

Katie Hughes
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Vivan Paley was an experienced and knowledgeable teacher who cared about the success of her students. She focused on improving the minds of her students, no matter how old. Using a vigorous curriculum for her kindergarten students through the author Leo Lionni, Paley encouraged higher-level thinking on difficult issues. The most interesting part is that the students, particularly an African-American student named Reeny, facilitated the in-depth discussion on controversial issues. It was Vivian Paley's way of inquiry that promoted excellence in the classroom for herself and her students.

In the section titled "Girls and Boys" from *The Girl with the Brown Crayon*, Reeny observes that most of the characters in the books they have read by Leo Lionni are males. It is interesting that the other students ask the probing questions, while Paley tends to guide the conversation with facts. She allows the students to interact and learn from each other and not only from her. The students are inquisitive because of the reading curriculum provided for them and from their teacher, who does not interrupt or discourage creative thinking and learning. Paley uses curriculum to allow her students to interact with each other within the context of the story. She wants her students to search for obtainable knowledge through the text and through each other. It is her job to guide the conversation and learning environment. Paley also utilizes the art of posters for the students to relate to the story. They cannot write journal reflections to reflect their thoughts, but perhaps they can say more through their posters.

To quote Paley in her essay, "*Must Teachers also be Writers?*" she says that she "makes sense of the classroom by watching the children and listening to what they say." This seems to be her main form of inquiry. While general, it allows her to recognize her audience, assess their needs, and hear from their perspective. She also likes to use stories as a main focus in curriculum (as she was influenced through work by Jane Austen and as seen in *The Girl with the Brown Crayon*) because it allows students and people in general to work through their lives or ask significant questions through the stories. The students get to interact within the story, their peers, and their teacher through questions and discussion. Paley also notes that at the end of the day, she will write down thoughts and observations from the day to "question and argue with ourselves" to "demonstrate the process for searching." For Paley, this is a great way to process, reflect, and ask questions. This way of inquiry allows the thinker to come up with their own solutions and reflections to create improvements or restructure their thinking. Writing is intentional, and the writer must think about their thoughts instead of immediately saying them aloud. It is through writing that Vivan Paley sees value in searching for knowledge in the classroom and in the school setting.