paper, books and so on; to give the pupils that day to be used in the period to provide the usual and to give children enough time to work for their values. The story of Sam and Lucile in Part 2 was to be read by the teacher, it is followed by the

¹ See Appendix 1, pp. 10-11.
² See Appendix 2, pp. 12-13.
³ See Appendix 3, pp. 14-15.

CHAPTER IV

Feature articles were published in The Rhode Islander magazine at approximately monthly intervals. These articles were written so as to indicate the progress of the class throughout the school year.

Inasmuch as the first article¹ for The Rhode Islander was to appear on Sunday, September 23, the reporter and photographer from The Providence Journal would be present for the first day of school on Monday, September 9, 1956. Prior to this day the normal preparations had been made for the opening of school, with the exception of decorating the room. This, the author firmly believes, should be done with the cooperation of the children. It is their room and their suggestions and assistance contribute to the essential feeling of "belonging."

The morning exercises were prepared for the first day. They were to include a prayer and the "Pledge of Allegiance." The plans for the remainder of the morning were as follows: to distribute school supplies--pencils, pencil boxes and crayons; to mix paints that were to be used by the pupils; to assemble the easel and to have children choose plants they wanted for their tables. The story of Hook and Ladder No. 3² was to be read by the teacher,³ to be followed by the

¹ See Appendix A, pp. 54-57.

² Bill Martin, Hook and Ladder No. 3, (Philadelphia: Winston, 1948).

³ See Appendix A, p. 56, Fig. 5.

children creating on large sheets of drawing paper with their new crayons their own interpretations of the story.⁴

The activities of the morning developed successfully as planned. With dismissal at 12:00 o'clock, the reporter and photographer had their materials for the first article of the series.

As previously arranged with the teacher, the reporter and photographer walked freely, yet unobtrusively around the room observing the activities and responses of the children. At no time did they converse with the children nor with the teacher. Pictures were taken spontaneously by the photographer without the use of flashbulbs whenever he chose. Only once in the entire series were plans made for a specific picture and that was in connection with the Easter project.

The children paid no attention to the guests. This being the first school experience for almost one third of the children and the children from kindergarten being used to having two teachers in the room, they seemingly assumed that having adults in the room was a normal procedure. The attention of the children was focused on the activities of the teacher, which allowed little if any opportunity for conversation with the newspaper representatives.

Procedures described for gaining materials for this first article were followed for the remaining visits of the reporter and photographer. Prearrangements, including the briefing of the representatives in what would take place in the classroom,

⁴ See Appendix A, p. 57, Fig. 9.

were made for each anticipated visit. Following each visit there was consultation as to what had taken place, but the teacher never knew what was actually written in the articles until they appeared in The Rhode Islander.

Considerably more time and planning were required in preparing the second article⁵ which would appear on October 21. It was to depict a science lesson devoted to setting up an aquarium. In preparing for this, the teacher had to assemble all necessary material, including a large aquarium tank, two large containers for carrying water, a large container of sand, several water plants, five goldfish, two snails, and a large pen and ink sketch of a fish. It was seldom that the teacher could ask the children to bring in any materials, for class use, due to their low socio-economic level.

After discussing fish and their habitat, the pen and ink sketch was shown to the children. It showed how fish, having fins instead of legs, differ from land animals in methods of locomotion. From there the children proceeded to arrange the sand, water, and plants in the tank.⁶ This completed, a child was sent out for "a surprise" and soon returned carrying a container of five goldfish and two snails. These were placed in the "new home" for the children to enjoy and care for as part of their first grade experience.⁷ The reporter and photographer were present during all of this lesson.

⁵ See Appendix A, pp. 58-62.

⁶ See Appendix A, p. 60, Fig. 16.

⁷ See Appendix A, p. 61, Fig. 18.

Inasmuch as the material was insufficient for a complete article, they returned at another time when pictures were taken showing a child reading from an "experience story" about a yellow caterpillar⁸ which one of the children had brought to school. An "experience story" is one told by the children and written on large paper by the teacher.

In addition to reporting the lessons observed, building the aquarium and reading the "experience story", the second feature article included a review of what had been accomplished in reading and writing by these first graders since the opening of school. It included lessons on the writing of four capital letters, I, L, F, and E, and two "experience stories." In the same article reference was made to the monthly weather calendar which was changed daily by the children and a wall display of self-portraits complete with stories about themselves.

Article number three⁹ was to appear on November 18. It depicted a vivid lesson in social studies (called geography by the press). For this, the class was taken for a walk around the block.¹⁰ On this trip children observed things which they had not hitherto observed closely. It was noted that the school was red, the leaves were pretty colors,

⁸ See Appendix A, p. 62, Fig. 19.

⁹ See Appendix A, pp. 63-66.

¹⁰ See Appendix A, p. 64, Fig. 22.

street signs were made of letters the children had been learning, and an iron foundry with a large crane was located in the vicinity. As the walk proceeded, each child was anxious to make his contribution to a little map the teacher was sketching for class reference. Upon returning to the classroom, appropriate supplies were obtained and a large wall map of the block which had been traversed by the youngsters was commenced.¹¹ During the next few weeks each child was given an opportunity to paint his particular contribution on this illustrated map of the school block.

In preparing the November article the feature writer reported many activities of the classroom. He discussed the writing, which included five new capital letters, T, P, R, B, and D, as well as two numbers, 6 and 7; the science projects including milkweed pods, praying mantis, fall leaves and the black and white Dutch rabbit, Nibbles;¹² the beginning reading in the big book (the first reading material to which children are introduced) together with matching word cards; and an art project of Halloween pictures done with crayons on white paper. This paper was later covered with black paint which does not adhere to markings made by a wax crayon. In this article the reporter also discussed songs to which the youngsters had been introduced.

¹¹ See Appendix A, p. 66, Fig. 26.

¹² See Appendix A, p. 65, Fig. 24.

The fourth article,¹³ along with its Christmas gaiety, appeared on December 16. The subject for this month was art, which resulted in a Christmas mural depicting Santa Claus in a sleigh drawn by reindeer flying at night over a little snow-covered community.¹⁴ The project as reported took several lessons and much preparation. First a large wall area was covered with black and white paper representing snow at night. The children then painted several large reindeer and Santa Clauses. One of the Santa Clauses and four of the reindeer were finally selected for the mural. Little snow-covered houses were added. Next came a lesson on three-dimensional evergreens and stars which were also added to the mural. The reindeer were eventually joined with paper chains, and the mural was completed, much to the enjoyment of the children.

In addition to the Christmas mural a class trip¹⁵ was discussed in the article. This trip was made to a wooded area, and soil and many small plants were obtained to be used in the making of a terrarium. Each child, upon his return, planted his own small plant in a large glass tank. For the remainder of the school year the plants, as they grew in this balanced environment, were watched by the

¹³ See Appendix A, pp. 67-70.

¹⁴ See Appendix A, p. 70, Fig. 39.

¹⁵ See Appendix A, p. 68, Figs. 29-31.

children.

The fifth¹⁶ feature article appeared on January 27, 1957. It described a morning routine which included the writing of the capital letter O; a reading lesson from the second pre-primer; milk and cookie time before recess; indoor recess which included a favorite game; and music time complete with the Happy Birthday song. One child was celebrating his birthday, so he had the honor of sitting in the birthday chair¹⁷ for that day.

The reporter witnessed the contest for the best "writing" papers. Writing one's name was the lesson for the morning. The morning activities were climaxed by the contest. Those with correct papers were to have the honor of writing their names on Pluto, a large pink autograph-hound which had been obtained for such occasions.¹⁸ It was hoped that before long all children would write their names correctly and earn the privilege of inscribing the hound.

The sixth article,¹⁹ featuring a health play written by the teacher, was published on February 24. The play was entitled "In Mother Goose Land." Each child was cast in the

¹⁶ See Appendix A, pp. 71-72.

¹⁷ See Appendix A, p. 72, Fig. 42.

¹⁸ See Appendix A, p. 72, Fig. 44.

¹⁹ See Appendix A, pp. 73-75.

play and each worked enthusiastically for the day of presentation. Furthermore, the youngsters were anxiously anticipating an audience, which would consist primarily of their parents.²⁰

A well-integrated program was being simultaneously followed. To coordinate both reading and language, stories were written. Songs used in the play were learned in music class. Art work consisted of a large health train which carried the message of the play. The making of invitations lent itself well to both writing and art; and perhaps that which counted most of all was the ever present spark of enthusiasm, cooperation, and willingness which was found within the group.

This article also included the February calendar. Before singing songs about Presidents Lincoln and Washington, the children counted the days prior to each birthday. The children next discussed the red heart which appeared on number fourteen. After singing the valentine song, the teacher produced a large box, wrapped in silver paper and tied with a large white bow, which the children unwrapped. Much to their surprise, it was found to contain material for their new project--the making of valentines.

The seventh article²¹ to appear on March 2, was planned

²⁰ See Appendix A, p. 75, Fig. 52.

²¹ See Appendix A, pp. 76-79.

to interpret a unit activity from its beginning to its completion. This activity was continued for approximately two months prior to March 2. It all started when a large three-sided frame was brought into the room. After much discussion and numerous suggestions, it was decided by the children that the frame should represent a pet shop. After this decision, a visit to a real pet shop was in order. A letter asking for permission to visit the local pet shop was composed. The pet shop owner replied that he would be happy to welcome the class. Prior to walking to the pet shop safety rules were rehearsed and the agreement of some mothers to accompany the children was secured. Once at the pet shop the children observed the animals²² and questioned the shopkeeper. They returned to school eager to start work on their own pet shop.

Over a period of time the three-sided frame was wall-papered inside and shingled outside. Animals were fashioned of paper-mâché, construction paper, clay, and asbestos mixed with plaster of Paris. Live animals, such as the parakeet and turtle which lived in the first grade room were used as models. Because of a common group interest each child enjoyed his share of the work.²³

²² See Appendix A, pp. 76-77, Figs. 53-55.

²³ See Appendix A, pp. 77-79, Figs. 57-63.

For the eighth article,²⁴ "At Easter; The Miracle of Life" appeared on Easter Sunday. In spite of a great deal of preplanning, however, this month's presentation took a turn for the worse. This author, therefore, was left in quite a dilemma. Plans were made and carried out to have a litter of rabbits born to Nibbles, the class rabbit, five weeks prior to Easter. The five-week period was thus gauged so that the baby rabbits would be two weeks of age when photographed. The articles, as previously noted, were always done three weeks prior to publication because it took that long to get them into print. Matters seemed to be going along as planned when one rabbit was born on schedule. Sunday both mother and baby seemed to be doing fine; then Monday morning the baby rabbit was found dead. Up to this time the children had been completely unaware of this situation; therefore, the April article was now without a subject. Much telephoning was done, but finally, the impossible seemed probable. An incubator was to arrive the following week complete with nine eggs. The eggs, despite great temperature fluctuations, finally hatched. Everyone was pleasantly surprised. The little balls of yellow fluff peeped their first sounds,²⁵ and as they did so peeped their way into the hearts of all the first grade children.

²⁴ See Appendix A, pp. 80-83.

²⁵ See Appendix A, p. 80, Fig. 64.

In the April article, in addition to the story about the chickens the art project called "The Egg Tree"²⁶ was reported. This project included the decorating of egg shells, the contents of which had previously been blown out. Each child chose his own decorations. Upon completion, he proceeded to hang the egg on the tree which was placed on a table in the back of the classroom after the children had painted the branches pink.

Mentioned in this same article was a bulletin board arrangement entitled "Our Wide Wide World." This depicted in crayon the child's own interpretation of "What Is the World?" This was a social studies lesson in preparation for next month's topic.

The ninth article²⁷ on May 26, entitled "Greatest of the Three R's--Reading", explored a new topic in the curriculum, that of the United Nations. This new phase came about through an "experience story" told by a child who had visited the United Nations building during the Easter vacation.²⁸ He brought back from the trip a picture of the United Nations building and a statue of the Empire State Building. These things fascinated the children and Charles' story was chosen

²⁶ See Appendix A, pp. 81-83, Figs. 65-70.

²⁷ See Appendix A, pp. 84-86.

²⁸ See Appendix A, p. 85, Fig. 73.

to be hung in front of the room.²⁹ From this enthusiasm followed the reading of Three Promises to You,³⁰ a story of the United Nations written and illustrated for this age group by Munro Leaf.³¹ Then came the making of papier-mâché hand puppets representing the children and the acting out of a spontaneous dialogue,³² illustrating how we live with one another. A large scroll, illustrating the story Three Promises to You, was made and used by the children. This consisted of pictures pasted together and pulled through a box resembling a television screen. The pictures were individual interpretations of the United Nations story. Each child narrated his own story as his picture came over the screen. For an audience several other classes were invited to come and hear the story.³³ This article included some observations made by the elementary school concerning the methods of teaching reading employed by these first graders. The teaching of reading in this grade was approached somewhat differently from that employed

²⁹ See Appendix A, p. 85, Fig. 74.

³⁰ Munro Leaf, Three Promises to You, (Philadelphia: Lippencott, 1957).

³¹ See Appendix A, p. 84, Fig. 71.

³² See Appendix A, p. 86, Fig. 76.

³³ See Appendix A, p. 85, Fig. 72.

elsewhere in the school system.

The tenth and final article³⁴ of the series appeared on June 23, 1957. This was written as a comparison of the behavior and knowledge which the children had assimilated from their first day of school to their last. The reporter mentioned particularly the results of the story of Hook and Ladder No. 3 which had been read to them the first day of school.³⁵ The totally different responses to the story of the children after a year of school were mentioned, such as the better pictorial representation of Sampson, and a more matured discussion as to the use made of a fire engine in the community. He also described how a group which was so chaotic the first day was now able to work together and plan together. Changes in height and weight were also mentioned as visible signs of growth.

The final article³⁶ stated that the teacher offered the class throughout the year "a wide knowledge of animals and their way of living."³⁷ Included therein were a bird, a rabbit, goldfish, other representatives of the animal kingdom, and finally the class-made pet shop. Also mentioned in this

³⁴ See Appendix A, pp. 87-89.

³⁵ See Appendix A, p. 88, Fig. 81.

³⁶ See Appendix A, p. 89.

³⁷ See Appendix A, p. 88.

article were several visits from Dooley, an Irish Setter owned by the teacher.³⁸

The reporter concluded his article:

The children are well behaved, and respond to Miss Andrews' firm handling with eagerness and bright interest. Each new experience is an adventure, to be approached with excited anticipation. When Miss Andrews works quietly at her desk, and the children practice their writing, sometimes a few are finished ahead of the others. They often seize the opportunity to do a little special art work, with bright decorations, which they place onto the teacher's desk shyly. The lettering always says, "I love you."³⁹

³⁸ See Appendix A, p. 88, Fig. 79.

³⁹ See Appendix A, p. 88.

CHAPTER V

The children realized little of what was being done each month by the reporter and the photographer. As the children entered the classroom the first day of school, they were confronted with three adults in their room. This writer believes that because this situation occurred on the first day, concern caused by future visits of both the photographer and the reporter was, therefore, alleviated. The photographer did not use flashbulbs. Thus, neither the teacher nor the children were aware of pictures being taken. After a conference with the teacher, the writer and the photographer usually spent one or two school sessions in the classroom each month.

During the series the writer assigned to the project had to be changed. The replacement was one who had participated in the writing of the first article.

The writer of this thesis endeavored to present a typical first grade program to the public via the press. Each aspect of the first grade program was demonstrated. The teacher discussed her material with the elementary school supervisor and representatives of The Providence Journal. A way of carrying information about the schools through the press has been demonstrated in this thesis.

Mr. Garrett D. Byrnes, Special Features Editor of The Providence Journal, was asked if he had received any reaction to the series and he replied:

My recollection is that we received no mail response at all, but Miss Lynch (now Mrs. Paul Hoyer) tells me that she heard more favorable comment about this series, both in and out of the office, than she did for anything else she ever wrote for the paper. One of the reasons why the series was sure fire was that it was concerned with children, and they always prompt a great deal of reader interest.¹

When asked if he would ever consider doing another series, perhaps using another grade level, Mr. Byrnes replied, "Perhaps, but not right away."

Several letters and reports were received from people in a position to judge and confirm the worth and effectiveness of this adventure in public relations. Mr. George J. O'Brien, Assistant Supervisor of Providence Public Schools, wrote:

Now that I have had the opportunity of reading the last in a series of articles, may I express my deepest thanks and appreciation for the wonderful contribution which you have made to our public relations program.

Little did I realize last summer when I was approached on this project that it would have worked out into such an intensive series. As I told you then, the original intention was to have three or four articles at the most, but the fact that they have continued this on a monthly basis is an indication of the great value which they have placed upon this series.

You have done more than your duty. I hope it has brought you some satisfactions. I know that it has helped to interpret our program to many thousands of people who otherwise would have a very meager idea of what we are trying to do in our primary grades.²

Mr. James L. Hanley, Superintendent of the Providence Public Schools, in his annual report to the School Committee

¹ Letter of Garrett D. Byrnes to Claire Andrews, March 2, 1961.

² Letter of George J. O'Brien to Claire Andrews, June 25, 1957.

praised the staff of The Providence Journal and the teacher for performing an unusual service in preparing and presenting the feature series to the community.

In closing his annual report, he said:

If I were to point to an area of weakness, it is in the interpretation of the program and problems to the public and to the teachers themselves. Our public relations efforts are not appropriate to the importance or need of the task. Over a long period, the schools will be no stronger than public support, based upon interested understanding. If the people are to support, they must understand. It is our responsibility to promote this understanding.³

People with special interests were particularly concerned with some of the articles. The Audubon Society of Rhode Island cited the writer of this series, the photographer and the teacher for "laudable contributions" to conservation education.

The citation presented to the teacher read:

In recognition of a laudable contribution to conservation education through her role in the Providence Journal's RHODE ISLANDER MAGAZINE story of October 21, 1956, "Miss Andrews' First Graders", the Audubon Society of Rhode Island takes pleasure in citing...

CLAIRE ANDREWS

the first grade teacher, for her example of good natural science teaching at the elementary school level.⁴

That the series attracted some public attention is indicated by the following letter written by Roland C. Clement,

³ Editorial in The Providence Journal, September 17, 1957.

⁴ Citation presented to Claire Andrews by the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, November 1, 1956.

Executive Secretary, Audubon Society of Rhode Island, to the editor of The Providence Journal.

It said:

We hope everyone read that fine story by Henry H. Smith about Miss Claire Andrews' first graders in your Rhode Islander Magazine of Sunday, Oct. 21. We owe all of you--writer, photographer, editors--enthusiastic acclaim for this type of reporting.

As every teacher recognized, this was an example of superior teaching. It is important to notice that Miss Andrews is not taking time away from the basic job of teaching reading, writing and arithmetic by introducing science into the curriculum. She is, rather, making the learning of these fundamentals much easier by relating them to what the youngsters are interested in.

We are happy to see this use of living things as an introduction to science, because real frogs, snakes, fish, etc., are so much more exciting than mere written words to young people in the first six grades.⁵

One of the parents obviously having read one of the feature articles wrote a letter in which he said, "I am very much impressed in your method of teaching children. It makes me want to get right in line with them and start learning all over again."⁶

There was no way in which the public's reception of and reaction to the articles could be assessed. However, in an attempt to get some critical evaluation of the series a questionnaire⁷ was given to thirty people. The results of the

⁵ Letter to the editor in The Providence Journal, November 14, 1956.

⁶ Letter of Edwin Santos to Claire Andrews, November 19, 1956.

⁷ See Appendix B.

questionnaire are as follows:

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

1. To what degree do you feel these articles helped to interpret the first grade program to you?

29 Great value

1 Little value

0 No value

2. Do you feel you were given a satisfactory explanation of the first grade program?

28 Yes

2 No

3. If the answer is no, how do you think these articles could be improved?

a.) Be more representative of average first grade program.

b.) There should be more of them.

c.) Cover 3 R's more closely.

4. Have your feelings changed toward the school program since reading of these articles?

23 Very much

6 Some

1 Not at all

5. How have your feelings changed?

a.) Patience of first grade teacher--she must strive towards child's emotional as well as mental development.

- b.) Sympathetic understanding on part of teacher.
If inspired, she gives more than 3 R's to children: extra help to those who need it; fosters child's interest in learning; individual attention; science motivation.
 - c.) Articles present a clear picture of first grade activities and give better understanding of school problems.
 - d.) Teaching methods have been greatly improved in the last few years.
6. What do you feel you learned from the articles?
- a.) In modern education, all teaching not from books. Teachers must be excellent--must be able to understand and cope with the problems of today's child.
 - b.) To arouse appetite for learning in very young teacher must be imaginative; teach cooperation and group living; make subjects enjoyable for youngsters; introduce play into learning situation; child must do and participate in order to learn.
 - c.) Closer association between modern teacher and pupils.
 - d.) New ideas gained to be used in my own teaching situation.
 - e.) Education has advanced with the times.

7. Did you enjoy reading the articles each month?

26 Very much

4 Average

0 Not at all

8. Would you like to have future articles such as these published by the newspaper?

30 Yes

0 No

9. If the answer is yes, how often?

27 Every year

1 Every 2 years

1 Every 3 years

1 Every 4 years

0 Every 5 years

10. Which grades?

1-6 12 votes

K-6 5 votes

All 3 votes

Intermediate 1 vote

K-9 2 votes

1-12 7 votes

According to the results of the questionnaire as tabulated above, the majority believed the series to have been of value. A continuation of the programs, on an annual basis, would be worthwhile to parents, educators, and even the general public. Most of those questioned were most interested in

elementary education; they seemed aware of the importance of a good start in school. Furthermore, they realized that an imaginative teacher who is able to motivate pupil interest is of utmost importance in the contemporary educational program.

Five years have elapsed since the feature articles were written; however, the teacher still receives such reactions as: "I remember you--your first grade was written up in the paper"; or "You are the teacher that we read about--you had all the animals."

This thesis is illustrative of a type of public relations program: it gives an actual account of classroom learning situations. These situations were genuine, honest, teaching-learning experiences which were in no way staged. The teaching situations which were recorded and published monthly were carefully planned, to be sure, but realistic in terms of what the youngsters did every day and would have been doing regardless of preparation for the articles.

Both the writer and the photographer spent many hours each month with the class in order to follow its progress. Neither the children nor the teacher communicated with them in any way during the school session. Conferences concerning the lessons were always held after school hours, thus eliminating interruptions during a lesson. As stated before, flashbulbs were not used by the photographer. The author firmly believes that this had much to do with the success of the articles. Distractions during a lesson would be chaotic

for all concerned in a program such as this. The teaching value of the lessons could well have been lost to the children and pictures useless, if the children had been conscious of the activities of the photographer.

Intangibles in a teaching situation, however, could not be depicted completely by word or picture. These included the eagerness and bright interest with which the children responded, the enthusiasm for their work, and the oneness of the group. The children and this writer together enjoyed one of the most happy, exciting, and profitable years of learning and teaching.

Found to be of great importance by this author was the amount of interest which the reporter had in elementary education. This in addition to the information which he obtained made these ten feature articles good educational reporting. For a reporter, unfamiliar with or disinterested in elementary education to be placed in such a position by a newspaper the activities observed could well have been misinterpreted. Some understanding of the grade level to be reported should be a criterion in selecting the reporter.

Editing of the articles was done entirely by the newspaper staff. The teacher had no part whatsoever in the writing or editing, nor did the supervisory staff of the Providence School Department. It is not newspaper policy to have articles such as these edited by outsiders. This is where a thorough understanding of education and the grade level involved is

required by the reporter. Misinformation published in articles such as these could do much damage throughout a school system or among parents, thus hindering good public relations.

The teacher participating in a series such as these must be completely aware of school policy, the desirable educational techniques, and able to select those activities which will be most helpful in interpreting her teaching to the public. She must weigh everything she says before saying it, as many times quotes are taken out of context and, if misunderstood, can do harm. It must be remembered that educators as well as parents will probably read these articles. They may well be critical of methods and procedures employed to obtain desired outcomes. A well thought-out program that will interest parents and educators alike is essential.

The author, as explained previously, understood that the program would entail only two articles, as a "before" and "after" presentation to be used in September and the following June. It wasn't until after the printing of the first article that it was decided to follow the class monthly for ten consecutive months. The teacher perhaps would not have taken such a task if it had been outlined in detail when she was first asked to do the job. The assurance of complete freedom for creative teaching made the undertaking possible. The year belonged to the teacher to do with it what she saw fit. The freedom given to the teacher allowed for the creativeness

which was so important for such a task. It had much to do with the success of the articles.

The children enjoyed the year not because of the articles or because their pictures were published (barely one fourth of the class even saw a Sunday paper), but because of the teacher's freedom to let the children plan, choose, and create with her.

The writer believes that a series of articles such as described in this thesis is an effective way for interpreting a first grade program to the public. However, if one were to attempt a similar series based on the experiences herein described, certain recommendations should be kept in mind.

1. The teacher must have complete freedom to select activities which she thinks are suitable and to employ whatever methods and procedures she thinks necessary. However, she must be forever mindful of what is good instruction for the children for that is the reason for the articles.

2. The teacher selected must be enthusiastic about undertaking the task.

3. Persons representing the newspaper as reporter and photographer must have interest in and knowledge about the educational area which they are reporting.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I extend my sincere appreciation to my advisor, Dr. Frank M. Pelton, for his kind assistance and excellent advice, and to my other readers Dr. Grace E. Stiles, Mr. Robert W. McCreanor and Dr. Thomas P. Nally.

Bailey, Richard, "Literature and Schools," School and Society, 1917-18, November 21, 1917.

Bramming, Abigail M., "Interpreting the Vocational Program to the Public," Administrative Science, June, 1917.

Brewster, Clifford Lee, Law, Mass., and Public Education, Public Relations in Education, New York: Educational Book Company, Inc., 1916.

"Initiative and Publicity," The Three Educational Supplements, Nov. 1914, 1915, March, 1916.

Farley, Samuel E., How to Tell the People About Public Schools, Teachers' Holdings, Columbia University, 1919.

Foster, Charles H., Jr., National Treatment of Education in the American Press, No. 2 of the Survey Bulletin of Education, 1919.

Grinnell, J. Eric, Interpreting the Public Schools, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1917.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Harris, Louise A., How to Teach Reading in the Elementary School, New York: Macmillan & Company, Inc., 1915.

Hildreth, Gertrude, Reading for School Pupils, New York: World Book Company, 1910.

Holloway, James J., "A Comparison of Newspaper Coverage of Topics of General News and the Relative Importance of These Topics According to Certain Lay and Professional Groups," Journal of Educational Research, XLIX (December, 1921), 301-5.

Leaf, Mary, Three Families to You, Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1917.

Levin, Bill, Book and Letter No. 3, Philadelphia: Winston, 1922.

McKim, Margaret G., Guiding Growth in Reading, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923. Pp. 10.

McKissick, John W., Social Studies for Children in a Democracy, New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1920. 68 pp.

Milligan, John F., "Making and Keeping Friends with the Press," National Schools, 57:4-5, March, 1928.

- Bailey, Richard, "Educators and Editors," School and Society, 86:317-19, September 13, 1958.
- Broening, Angela M., "Interpreting the Educational Program to the Public," Instructor, 66:64, June, 1957.
- Brownell, Clifford Lee, Leo Gans, and Tufie Z. Maroon, Public Relations in Education. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1955.
- _____, "Education and Publicity," The Times Educational Supplement, Sup. 2254:1222, August, 1958.
- Farley, Belmont M., What to Tell the People About Public Schools. Teachers College, Columbia University, 1929.
- Foster, Charles R., Jr., Editorial Treatment of Education in the American Press. No. 21 of the Harvard Bulletin of Education, 1936.
- Grinnell, J. Erle, Interpreting the Public Schools. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1937.
- Hanna, Lavone A., Gladys L. Potter, Neva Hagaman, Unit Teaching in the Elementary School. New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1955.
- Hildreth, Gertrude, Readiness for School Beginners. New York: World Book Company, 1950.
- Jelinek, James J., "A Comparison of Newspaper Coverage of Topics of School News and the Relative Importance of Those Topics According to Certain Lay and Professional Groups," Journal of Educational Research, XLIX (December, 1955), 301-5.
- Leaf, Munro, Three Promises to You. Philadelphia: Lippencott, 1957.
- Martin, Bill, Hook and Ladder No. 3. Philadelphia: Winston, 1948.
- McKim, Margaret G., Guiding Growth in Reading. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955. 518 pp.
- Michaelis, John U., Social Studies for Children in a Democracy. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950. 466 pp.
- Milligan, John P., "Making and Keeping Friends with the Press," Nations Schools, 57:47-8, March, 1958.

- Morgan, Joy Elmer, "The Interpretation of Education," National Education Association Journal, XXII (October, 1933), 177-92.
- Pease, J. E., "The Best Public Relations," American School Board Journal, 106:22, May, 1943.
- _____, "Good Public Relations Wins Support," Education, LXVI (June, 1946), 610-13.
- Petersen, Evelyn F., "Existing Public Relations Techniques," Chicago Schools Journal, May-June, 1951.
- Preston, Ralph C., Teaching World Understanding. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955. 207 pp.
- Russel, David H., et al, Manual for Teaching the Reading Readiness Program. New York: Ginn & Company, 1957. 61 pp.
- Seay, Maurice F., "Interpreting the Schools," The Elementary School Journal, LII (October, 1951), 65-9.
- Sigband, Norman B., "Communication: Key to Effective Home-School Relations," The High School Journal, XLII (February, 1959), 146-50.
- Stratemeyer, Florence B., et al, Developing a Curriculum for Modern Living. Teachers College, Columbia University, 1947. 558 pp.
- Wolf, Kenneth A., "Publicizing Schools," American School Board Journal, 131:167, July, 1955.



PERMANENT RECORD
OF THE
CITY OF PROVIDENCE

APPENDIX A
TEN FEATURE ARTICLES

Introducing
**Miss
Andrews'
First
Graders**





The RHODE ISLANDER
[Registered with U. S. Patent Office]
Providence Sunday Journal
MAGAZINE
SEPTEMBER 23, 1956

Introducing
Miss Andrews' First Graders



Introducing
Miss Andrews' First Graders

Ladder 3 Was the Big Excitement



Figure 3

CRAYON PICTURE of Samson, is John Thibault's impression of fire engine in story read to the class by Miss Andrews at right.

STORY BY CATHERINE M. LYNCH — PICTURES BY FRANK J. FARLEY



TEACHER

Figure 4

HEARING about Samson, who is Ladder No. 3, and drawing their impressions of the story—"what you like best about Samson"—were the highlights of the first day for Miss Claire Andrews' first graders at Point Street School. Otherwise, the day followed the usual pattern faithfully. There were mixups in enrollments; some of the kids actually belonged in the other first grade room.

Throughout the day, little boys and girls, carrying their coats, for it was cold on Monday, Sept. 10, and earnestly trying not to look frightened, stood hesitantly at the door. They were welcomed briskly by Miss Andrews, shown where to hang their coats, and permitted to choose a seat.

Most of the children were accompanied by their mothers, and a few by their fathers. One little girl just came with her older sister, who deposited her in Miss Andrews' class without bothering to go through the routine of registration. By the end of the day, the teacher was sufficiently familiar with her class to realize that one was unidentified.

One boy, an early arrival, sat docilely for about half an hour, then began to cry quietly. His tears and pleas to go home went on until, gently guiding his attention to the activities, the teacher captured his interest. The second

morning, he led the line into the classroom.

At the end of the first day, the class tentatively numbered 36. Enrollments throughout the school totaled about the same as last year, despite the condemnation of housing in the area to make way for the North-South freeway.

Some of the children were changed to the other first grade during the day; others will be transferred later. Last year's class wavered between 30 and 33 pupils, and Miss Andrews expects the average to be about the same this year. Of the first day group, six are 5 years old; 21 are 6, six are 7 and three are 8. Twenty-two had attended kindergarten, and four had been in Miss Andrews' class last year, as pre-primary students.

The kindergartners, she says, are easily recognizable. "They're quieter," she said, "and they already know how to follow directions." For instance, after I read them the story about Samson, the ones who had been in kindergarten knew right away that they should draw a fire engine. A lot of the others just drew crayon designs; some of them drew houses, and said, "That's supposed to be Samson's house." Kindergarten prepares them wonderfully for the first grade.

All of Miss Andrews' three years of graduate teaching experience have been spent in the Point Street first grade.

After attending Classical High School for three years, she spent her senior year at Central, and was graduated from the Rhode Island College of Education in 1953.

Her manner of handling small children consists of speaking to them quietly, with authority, and constantly drawing them into participation. She starts a sentence, stops and lets the class finish it. She introduces every new challenge as an adventure, a "big surprise," or "something very special." The children respond eagerly, loving the feeling of maturity and importance she gives them.

The Point Street School has the first three grades and two ungraded rooms. Most of the pupils will attend Grades 4 through 6 at nearby Beacon Avenue School. Miss Annetta McLaughlin, principal of both schools, made unobtrusive visits to Miss Andrews' classrooms several times to check on the total number of children there and to adjust the destinies of the few who were improperly assigned.

School hours, even for first-day first-graders, are from 8:45 to noon, and from 1:05 to 3:20. They go home for lunch, and out into the paved schoolyard for 20-minute recesses.

During the first four weeks, the children are being graded according to



Figure 5



Figure 6
KEVIN McBRIE struggles bravely against loneliness as Lonnie Jacobson politely refrains from noticing.



GOLDFISH BOWL entrances John Cariglio and girl who was moved to other class.

Figure 7



THERE'S MORE TO TEACHING than imparting a knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic. Teacher must be available for tying a smart bow on a brand new pair of school shoes. Miss Andrews assists Paul Lewis, with John Thibault's approval.

Figure 8



Figure 9 EAGER TO RECORD their ideas about that fire engine are (l-r) Lois Davis, Marie Gaudet, John Cariglio, Jeffery Fine.

FIRST GRADERS continued

His One Last Feeble Attempt at Rebellion

their abilities. There will probably be three groups, the teacher said, plus a pre-primary group. The pre-primaries will stay for the year, then repeat the first grade.

"Last year, only four were graded as pre-primary, so they were left in my room," she said. "This year, if my class is bigger, they may have a separate little class just for them."

The group includes little girls with curls, bangs, pigtails and pony tails. Nearly all of them were dressed for opening day in perky cotton dresses, of which they were very proud. One little girl wouldn't sit on the floor, because "I might get my dress dirty," and Miss Andrews persuaded a gentlemanly boy to give up his chair in the circle while she read the story.

The boys were dressed pretty much alike, although some wore sports shirts, while others looked starchily in neat shirts with neckties. Two of them had shiny new pencil boxes.

Four children sat at each of eight square tables. A couple of round tables in the back of the room took care of the overflow. All but two or three of them knew the pledge of allegiance to the flag. Miss Andrews assured the two or three that "you'll know it by tomorrow."

They said a little prayer after their pledge. Then each group of four was permitted to choose a plant for the center of the table. All promised faithfully to keep them watered daily. Another project was mixing paints and trying them out on a sheet of paper.

"I don't want to mix any darn paints," said the youngster who wanted to go

home. It was his last feeble attempt at rebellion.

Blank bulletin boards in the classroom, headed "Science," "Good work," "We write," "Colors," await examples of the children's work during the year.

This is the first of several visits The Rhode Islander will make to Miss Andrews' first grade room. Reports at approximately monthly intervals will indicate the progress of the class through the school year.



COVER PICTURE shows Miss Claire Andrews' class giving salute to the flag, held by Thomas Austin. Girls are (l-r) Barbara Costa, Joyce Hukow and Judith Dyer. Picture is by Frank J. Farley, staff photographer.



Figure 10 PAINTING just for the fun of seeing the colors on paper was a first-day activity. Marilyn Gianpietro tries it out.



Figure 11 BEWILDERED small boy is Edward Chin, who arrived early.



Figure 12 SHE'S GIGGLING, not crying. Fernie Wright is fond of school.



Figure 13 TIME TO GO HOME. Leading the line are Rory Budlong, left, and Dennis Gikas. Next are Kathleen Curran, Susan Sullivan. End



Fig. 14

First Grade's Big Project

The RHODE ISLANDER
(Registered with U. S. Patent Office)
Providence Sunday Journal
MAGAZINE
OCTOBER 21, 1956

Miss Andrews' First Graders #2

They Made A Home For the Fish



Figure 15

MAKING A HOME. Miss Andrews invites the class to take part in housing fish. Faces show eagerness to accept.

In school only three weeks, pupils get introduction to science though they may have thought it was play

STORY BY HENRY H. SMITH—PICTURES BY FRANK J. FARLEY

LESS than three weeks after the opening of school, Miss Claire Andrews' first grade pupils at Point Street School had already taken several, healthy giant steps forward.

They had learned to write four letters, had composed three "experience" stories, had drawn their own portraits in crayon, had learned and sung several songs appropriate to the season, had begun putting out a daily "weather report" and, without being aware of it, had more or less accepted the hard job of learning as a common purpose.

The only way you can be sure that the children have performed this last miracle, this acceptance of common responsibility, is to visit the class and listen as Miss Andrews talks and teaches. In a few minutes, you become aware that the children are "with her." When she tells a story, they hear with delight. When she commands, they obey. When she observes, they observe with her. When she admonishes, they are cast down with chagrin. She has become the center of their day.

Miss Andrews professes to be not yet satisfied that the children are "with her," but this seems like professional perfectionism to the casual eye. "It takes longer than it should to get things done because they all really don't hear my directions. Some are slow to get away crayons when I say to. Others don't hear when I say that reading is about to start. But that's because the class is really too large. I have 36 and 36 is too many to get them thoroughly organized so early in the year."

Nevertheless, when Miss Andrews got the big project of a recent day going, there was more orderliness in the class than atomic age parents are accustomed to. The big project was "making a home for the fish," and it turned out to be richly educational

She began, after morning recess, by sending the children "to the circle." The circle is a crescent of chairs in the center of which is a large chair for Miss Andrews. It's at one side of the room. The circle, Miss Andrews explained later, is the heart of the classroom. It's where she sits among the children and explains or shows or narrates as the case may be. Where she teaches.

Usually, only a third of the class goes to the circle at once but for big projects, like making a home for the fish, the crescent of chairs is widened to accommodate everyone. Miss Andrews dispatched the children to the circle in groups of four, urging them: "On tiptoe. I want grown-up people, and grown-up people go on tiptoe."

When everyone had taken a seat, she entered the circle and announced, "now we're going to have a surprise." Shudders of delight affected some. Others asked, "What is it? What is it?" A few, the sophisticates who had noticed a large glass aquarium on the wall shelf behind Miss Andrews' desk, answered, "I know. I know."

"First, I want two very grown-up boys to bring a table here, and then I want a couple of more very grown-up people to get some newspapers and bring them here." This was done with great strivings on the part of the table carriers. Miss Andrews assigned the boy and girl who had brought the papers to cover the table and floor around it with them. Then, she brought the glass aquarium over and put it on the table.

"You remember the other day," Miss Andrews continued, "we made a home for a yellow caterpillar which Kenny brought in." Miss Andrews very quickly had mastered the first names of all her children.

"Today," she said, "we're going to make a home for something else. What do you think this would make a good home for?"

Hard thinking for a second or two. "Fish," someone offered but someone else offered "rabbit" and still another voice suggested "toad." Miss Andrews allowed them to keep thinking, appearing herself to consider each suggestion equally reasonable. Eventually, a chorus of agreement was reached on fish after Miss Andrews, by directing questions at individual children, had drawn out of them the information that the aquarium would make a nice house for the fish because it would hold water.

Then, she brought out a large pen-and-ink sketch of a fish and told a little about fish, pointing out particularly how they differ from land animals in having fins instead of legs to get about with.

Next, she assigned two more very grown-up people to bring a couple of tomato juice cans full of beach sand from the shelf behind her desk, because by more skillful questioning it turned out that a lot of people present thought it would be nice to put a sand floor in the fish house. "Just the way the fish have at the beach."

So the sand was brought and children took turns dumping it in, a spoonful at a time. Only grown-up people could be allowed to fetch sand or papers or tables or spoon sand but, before long, it became apparent that practically everyone there was grown-up or could, at least, be grown-up long enough to take a turn at something. Then water was fetched in the same manner as the sand. The fish home required a great deal of water and it was brought in the empty



Figure 16
 HELPING HAND. Phyllis Kelvey was one of water carriers. John Cariglio (right) watches closely as the water level in fishes' house is raised.



Figure 17
 FINAL STEP was to transfer each fish from jar to aquarium. Susan Sullivan lends one a helping hand. Georgianna Griffin is right behind her.



Figure 18 A BEAUTIFUL HOME in the sun: Barbara Costa and Rory Budlong take time to watch fish swimming about.

FIRST GRADERS continued

Aquarium Brought Delight All Around

tomato juice cans so earnestly that, at times, the children looked like an old-time fire bucket brigade.

Miss Andrews came armed with a box full of underwater plants, and it was agreed, after animated discussion, that plants grew underwater sometimes and they would make nice trees for the fish home.

Finally, it came time for the fish.

The fish were on a shelf in the corridor outside the room but no one knew it except Miss Andrews. So she called upon Georgianna, aged six and only recently arrived from Colorado to live in Providence, to get them.

"Now," said Miss Andrews to the others after she had told Georgianna where to find the surprise, "everyone else has to close his eyes and, when Georgianna comes in, she'll give us the signal to look. Remember now. Everyone's eyes closed till Georgianna tells us." Miss Andrews glanced around to check eyes. All closed, except a couple of brief squinters. Then Georgianna came in.

"OK," Georgianna said.

In spite of the long wait (about 50 minutes from the start of the project), there were gasps of delight all around as Georgianna held up a mason jar with three orange goldfish, two black

ones and two snails. Including a big, genuine gasp from Miss Andrews. "It's like Christmas," she said. "Just like Christmas." Then, the fish were put in their home.

"That lesson took almost an hour which is really too long," Miss Andrews analyzed later. "There was too much restlessness but, as I say, it's a large group and it's early in the year. Already, they've been introduced to the important subjects they'll have in first grade—reading, writing, art, music, science and physical education.

"This was a lesson in science—an introduction to the natural world—but we'll also bring it into the reading program. We're just in the beginning stages of reading. Acquainting them with letters and words and getting them to make up stories in their own words. The children will make up a story about the aquarium. Just two or three sentences. I'll write the sentences, rather I'll print them because they learn manuscript printing first, on a large sheet of paper. In art, we'll draw a picture of the aquarium and I'll put one of the pictures at the top of the large sheet with the printed sentences. Then, tomorrow, I'll bring them up to the circle by reading groups—they're divided into puppies, kittens and rabbits—and we'll "read" the story we composed today.

"They don't really read it at this stage. They know the inci-





Figure 19
LEARNING TO READ. Dorothea Pina is going through one step in the slow process. She's learning to note differences among words and letters. Teacher did lettering.

FIRST GRADERS continued

Stories From Pupils' Lives

dent and by going over what we have already said, they see how what we have said becomes printed words. Also, they're learning something very important at this stage—that writing goes from left to right in lines. Also, they're noticing the appearance of words. I'll have cards with single words from the story and I'll pick out individuals and have them match the card with the same word in the story. In that way, they get to study similarities and differences in letters and words."

Meanwhile, she said, the children were starting to write. So far, they have learned four letters: I, L, F and E. There is a special order in which letters are learned. These are not random choices. The lines which compose the individual letters all have names that the children learn. The down stroke of an I, for example, which also is used in F and E is called a "scoot."

"A grownup hearing us learning to write would be hopelessly confused," Miss Andrews observed "it sounds like Greek to him. But the children follow me just fine. They're with it every day."

She pointed out the weather report which she said the kids love. It's a calendar made of colored paper with little pockets for each day. If it's rainy, a little picture of an umbrella is pasted in one of the pockets. If the sun is out, in goes a picture of a sun radiating yellow warmth. "You should be here when the weather changes during the day," she said. "Everything stops and they tell me to change the weather report."

A wall display of self-portraits was the chief

decoration of the week. Brief autobiographies, printed by Miss Andrews, were under each.

"My name is Helen Onesti," one disclosed, "I have one big sister."

"I am Kenny," another announced. "My dog tears socks."

End



TODAY'S COVER shows Georgianna Griffin peering happily into the aquarium shortly after it had been equipped with sand, fish, snails and plants by her and classmates during a science lesson. A fish is silhouetted in foreground. Frank J. Farley, staff photographer, snapped the picture.



Figure 20

DEEP THOUGHT. Barbara Costa is thinking over whether she should add embellishments to her crayoned portrait of Nibbles, the Dutch rabbit she has learned about.

Miss Andrews' First Graders #3

First Step in Geography

Walk around block teaches children importance of knowing where places and things are located

STORY BY HENRY H. SMITH
PICTURES BY FRANK J. FARLEY

GEOGRAPHY as a formal school study doesn't get much play until after the third grade. Nevertheless, children in the early grades get some of the rudiments in an offhand way. The other day, for example, Miss Claire Andrews' first graders at Point Street School began at the beginning by learning the exact boundaries of their little school world.

The children absorbed this bit of lore in a walk around the block led by Miss Andrews with the help of Miss Eileen Fitzpatrick, another teacher. Whenever the children go outside the school building, safety decrees that another teacher has to be along to shepherd them.

During the walk, the children learned these among many facts: that Plain Street runs along one side of their school, that Point Street runs along another, that Point Street runs into Hospital Street, that if you walk up Hospital Street you come first to Globe Street which takes you back to Plain Street and their school. In short, their school world is bounded by the four streets mentioned.

Miss Andrews called attention to the street signs as the double line of children sauntered along looking eagerly at the sights. Reading is the big study this year and Miss Andrews is getting them to look at letters and words wherever they appear.

Miss Andrews led the line and Miss Fitzpatrick brought up in the rear. Everyone was warmly dressed. It was chilly, and there was fall color in the leaves of a couple of trees in the school yard. Miss Andrews called attention to the trees, the color of the school and the school door. She held up a pad of paper and explained: "We'll draw a map of the things we see on our walk." She urged the children to look for things which could be drawn on the map. She had to raise her voice because of the constant rumble of cars passing over cobblestones.

The children looked closely and pointed to the school which they said was red. They noted that the school door was green, and that there was grass in the school yard which was green, too. Miss Andrews wrote these things down as the children noted them. They told her which was the boys'

school yard and which was the girls' school yard.

At Point and Plain Streets, Miss Andrews paused significantly and pointed to the street sign. Some of the children picked out the letters. Not all of the letters, because they aren't sure of all of them yet.

Down Point Street, they stopped and Miss Andrews looked across the street at a store, in front of which was a stack of beer cases. "What do we see across the street," she asked, having in mind the store.

"Beer bottles" someone answered promptly and Miss Andrews suppressed a smile lightly and went on, "yes, but what else?" Then, one of the children identified the store.

NEXT came a yard filled with huge steel girders. A crane was busy lifting the girders. This was an absorbing sight and the class stopped to watch and the children made sure Miss Andrews jotted down a sketch and a few notes to recall the sight. At the corner of Hospital Street, everyone stopped to look across the street at Coro's which the children identified as "a factory."



SOFT AND GENTLE. Nibbles is used to children and willingly lets Susan Sullivan stroke him.

Figure 21

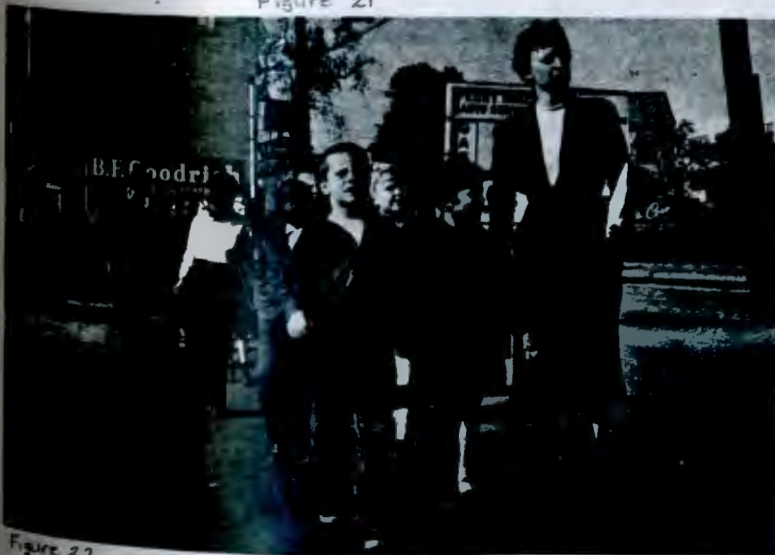


Figure 22
OUR NEIGHBORHOOD. Miss Andrews and her first graders see the sights going east on Point Street. Frank Richmond and Susan Santos are leading pupils' double line.



Figure 23
WILDLIFE was scarce but they found some. Looking, l to r: Frank, Susan, Leon Benton and Miss Andrews.



Figure 2.4

TEACHING MAGIC. One day Miss Andrews produced a rabbit named Nibbles. Children studied his long legs and ears, wiggly nose.

FIRST GRADERS continued

Sleepy Cat Sat in the Sun

"Yes," Miss Andrews agreed, "and some of your mothers and fathers may work there."

Around the corner on Hospital Street, the children found houses where people lived. A cat sat sleepily in a patch of sun on the porch of one of them.

"Let's tiptoe past so we won't disturb him," Miss Andrews said. As they turned into Globe Street, a little blonde girl pointed and said, "There's my house."

"Why, here's where Ida lives," Miss Andrews said. "Ida," she asked, looking across the street from Ida's house to a shed-like building with a small sign saying it was an iron works, "what do they do in this building?"

"They burn things," Ida said. "Do you know why," Miss Andrews asked. Ida looked unsure.

"I guess it's an iron company," Miss Andrews concluded.

Further up Globe Street, they gazed into a dark cavernous building where a man was welding. In another part of it, a huge overhead crane hoisted enormous loads of metal rods. The blue light of the welding and the movement of the crane both impressed the children.

"Well, there is certainly a lot to see around here, isn't there?" Miss Andrews observed as the line meandered back into the school yard. Back in the room, the class got right down to recording their impressions of the walk.

Miss Andrews announced that "We're going to draw a big, big map of our walk, and I'll want some help for that. But the rest of you who aren't helping to start the map will take a piece of the big drawing



Figure 2.5

BIG BOOK. Miss Andrews holds flash cards with words which children match up with words which appear in the big book. Later, the children will use individual readers.



Figure 26
OUR BLOCK. Children, with Miss Andrews' help, drew an illustrated map of block on which school is located. Helpers are Marilyn Giampietro, at left, and Susan Santos.

FIRST GRADERS continued—

Map Making on the Floor

paper and draw me a picture of the thing you liked best on the walk."

She picked out four or five children to help prepare the big map. They were given a large roll of brown paper and instructed to cut off two lengths long enough to cover the entire display board at the back of the room. Miss Andrews measured the display board and told the children how long to cut the sheets. After they had been cut she got out some scotch tape, took off her shoes, told her assistants to take off theirs and then they all set about taping two lengths of paper together.

"We'll make a mural of this later," she explained. "The children will take turns painting in sights they saw on the walk. It will be like an illustrated map of our block."

MISS Andrews brought us up to date on the progress of the class since our last visit.

"In writing," she said, "we're about to start learning the letters that have curves in them, starting with D. They've had I, L, E, F and T and two numbers, 7 and 6. Of course, they learned the l the same time as they learned I. It's the same stroke. But now we're going into P, R, B as well as the D.

"In science, we've studied milkweed seeds, and someone brought in a praying mantis along with some grasshoppers for him to eat. Yesterday, he ate a grasshopper right in class. Ugh! And we've studied leaves—the differences among maple, oak and elm leaves. And the music teacher has visited us and we learned a marching song and another one. We have other songs which I sing to them. I have to practice them myself at home because I'm rather weak at music. My father plays the songs on the piano

and I accompany him. In that way, I can sing a song through for the children without making mistakes.

"As for art, well, you can see our Halloween pictures on the wall. The children loved that project. We did the pictures in orange and white crayon on white paper, and then we painted over the whole thing with black paint to give a nighttime effect, and of course the black paint didn't adhere to the crayoned areas. They thought that was wonderful.

"And we're now reading from the big book." Miss Andrews pointed to an oversize book, nearly as tall as a six-year-old, resting on a table. It contains color pictures of children at play. The letterpress on one page read, "Tip, Tip. Here Tip." There was a picture above this showing a boy and a dog.

Miss Andrews said that the children sit around her in a circle and read from this big book. One child is called at a time. The child uses a wooden stick to point at the words as he reads them. Miss Andrews holds a teacher's manual in her lap. From it she reads descriptions of the pictures in the big book. The manual also lists questions to ask the children about the action in their story.

After the children have read from the big book, she takes out cards with words from the story in the book printed on them. And she asks the children to match up the word on a card with the same word in the story.

"There's a lot to it," she sighed. "I have to watch the manual, listen to them and try to get them to put some expression into their voices. They're concentrating so on recognizing the words that they are apt to say them in a monotone."

End

The RHODE ISLANDER

(Registered with U. S. Patent Office)

Providence Sunday Journal

MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 16, 1956



Figure 27
In Miss Andrews' Room

Christmas Confronts the First Grade



EVERYONE made a chain of colored paper. Helen Onesti sees if the paste is holding.



Figure 34 REINDEER'S harness was made from chains. Kenny Meller, on chair, helps fasten it.



Figure 35 LONG REACH. David Savage, left, and Kenny Meller strive to staple chain in place.



Figure 35 EXTRA CHAINS were draped on support columns. Teacher receives them from artists.



Figure 36 HOUSE PROJECT. Miss Andrews is tracing roof line on white paper for each house.



Figure 37 THEN children cut out tracing for snow on roof. Rory Budlong shows his to Kenny.

vising the stapling of chains. The stapler seemed to hold great attraction for the boys but the job was difficult, for they had to reach high to put the staples in place properly.

The chains not used on the mural were draped gaily around two steel support columns in the center of the room. Scotch tape was used on the columns. Miss Andrews stood on a chair surrounded by hands offering a wide choice of colors.

The following afternoon the last installment of the mural was undertaken. As soon as the children had got seated quietly at their tables, Miss Andrews announced briskly.

"Ida, get the scissors." Ida headed for the scissors. "Marilyn, come and pass the paste out." Marilyn went to work.

"Barbara, pass out drawing paper." Barbara did likewise.

"Now," continued Miss Andrews, "on the drawing paper. I want you to draw a house. You can make a picture of your own house. You can make a picture of someone else's house. Of a favorite house you have. You can make a short house, or a tall house, or a fat house or a thin house. A house with a pointed roof or any kind of a house you want.

"When you finish your house, I want to see it. And, if it's good, I'll pass out colored paper, and you can trace your house on the colored paper. The house on the drawing paper will be just for practice."

The children went to work drawing thin houses, fat houses, tall houses, houses with pointed roofs and houses without them. There were concentrated looks and the same gentle murmuring as on the previous day.

After a few minutes, Miss Andrews remembered something and walked to the blackboard. She drew a simple sketch of a gable-end house. She called the children's attention to it.

"Where would the chimney go," she asked. A boy raised his hand and Miss Andrews asked him to come to the board and put a chimney on her house. His chimney tilted at the angle of the roof.

"What would happen to that chimney?" Miss Andrews mused aloud. Dorothea's hand was raised in excitement.

"It would tip off the roof," Dorothea offered.

"Yes, I'm afraid it would," Miss Andrews said.



Figure 38 NEARING THE FINISH. Children wait turns to have their houses located on Christmas panorama.



Figure 39
FINISHING TOUCHES. George Huard and Lois Davis staple paper trees to landscape.

FIRST GRADERS *continued*

'Now, sit back quietly . . .'

"Dorothea, you come up and show how you would put the chimney on." So, Dorothea went to the board and drew a chimney which was in line with the sides of the house.

"Try to remember now," Miss Andrews concluded. "Put your chimney on so it won't tip over."

The children returned to their drawing and Miss Andrews passed among them carrying a pile of colored paper. As a child finished his practice drawing, she issued a piece of the colored paper. "As soon as you finish drawing your house, trace it on the colored paper," she instructed. "Then cut out what you have traced and bring it to me."

Miss Andrews then established herself at an empty table at the back of the room with several large sheets of white paper. Each child, upon finishing the cutout of his house, brought it to the table. Miss Andrews held the roof line of the house against the white paper and drew a quick outline of it. A rounded outline.

"Cut this out," she instructed each one, "and paste it to the top of your house. This is the snow." She worked busily at this point and went on talking.

"When you have pasted on your snow, go to the table behind me and you will find strips of either black paper or yellow paper. These are for windows or doors. If you want a house with the lights on, take yellow paper. If you want a house where everyone has gone to bed and the lights are out, take black paper. Remember to cut out windows that are the right size for your house."

The work continued, and the excitement grew. Eventually, the first of the houses were finished

and Miss Andrews stationed herself near the mural. As each child brought up a finished house, she cut a little slit in the white paper, representing the snow-covered ground, and showed the child how to tuck his house into the slit.

"That makes it look as if the snow is all around the house," she explained.

Everyone's house found its way at last into a slit. Susan, who had been delegated to make a church, delivered a glorious church with colored windows. Green trees, made several days earlier out of paper, were stapled in among the houses, and the children returned to their desks to catch their breath.

"Now," said Miss Andrews, "sit back quietly and look at the whole picture."

And apparently, the children had not taken in the total effect until that moment, because delighted and appreciative "o-o-o-o-hs" sounded all around the room.

Christmas was coming.

End

TODAY'S COVER shows the first graders busy decorating their room for Christmas. Dennis Gikas and Mary Ray stand on chairs to fasten chains to mural. Children also made mobiles hanging in foreground. Frank J. Farley, staff photographer, snapped the picture.



MISS ANDREWS' FIRST GRADERS #5

'Puppies' Can Read Well

And Pluto, the 'autograph hound,'
has signatures of those whose writing has won
critical approval of classmates

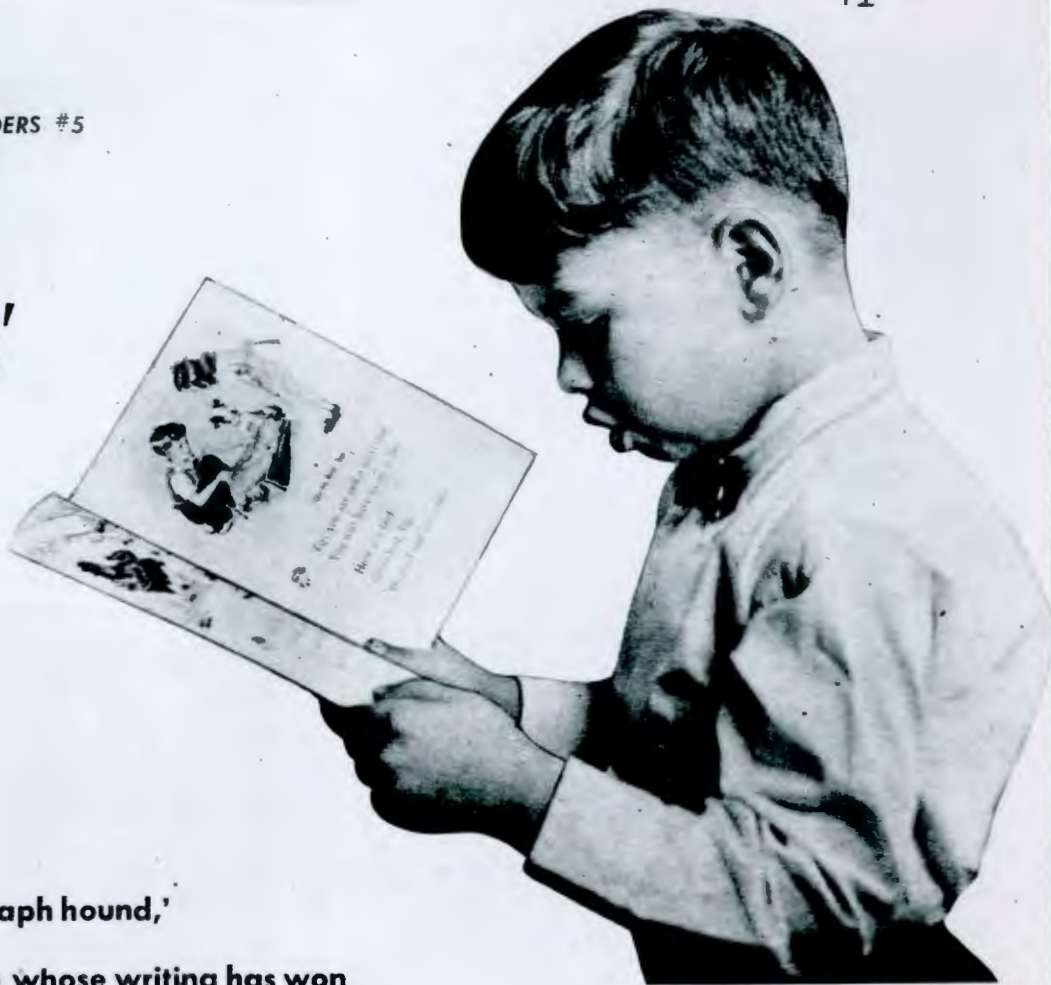


Figure 40 'TIP, YOU ARE not a good dog,' reads Charles DeWitt. 'You will have to go to bed. Here is a bed. Go to bed, Tip. Be good and go to bed.' Charles is one of the 'puppies,' the first reading class

STORY BY CATHERINE M. LYNCH — PICTURES BY FRANK J. FARLEY

THE most striking advance in Miss Claire Andrews' first graders at Point Street School, since their start in September, is their function as a unit. On the first day, the children, unused to class discipline, went in all directions, and expressed their individuality in a hundred ways—standing when they should have been sitting, roaming around the classroom.

Now, in January, the little tables where the children take their places are in neat formation. The youngsters automatically find their places when they enter, and sit quietly until they are told what to do. When they are absorbed, they sometimes talk to each other in a low murmur; this Miss Andrews ignores, interfering only when there is—rarely—a disturbance. They obey her requests promptly, and obviously take pride in knowing how to do as she directs.

A sign on one of the several bulletin boards reads, "Today is Monday. It is snowing—cold. This month is January. Winter is here."

First, the children were instructed to write the

small letter "o." They had been given papers with a curved arrow showing the direction of the stroke.

"Over and under, over and under," said Miss Andrews, gesturing with her hand. Twenty hands—10 of the children were absent, probably because of the storm—were raised, clutching red pencils. "Pencils in the air, fingers on the red—don't let them slip down." Pages of small o's were laboriously written.

"I see some very good positions this morning," remarked the teacher. "Backs straight, feet together." (Quick shuffling and straightening.) "I'm glad you didn't forget."

Readers in the class are divided into three groups. Ten "puppies" are the best readers; nine "kitties" are second, and 11 "bunnies" are third.

"Tip and Mitten," a story about a dog named Tip, was the job for the "puppies." They made a semi-circle of their chairs around Miss Andrews, who jogged their memories by showing flash cards of the words which they would encounter in the story.

"Look on page 5," directed the teacher. "Tell us what's happening in the picture."

"Tip's pulling a tablecloth off the line," said Charles. "Who else is in the picture?"

"Janet."

"Well, tell us about her. Is she glad?"

"No, she ain't glad. She's"—forehead wrinkled then, with a smile—"She's cross."

On each page, there is a little inset picture of the person who is speaking—Janet, Jack, Mother or Father, or even Tip. "But Tip can't talk," Miss Andrews reminded them. "This is what Tip's thinking."

Kenneth read one sentence haltingly. "Read that one again. You stopped after each word Jack's talking to his father. You be Jack, and read it as though you were talking."

He tried again, and managed to sound considerably more like Jack talking to his father.

Meanwhile, the rest of the children were carefully printing their names on sheets of paper at their tables. One group of children who had already written their



Figure 41 GREAT CONCENTRATION helps in writing. Making round o's are (l-r) David Savage, left-handed Edward Chin and Mary Ray.



Figure 42 BIRTHDAY BOY Thayer Fayerweather gets spanked by Ida Johnson and has the honor of sitting in the birthday chair.



Figure 43 CHILDREN SING with Miss Andrews about teapots. 'When I get all steamed up, then I shout: Tip me over, pour me out.'



Figure 44 AUTOGRAPHING PLUTO, a reward for his neatness in writing his name, occupies Kenneth Meller. Susan Sullivan approves.

FIRST GRADERS continued

Seven Birthday Whacks

names on "Pluto," Miss Andrews' oversized pink "autograph hound," acted as judges of the writing. The winners were permitted to add their signatures to Pluto, who wore a jaunty mortarboard above long, droopy ears.

The snow fell steadily. Wistful young eyes occasionally strayed to the windows. Miss Andrews asked the writers to use one paper to make a snowman, "and maybe after school you can make a real one." Everybody smiled at the idea, and went back to work.

Milk-and-cookie time was at 10:15. A couple of the children had brought drinking straws which turned the milk bright pink and flavored it with strawberry. One little girl bought seven cookies, at a penny each.

Because of the snow, recess was held indoors. A show of hands picked "Run for Your Supper" as the game of the day. They formed a circle. One child went around and picked two who were standing straightest. They raced in opposite directions, running for their supper. First one back picked the next pair. Competition was keen; everyone was cheered equally.

Thayer Fayerweather's birthday, which falls on a Sunday, was celebrated early. He sat in the "birthday chair," painted pink with blue flowers and blue lettering across the back, "Happy Birthday." Ida Johnson, the last birthday

child, had the honor of spanking Thayer seven times for his seven years, and once to grow on. All the other children counted gleefully. Ida didn't spank very hard; she's a sweet, patient little girl with a flashing smile which illuminates her serious face.

Then it was time for the writing to be judged. Those who had written their names on three sheets of paper, both sides, sat in the semicircle while the judges sat on the floor and looked at their papers. After much wavering back and forth, the judges finally picked three—Kenneth Meller, Susan Sullivan and Ida. They proudly added their names to Pluto's oilcloth coat.

The group is divided into classes according to ability for reading only. They write together. There is a great difference in ability to write, however; some have mastered their names with ease, while others are still unable to understand the principle of writing in a straight line.

But there is little apathy. One outstanding feature of Miss Andrews' first grade is its enthusiasm, its desire, as a group, to improve. The little hands grow hot and dirty grasping the pencils, but they don't give up.

About half the children who started out in Room 202 are still there. Others have changed to other rooms, or have moved away. The total still hovers around 30.

End



Figure 45 DECORATING CHAIR for scene in play are Dennis Gikas and Susan Sullivan. Trudy and Kenneth struggle with their costumes, under eye of Miss Andrews.

MISS ANDREWS' FIRST GRADERS — #6

Putting on Their First Play

STORY BY CATHERINE M. LYNCH
PICTURES BY FRANK J. FARLEY

GREAT excitement over a new talent—acting for an audience—was generated in Miss Claire Andrews' first grade early this month. In deference to the ideal of good health for all boys and girls, the Point Street School first graders presented *In Mother Goose Land* with an attention span that was a tribute to their interest.

Sixteen of the youngsters had speaking parts, led by Old King Cole, Kenneth Meller. Kenneth's parents had made his costume, a glittering jewel-studded cape of red satin. Other costumes were brought from home by the children, for themselves and for each other.

In the afternoon, when interest has a tendency to wane even in adults, the children were brought back to attention by Miss Andrews' "Now we'll rehearse." Each child, modestly trying to contain his great self-importance, went about his appointed job—setting up the throne, arranging the chairs, getting into his costume.

In the play, Mothers—Trudy Jozefowicz—reads *Mother Goose* to her children. All the *Mother Goose* characters come to life to act out the story, admonishing the children to drink plenty of milk and water, keep dry, eat fruit, vegetables, meat and eggs, and play and sleep in the fresh air. The chorus, eyes fastened on Miss Andrews, recite the appropriate nursery rhyme for each character.

Old King Cole's crown was of yellow construction paper, with red hearts. The children in the chorus were to have crowns, too, but not the same. After some discussion, the children decided to reverse them—red crowns with yellow hearts. While they sat on chairs or knelt on the floor, drawing and snipping, the rest of the class was addressed by Miss Andrews.

"Now, children—Oh, I think I won't even ask any questions, because somebody's crayoning. Imagine!" Somebody stopped. "Now, what do we have to make, so our mothers will come to our play?"

"Invitations!"



Figure 46 OPEN-MOUTHED CONCENTRATION helps Mary Ray in decorating her paper crown.



Figure 47 GAILY PATTERNED cloth for his throne is draped by Kenneth. Willing to assist are Charles DeWitt and Charles Haroian, r.



Figure 48 COLORED CRAYONS help Rory Budlong to draw an interesting picture on the cover of invitation to "In Mother Goose Land."



Figure 49
KING COLE has his cape adjusted by Trudy Jozefowicz. He's Kenneth Moller. Others are Rory Budlong and Charles Haroian, right.



Figure 50
SERIOUS CONSULTATION over the illustrations on their invitations is held by George Anagnost and Charles DeWitt.



MISS ANDREWS holds the book while Tommy Tucker (Charles DeWitt, l.) King Cole and Jack Horner, who is Charles Haroian, practice their lines for play.

Figure 51



Figure 52
APPRECIATIVE AUDIENCE of parents stimulated the children to give the best possible performance in their classroom on a Friday afternoon.

FIRST GRADERS continued

Saturday got a snowflake

"That's right. What is an invitation, Kenneth?"

"It's to tell people when to come, and what day to come, and what time, and everything."

"All right. What shall we say on our invitations?"

They decided to print, in capital letters, "MOTHER. PLEASE COME TO OUR PLAY ON FRIDAY AT 2:45." On the cover of the invitations, they drew "a picture of the play." Then Miss Andrews, with her stapler, rejoined the crown-makers.

Along one wall were hung three huge posters, two of them concerning the play and the third, the presence of winter.

One depicted Our Health Train, with cars full of dairy products, fruit, meat and vegetables, carrying the message of the play. The other featured a series of drawings by the children, illustrating, "Mother, will you read us a story?" "Come, come, my people," "Little Jack Horner," "Little Boy Blue is fast asleep," and "Cluck, Cluck, says Black Hen."

In the upper left-hand corner was a card, announcing:

"In Mother Goose Land. This is the name of our play. It is a story about health. What a good play!"

Earlier in the day, the class followed its usual routine of reading and writing. The six children whose progress has been slowest spent three periods of about half an hour each in a class for special help. When they returned, they were quietly drawn back into the group.

A sheet of paper, printed with a capital F, a small f, the word "farmer" and a picture of a farmer, was given to each child. The child impressed the connection on his mind by reciting

other words which began with "f," coloring the picture and filling in the block letters with crayon.

One of the Monday tasks is bringing the calendar up to date. After a little judicious reminding, the children remembered that on Saturday it had snowed. It developed that everyone had made snowmen. One had been pushed over; another had sported a carrot nose. One girl's father "made a big one, and my mother made a middle-sized one, and I made a little one." A snowflake was solemnly attached to "Saturday" on the calendar.

Everyone remembered that Sunday had been cloudy and rainy, and a gray blob was pasted over Sunday. They counted the days to Lincoln's and Washington's birthdays, and to Valentine's Day. They sang,

*Washington and Lincoln,
 You were both kind and true.
 Today we sing your praises,
 And we honor you.*

They were asked whether they had done anything kind, such as Washington and Lincoln might have done, over the weekend. One boy volunteered the story that a house near his had caught fire, and he went in and saved a lady. "I saw a boy throw a match," he said. "So I went in, but it made my eyes hurt."

Miss Andrews changed the subject. A large box, wrapped in silver paper with a big bow, drew "ooh's" from the group. They all crowded around.

"I hate you to unwrap it, it's so pretty," said one girl.

The box was opened, however, and was found to contain material for making Valentines.

That was to be the next project.

End

"Now we are going to make a pet shop."

STORY BY CATHERINE M. LYNCH — PICTURES BY FRANK J. FARLEY

THE pet shop project for the Point Street first grade started several weeks ago, when Miss Claire Andrews asked some of her strong pupils to set up a three-wall pre-built room in the classroom.

Then the class was called upon to vote on what the building, which was to be their major extracurricular activity for the year, would represent. Animatedly, they suggested and discussed a farmhouse, a fire station, a barn, a "book house." "Does anyone know the right name for that?" inquired Miss Andrews. One boy did—"A library!" he said triumphantly. A lot of the girls favored a doll house, but the boys vetoed that.

Finally, someone suggested a pet shop, and everyone concurred.

The next step was a visit for the whole class to a real pet shop. The class composed a letter:

"Dear Mr. Abbott: Please may we visit your Pet Shop Monday morning at 10 o'clock? Room 202." The next day the reply came! "Dear First Grade: I would be very happy to have you visit my Pet Shop on Monday morning at 10 o'clock. I will be waiting for you. Yours truly, Mr. Abbott."

Three of the mothers, Mrs. Leo Gikas, Mrs. Paul Haroian and Mrs. Harold Jacobson, accompanied the group on their orderly trip down Plain Street to Beacon Avenue, and across Broad Street to Franklin Street.

Before they left, they were rehearsed on the rules of conduct. "What must we do?" asked Miss Andrews.

"Walk nice," said one girl.

"Keep quiet," said another.

"Well, not really keep quiet," amended the teacher. "We can talk, but not in loud voices. Let's say 'talk quietly.'"

Each child was given a partner, and the formal march began. At the shop, the progress of the children's integration as a group was strongly evident. Behavior was exemplary; everyone responded instantly to the words of the teacher, the mothers and the pet shop personnel.

They met a parrot, a skunk named "Petunia," puppies, baby crocodiles, all manner of pets.

Over a period of about two months, the children "shingled"—with colored paper shingles—and papered their own shop, the "Point Street Pet Shop." The inside walls were covered with pictures of animals drawn by the children, on a pink background.

They made counters and cages out of cardboard, and animal of papier mache, construction paper, and asbestos mixed with plaster of Paris, working with scissors, crayons, paste, paint, staples and Scotch tape.

On a sunny Monday afternoon early this month, the class went to work on birds. On a large sheet of construction paper each youngster drew a bird with colored crayons. Some made easily recognizable species on the first try; others had to make more than one attempt. When the results received Miss Andrews' approval, the children carefully cut out the birds, outlined them on another piece of paper and colored the second bird. The



Figure 53
PET SHOP'S 'Petunia' decided the kids to call their own skunk by the same name.



Figure 54
PUPPIES somehow manage to have more appeal than the most exotic of animals.



SHAKING HANDS with Dick, the Mexican double yellowhead, is Trudy Jozefowicz.



Figure 56 MOTHERS ENJOY trip to pet shop, too. L-r, Mrs. Leo Gikas, Mrs. Paul Haroian, Mrs. Harold Jacobson.



REACHING FOR PAINT is Vincent Richards. Georgianna Griffin, right, works with scissors as Miss Andrews lends Susan Boss a helping hand on her paper bird.



SCIENCE BOOK is read by Susan Sullivan for picture of animal for a model.



Figure 59
PAINTING the legs of his dog, constructed of papier mache, is a job requiring most intense concentration by Dennis Gikas.



Figure 60

BURIED IN BOOK, Mary Ray searches out turtle picture for comparison with her handiwork. Kenneth Meller is more detached.



Figure 61 **ERECTING FRAMEWORK** for the pet shop was boys' job. Proud of his part in it is Kevin McBride, center.



Figure 62 **WITH PARDONABLE** satisfaction, Susan Boss adds her creation to the shop's collection of puppies.



Figure 63 **HANGING THEIR BIRDS** in a prominent part of the shop are George Anagnost and Ida Johnson. The gaily colored birds are suspended by pieces of yellow yarn.

FIRST GRADERS continued

From another room, a baby turtle

Miss Andrews stapled the two together, and the artist stuffed it with wads of paper.

One little boy, holding a thin strip of green paper, approached Miss Andrews sheepishly. "My tail fell off," he announced. Her stapler repaired the bird.

Some of the children chose to use a parakeet, lordly in his elaborate cage in the front of the room, as a model for their birds. He seemed to like the children, who took turns examining him carefully. From another classroom, they borrowed a baby turtle, who obligingly served as a model for shape and color.

On the bulletin board was a large black sign, saying, "We want to make a pet shop." Examples of the children's drawings of pet shops were on display. Another sign proclaimed "Our Plans." They included:

- "Cover frame.
- "Make cages.
- "Make pets.
- "Make supplies.
- "Build a counter."

The next panel said, "A Visit to the Pet Shop. We walked to the Pet Shop. We saw many animals. Now we are going to make a pet shop."

More pictures of the real pet shop were hung there, together with a couple of drawings of parading children.

As a device for uniting the children in a common interest wherein everyone has a stake and is therefore vitally concerned, the pet shop is working admirably. The shyest child forgets to be bashful when he is concentrating on an animal made by his own hands; the aloof, superior child is no proof against the infectious group fascination engendered by the project.

Meantime, the usual schoolwork goes on uninterrupted. The children are now learning to spell four words each week. On Fridays, they have spelling tests, and they are immersed as well in reading and learning numbers.

But the bright spot in the day comes when Miss Andrews says, "Put away your things. We're going to do some more work on our pet shop."

End

The RHODE ISLANDER

(Registered with U. S. Patent Office)

Providence Sunday Journal
MAGAZINE

APRIL 21, 1957

At Easter: The Miracle of Life

See Page 3



Figure 64



Figure 65

OLD EGG-FACE, made by Miss Andrews, draws the admiration of first grade.

Miss Andrews' First Graders #8

The Wonderful Egg Tree

With baby chicks in a cage and eggs hung on pink branches, it was definitely Easter

STORY BY CATHERINE M. LYNCH

PICTURES BY FRANK J. FARLEY

PREPARATIONS for Easter began early for Miss Claire Andrews' first grade at Point Street School. Miss Andrews, who has a particular and personal interest in animals, decided that the Easter season, symbolic of rebirth, was a good time to acquaint her pupils with one phase of the life cycle—how the chick emerges from the egg.

The timetable went like this:

Thursday afternoon: Miss Andrews called Ralph Farrow of the state Department of Agriculture and asked his assistance in getting an incubator and some eggs installed in the classroom. He agreed to attempt the experiment, an innovation, needless to say, among first grades.

Friday: Mr. Farrow called Miss Andrews and reported that he would be able to get an incubator from the University of Rhode Island, and that he would bring it to the school Monday.

Monday: Mr. Farrow, the incubator and nine eggs arrived. He spent all afternoon adjusting the tempera-

ture, set for 103. The "safe" area of temperature was judged to be between 100 and 105 degrees.

Tuesday morning: The temperature was noted to have dropped to 97 degrees. There was complete consternation in the first grade; pupils and teacher were shattered. Would the eggs fail to hatch?

Tuesday afternoon: The eggs started to crack. The excitement was high. Just as the children left, one chick pecked a hole in his egg, and they were able to glimpse him inside. Miss Andrews called the *Journal*. Her conversation sounded something like this:

"Can the photographer come? One of the chickens is starting to peck his way through the egg. I can just see him inside—oh! I've got to hang up! The chicken's here!"

By Tuesday night, eight of the chickens were "here." The ninth egg did not hatch. The next day, they were running around in a wire cage, apparently





Figure 66 BLOWING ENERGETICALLY, Stephen Chaplin, left, and Billy Cesario try to hasten the paint-drying so they can go on to greater feats of decorating art.



Figure 67 HUFFING AND PUFFING, Georgianna Griffin minimizes the effects of a too-thick paint job.



Figure 68 PINK BRANCHES emerge as Billy Cesario delicately brushes paint on Easter egg tree.

Miss Andrews' First Graders #8 continued

One goal achieved: they're not babies any more

quite unaffected by their unusual home and the attention of their audience.

Another pre-Easter project was the "egg tree." The children painted three large dried branches an intense pink, and stood them in a pail, braced with heavy lumps of coal borrowed from the janitor.

Then Miss Andrews gathered the group in their familiar semi-circle, and instructed one boy to "bring out the eggs."

For the past few days, the children's mothers had been "blowing out" eggs and carefully preserving the shells, which the children carried to school. The class had a total of 39 eggshells.

With such aids to art as pipe cleaners, pieces of felt, fancy paper, lace, ribbon and other trimmings, Miss Andrews proceeded to show them how to decorate their eggs for the tree.

"You know," said Miss Andrews, as she carefully inserted a pipe cleaner through the two openings in the egg, curling the bottom under and curving the top, "this is a job for almost second-graders. It isn't very easy. Maybe you can't even do it. You have to be very careful."

As her creations grew, the children would say

"Oo-oo-oo!" with the dutiful, exaggerated tones of children whose politeness exceeds their surprise. It is evident that the Point Street first-graders have reached the inevitable point of self-assurance which is, of course, one of the goals of school. They're not babies any more.

The children were allowed to choose how to decorate their eggs. Some held them carefully by their pipe cleaner stems and painted them in bright colors; others preferred to glue on eyes, ears and nose, fancy hat, or bits of trimming.

"If they drop, they'll break," warned Miss Andrews. "They're only tiny eggs. We have to be very gentle."

Patiently holding the paint-wet eggs, the children waited for them to dry. After the decorating was completed, each child hung the egg on the tree, which stood on a table in the back of the classroom, brightening it with the unmistakable aura of Easter, the Easter bunny and spring.

A class illustrating project is now adorning one of the bulletin boards. The theme of the pictures is "Our Wide Wide World." Some of them depict multi-colored globes on stands.

One is labeled "My tree, my house and my father's workshop;" another shows an egg-shaped world topped by "my house and my grandmother's" and "rocks falling down." A vividly colored square with a violently blue center has a caption explaining that "the blue square is where the Eskimos live."

The most touching is a drawing of a house, the sun, two flowering plants and a boy. The caption says, "This is just a little bit of the world."

End

MIRACLE OF LIFE, as personified by a chicken pecking his way out of an egg, is demonstrated in first grade at the Point Street School. The cover photo by Frank J. Farley shows Billy Cesario and Barbara Holland greeting the new little citizens.





Figure 69

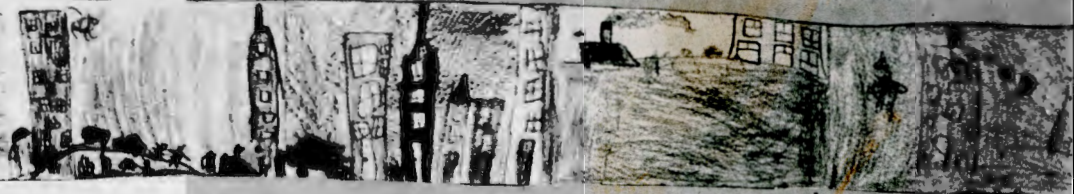
ROUND TABLE in back of classroom is used as a stand for the egg tree. Miss Andrews puts a coat of matching pink paint on table cover.



Figure 70

FULLY REALIZING the importance of the moment, Trudy Jozefowicz solemnly hangs her egg on the tree. Jeffrey Fine is rapt audience.

THE
UNITED
NATIONS



Miss Andrews' First Graders' #9

Greatest of the Three R's—Reading

STORY BY CATHERINE M. LYNCH
PICTURES BY FRANK J. FARLEY



Figure 71 GRAPHIC STORY of the United Nations is used in Miss Andrews' first grade. Written by Munroe Leaf, justly famed for his ability to communicate in childhood's language. "Three Promises to You" is published by Lippincott.

IN the first grade, the great experience is learning how to read. Reading is the end to which all the projects, all the adventures are the means. Once it is achieved, it becomes a means in itself, with the most vital potential ends in the world.

At Point Street School, Miss Andrews uses, within the framework of specific instructions, a highly individual approach to the teaching of reading. A supervisor's summary says:

"A child learning to read is like a person planning a trip. He will gain as much or as little as his intelligence and his background of readiness or richness of experience will permit him to absorb. Some who enter school have come with feelings of great insecurity due to the kind of living in their homes; others come with fair emotional stability. There are those who accept their peers, and those who are fearful because they have had few or unsuccessful play experiences."

In Miss Andrews' class, the children have by now been graded according to their abilities and background. Their reading has progressed accordingly. Early this month, something new for first grades was tried: an attempt to convey the concept of the United Nations.

"Three Promises to You," by Munro Leaf (Lippincott—\$2) was chosen as the vehicle. Miss Andrews read the book to the class several times. The promises, illustrated with a couple of photographs and a delightful series of clever Leaf drawings, talks seriously to six-year-olds, addressing them at their level but never condescending.

"The teacher has learned in her psychology classes that the place to start is with the child, not with the book."

Miss Andrews questioned the children about their activities during the Easter vacation. One boy caught a fish at his summer home. "First we opened his mouth and shook all the blood out of him," he reported. "Then we stuffed him with all material and cloth. We left him in the woods, so when we went again we'd have a nice decoration in the woods to look at."

The other children regarded this seriously as an interesting adventure. They laughed uproariously when another boy told about playing "office."

"I had papers with my name on them," he said, hardly able to talk for laughing. "And my sister worked for me. I was the manager!"

Charles DeWitt, fortunate child, went to New York and was taken to see the United Nations building. He brought back to the first grade a picture postcard showing the U.N., and a statue of the Empire State Building which is also a thermometer.

The three promises are made to YOU. ("You may be tall and thin, or you may be short and fat. You may be dark. You may be light. But whatever you look like, YOU are an important human being—a person.") The promises are: 1. No war. 2. Fair treatment for all human beings. 3. Better living for everybody by sharing what we know.

"From the stories of experiences the children have had, the teacher writes one. It is called an 'experience story.' Purpose: To show the children that the





UN STORY was staged by first graders by means of a scroll of drawings, above. Kenneth Meller, I, and George Anagnost present show for class and guests from another room.



Figure 73 ASK THE EXPERT: Miss Andrews questions Charles DeWitt, who actually visited the UN, on an obscure point as he shows the class a picture postcard which he brought to them.

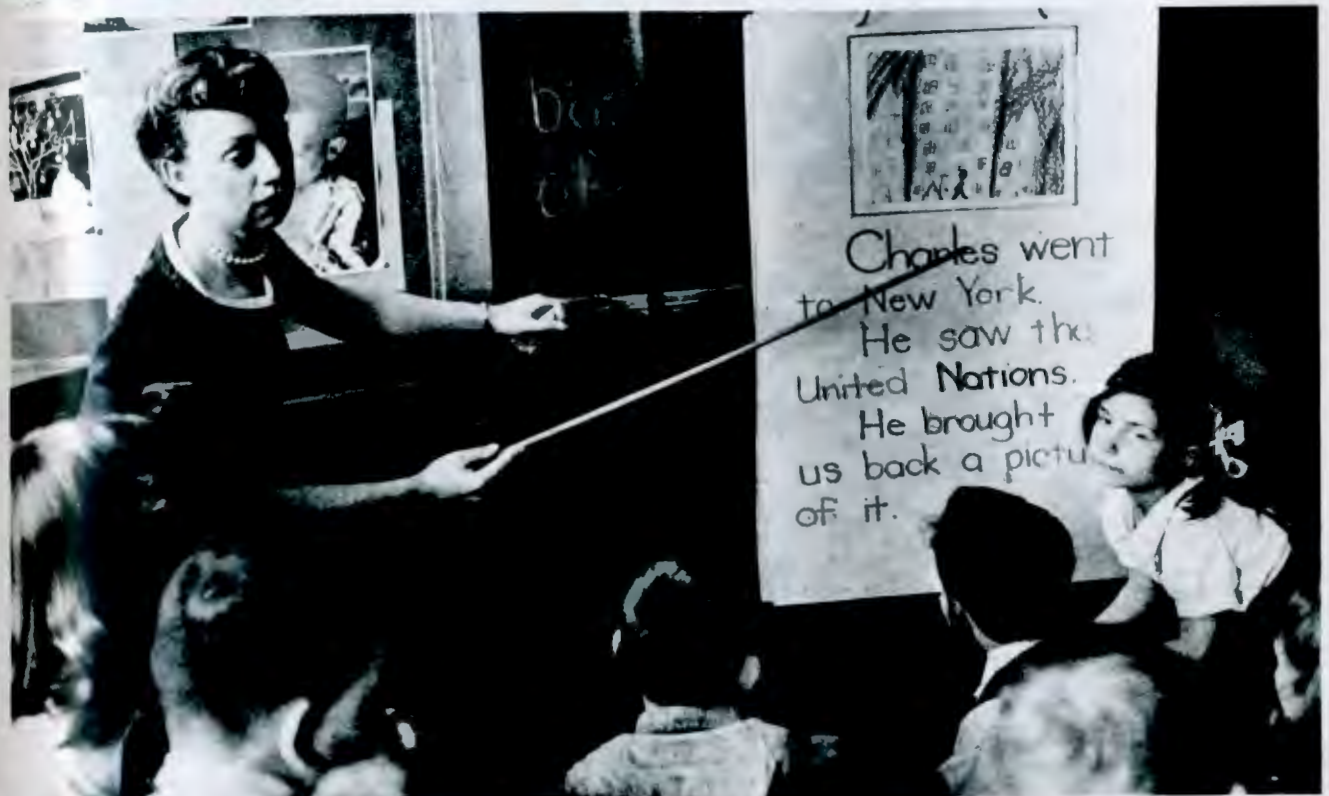


Figure 74 PICTURE STORY, illustrated by a drawing made by David Savage, becomes a reading lesson, led by Miss Claire Andrews.

SEMI-FINALISTS in the competition to see whose drawing will illustrate Charles' UN story are (l-r) Trudie Jozefowicz, Dennis Gikas, Barbara Holland, David Savage and Thayer Fayerweather. David won.



Figure 75



PUPPET SHOW dramatizes the aims of the UN. Operating puppets are Kenneth Meller and Dorothea Pino.

Figure 76

Miss Andrews' First Graders' #9 continued

Those 'Funny Little Marks on Paper' Make Sense

funny little marks on the paper are what they have said; in other words, the symbols represent the spoken word.

By now, the Point Street students are well aware of the connection. The "experience story" has become a part of their school routine. Miss Andrews wrote, at their dictation, on the blackboard: "Charles went to New York. He saw the United Nations. He brought us back a picture of it." It took seven lines, but the children were able to recognize that there were only three sentences—"by the dots at the end." Miss Andrews explained that there was another way. "He saw the," she said. "The what? It has to be complete to be a sentence."

She copied the words on a large sheet of paper. All the children drew pictures of Charles at the United Nations. Two boys judged the drawings, and narrowed it down to a choice between David Savage's and Thayer Fayerweather's pictures. David's won, by a show of hands. So his drawing—he was careful to put yellow in the windows, and make the sky dark, because Charles went there at night—was pasted on top of the paper.

Another day, the U.N. concept was carried over

into a hand-puppet show. The children made their own puppets out of papier-mache and cloth which they brought from home, and acted out spontaneous little dialogues.

"Let's go downtown. Oh, there's a toy I'm going to buy."

"No, I am."

"I am." (Repeated several times.)

"Let's buy it and share it." The end.

"Let's play school. I'm the teacher."

"No, I am." Et cetera.

"Let's share it."

Laughter from classmates. "How can they share a teacher?"

"I mean let's take turns," said the insulted actor. "Eeny, meeny—"

The remarkable comprehension of the youngsters is illustrated in another day's program. The children made drawings, illustrating aspects of the U.N., pasted them in a long strip, and unrolled it carefully on sticks, like a sideways scroll, through a cardboard theater. They called it a "movie," and invited other classes to come to the showings. Each child stood and explained his picture as it passed through the screen.

"There's water there and a couple of rocks, near the 'Nited Nations."

"This is me and my brother, shaking hands and making the first promise."

"Those are all the important people, skinny and fat, light and dark."

"This is me and my favorite friend, sharing candy and stuff and making the third promise."

"There's a little girl jumping rope near the Empire State Building."

"Those are the flags of the United Nations. They're waving together so we'll all be a happy world."

If a child is to take meaning to the printed page, he must have experiences that build within him concepts about varied life around him. When he makes a map, he has a new concept, immature by adult standards of a map. When he takes a trip to see his neighborhood, he learns something of the meaning of neighbor and neighborhood.

Why all this—doesn't it detract from the reading?

No, it packs the words that he will read with meaning. And all meaning is something we take to, rather than get from, the black symbols on the page.

End

BUSY CHILDREN occupy themselves with various duties in Point Street's first grade as the school year approaches its end.

Final Report on
Miss Andrews' First Graders



Figure 77

'Samson,' the Fire Engine, Reappears

STORY BY CATHERINE M. LYNCH
PICTURES BY FRANK J. FARLEY

LAST September, the 36 children who stepped timidly or straggled reluctantly into the first grade classroom presided over by Miss Claire Andrews at Point Street School were a thoroughly disorganized group of youngsters. Now, nine months later, they form an integrated unit. When asked a question, they no longer say "Yeah" or "Nope," or stand uncomprehendingly with mouths open; they say smartly, "Yes, Miss Andrews," and "No, Miss Andrews," and if they're uncomprehending, they say so: "I don't know, Miss Andrews."
On that first day last fall, Miss Andrews read a story to the class. One afternoon early in June, she

held the same book in front of them, for the first time since.
"Who remembers this?"
Several hands shot up.
"It was last September," said Kevin. (Kevin's first day at school was a very unhappy one.)
Miss Andrews was surprised. "How do you remember that?" she asked.
"Because I remember back to last September," said Kevin.
"It was the first—what?" asked Miss Andrews.
"The very first day of school," said Kevin triumphantly.
On that first day, the children had made drawings of their impressions of the story, "Hook and Ladder No. 3." A few of them, made by children who had attended kindergarten, were good reproductions of a fire engine. Many of the others simply drew lines or scribbles or objects which had no relation to the story.
Miss Andrews read the story again. Afterward, with no fuss, the children immediately went to work



VAGUE DRAWING made by Marie Gaudet on first day of school, above left, showed no comprehension of the fire engine story on which it was based. A drawing illustrating the same story, made by Marie in June and shown at left, typifies her progress.

Figure 78
10 Providence Sunday Journal



Figure 79

FRIENDLY NOW: Kevin McBride, shy and unhappy on first day, makes friends with Dooley, as Miss Andrews keeps a hand on the leash and Marie Gaudet awaits her formal introduction.



Figure 80

TEACHER'S HAND, passing out papers for drawing, is the object of attention.



Figure 81

AMBITIONS OF SAMSON, Hook and Ledger No. 3, draw sympathy from the audience as Miss Andrews reads his story to the class.

MISS ANDREWS'

FIRST GRADERS continued

'I Always Hate the Last Day,' Teacher Said

on their drawings. Every one of them made a faithful drawing of "Samson," the engine, in one of his adventures, in about one-quarter of the time the project required on the first day.

Of the 36 children present on the first day, only 21 are still pupils of Miss Andrews. Five more have entered the class since then, making the total at the end of the school year 26. All of them show signs of growth. Kevin, a big boy, was 52 inches tall on the first day. He now measures 53½. Susan Boss, who is small, has added two inches to her height, and is now 48 inches tall.

Recess, on the first day, was pretty difficult. The children either stood huddled in an uncertain group around the teacher, or tried to sneak out of the schoolyard and run home. Now they tear around, playing with friends, or they gather in a group for an organized game.

Most of the children are ready for the second grade. On the last day of school, the procedure is for them to gather up their papers and other belong-

ings, and march to the classroom where they will belong next year. They choose their seats, and occupy them for about 10 minutes, just to get the feeling of them. Then they rush out, ready for the summer.

"I always hate the last day," said Miss Andrews, looking around at the classroom walls, where barely an inch of space is uncovered. The decorations represent the children's art work, impressions of their six and seven-year-old world. All that comes down on the last day, leaving the walls ready for the next September's group.

"Nobody comes into my classroom on the last day; the kindergarteners have all gone home by then," Miss Andrews explained. "It's sad."

The greatest non-academic contribution Miss Andrews has made to her city-bred class is a wide knowledge of animals and their way of living. The classroom, unadorned on the first day, is now crowded with such items as a bird, a rabbit, the "pet shop" made by the class, a goldfish, and other representa-

tives of the animal kingdom, animate and inanimate. They had two rabbits, but one got out and created havoc over a weekend, so Miss Andrews offered him to the first child who came in with a note from his mother. Five notes appeared that afternoon, the first from Charles Haroian, who now has a rabbit for a pet.

Miss Andrews' Irish setter, who has the impressive name of Kimberlin Brian Boru, C.D. (Companion Dog), was a visitor during June. Familiarly known as "Dooley," the handsome dog was introduced to all the children and immediately became their friend.

The children are well-behaved, and respond to Miss Andrews' firm handling with eagerness and bright interest. Each new experience is an adventure, to be approached with excited anticipation. When Miss Andrews works quietly at her desk, and the children practice their writing, sometimes a few are finished ahead of the others. They often seize the opportunity to do a little special art work, with bright decorations, which they shove onto the teacher's desk shyly. The lettering always says, "I love you." *End*



Figure 82
LAST SEPTEMBER, frightened children clustered around the teacher. She's still the center of attraction, but now it's because she's fun.



Figure 83
VISIT TO SECOND GRADE, where they all hope to be next year, was a big event in June. Large single desks are something new to them.

APPENDIX B QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire has been set up to give the writer of a master's thesis some knowledge of how the lay public feel toward the two weekly articles which were presented in The Rhode Islander. Your responses will help the writer in evaluating the program.

Would you be willing to fill out the enclosed questionnaire by checking the answer that best describes your feelings and return it as soon as possible.

Please do not write your name on the questionnaire.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and participation in this study.

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. To what degree do you feel these articles helped to interpret the first grade program to you?

- Great value
- Little value
- No value

2. Do you feel you were given a satisfactory explanation of the first grade program?

- Yes
- No

3. If the answer is no, how do you think these articles could be improved?

APPENDIX B QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire has been set up to give the writer of a master's thesis some knowledge of how the lay public feel toward the ten monthly articles which were presented in The Rhode Islander. Your responses will help the writer in evaluating the program.

Would you be willing to fill out the enclosed questionnaire by checking the answer that best describes your feelings and return it as soon as possible.

Please do not write your name on the questionnaire.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and participation in this study.

1. To what degree do you feel these articles helped to interpret the first grade program to you?

Great value

Little value

No value

2. Do you feel you were given a satisfactory explanation of the first grade program?

Yes

No

3. If the answer is no, how do you think these articles could be improved?

4. Have your feelings changed toward the school program since the reading of these articles?

_____Very much

_____Some

_____Not at all

5. How have your feelings changed?

6. What do you feel you learned?

7. Did you enjoy reading the articles each month?

_____Very much

_____Average

_____Not at all

8. Would you like to have future articles such as these published by the newspaper?

_____Yes

_____No

9. If the answer is yes, how often?

_____Every year

_____Every 2 years

_____Every 3 years

_____Every 4 years

_____Every 5 years

10. Which grades?