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The Importance and Use of Student Self-Selected Literature to Reading Engagement in an Elementary Reading Curriculum

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The purpose of this article is to discuss the importance of student self-selecting literature and reading engagement in an elementary reading curriculum. The article discusses the use of self-selected reading in the context of child development, book difficulty, independent reading time accountability, and a supportive environment. The successful use of self-selected reading by the Children's Choices Project is also discussed.

Real world readers do not wait for a teacher to tell them what to read. They read what interests them, what suits their purpose.... When kids define what they care about, they begin to define who they are. (Ollman, 1993, p. 648).

ON JANUARY 8, 2002, President Bush signed the *No Child Left Behind Act* into law. The Act attempts to provide every child in America with a high-quality education regardless of his or her income, ability, or background. As part of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, *Reading First* is a national initiative aimed at helping every child in every state become a successful reader by third grade. A booklet, entitled *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read* (2001), has been widely distributed across the country in an effort to promote the findings of the National Reading Panel Report commissioned by Congress in 2000, as "key skills and methods central to reading achievement" (p. ii). The booklet describes the five areas of reading instruction below as "a foundation for instructional practice" that "teachers can learn about and emphasize...that have worked well and caused reading improvement for large numbers of children" (p. iii). The reading instruction areas are:

- phonemic awareness
- phonics
- fluency
- vocabulary
- text comprehension

Upon reading the *Put Reading First* document, it is obvious that something is missing. Reading is more than the sum of the five areas described. Reading is more than a cognitive process of decoding the words, reading fluently, or comprehending the text. It is becoming deeply involved, captivated, absorbed and immersed in a text – in other words, engaged. Reading engagement integrates the cognitive, motivational, and social dimensions of reading and reading instruction (Baker, Dreher & Guthrie, 2000). This means that children must not only have the competence to read, but also the motivation to read. According to Baker, Dreher, and Guthrie (2000), "If motivation is treated as secondary to the acquisition of basic reading skills, we risk creating

classrooms filled with children who can read but choose not to" (p. 1). If the goal of the *Reading First Initiative* – for all children to be successful readers by third grade (and hopefully beyond) – is to *truly* be achieved, then reading engagement must be as much of a priority as all other areas of instruction.

Self-Selected Reading and Engagement

Educators must focus their attention not only on *how* students read, but also *why*. Guthrie and Anderson (1999) explain that "motivations and social interactions are equal to cognitions as foundations for reading" (p. 17). They believe that reading can be seen as engagement because "engaged readers not only have acquired reading skills, but use them for their own purposes in many contexts" (p. 17); in fact, "an interested reader identifies with the conceptual context of a text so fully that absorbing its meaning is an effortless activity" (p. 19). Engaged readers are involved, interested and constantly learning from their text at all times.

Motivation is a critical factor of engagement. Gambrel (as cited in Graves, Juel, & Graves, 1998) states "Motivation must be at the heart of the language arts curriculum because the quality of the content of the program matters little if it is not taught in a way that both enriches and engages students" (p. 239). As motivation increases, students desire to spend more time reading. Therefore, motivation plays a dual role; it becomes a part of both the process and the product of engagement.

Because the engagement of readers is key to the reading process, it is essential that educators find ways to increase engagement. Student self-selection of literature can be one means to this end. In addition to fostering intrinsic motivation, allowing students to make choices gives them control. When real world readers choose a text, they are reading to learn and to enjoy. They accomplish these tasks by selecting a text that fulfills their needs. Selecting what to read is a major part of becoming a reader (Ollman, 1993). According to Darigan, Tunnel and Jacobs (2002), self-selecting literature is so essential to the reading process that without its inclusion into a reading program, no reading development can be

accomplished. In order for students to engage with text, they must feel like they have control in selecting materials that are interesting to them.

Self-Selected Reading and Child Development

Being able to make choices positively affects the educational development of children. It helps children become both independent and responsible. They "learn to deal with differing difficulty levels of books; understand that there are different purposes for reading (and these purposes may change); and learn to assess their progress by gauging their choices against their own standards and the choices of others" (Ohlhausen & Jepson, 1992, p. 34).

However, enjoyment of a book cannot be forced on a child; it must come about naturally. Johnson & Giorgis (2002) point out that "Even with a teacher's caring guidance and a parent's well-intended recommendation, children turn to books that reflect *their* interests and capture *their* emotions" (p. 780). Educators often feel that students are unable to make the important decision of selecting a book. Many believe that children cannot learn if they are not always reading from what we, as educators, might deem "quality literature." Yet, what teachers view as quality literature might differ considerably from what students feel is a "good" book (Worthy, Moorman & Turner, 1999). When given the chance, students will make positive selections based on both interest and ability (McLaughlin & Allen, 2002; Schlager, 1978; Worthy, 1996). Data suggest that students "can, and do, make choices that increase their awareness and extend their growing knowledge of literacy" (Fresch, 1995, p. 226).

Olsen's theory (as cited in Kragler, 2000) of child development claims that children are "self-seeking, self-selecting, and self-pacing organisms" (p. 2). As such, Olsen believes that children will seek and select experiences that are consistent with their developmental level. Consequently, many students' reading selections move back and forth between harder and easier materials depending on their developmental purpose, creating a "yo-yo" effect. While this variation in reading levels may seem inappropriate, teachers must acknowledge that respecting

children's choices allows them to grow and learn to value their own decision-making (Ohlhausen & Jepson, 1992).

Self-Selected Reading and Book Difficulty

Though many educators subscribe to the belief that students *must* read books that are on their grade level, children are often able to read texts that are otherwise too difficult for them if the texts are interesting (Worthy & Sailors, 2001). In fact, a study outlined in *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading* (1985) found that two factors help students recall information from reading: readability and reader interest. The study (as cited in Darigan, et. al., 2002) found that "the 'interestingness' of a text is thirty times more powerful than the readability of text when it comes to comprehension and recall" (p. 454). In fact, it is the "interestingness" of the books that leads to enjoyment and increases in positive attitudes toward reading by children.

It can be helpful when thinking about the role of interest to compare student literature choices with those of adults. As adults, we are sometimes forced to read books or articles that are difficult or uninteresting. However, we know that reading those texts is important to our job, our health and well-being, or our education. At some level, those books have value. Students too must read books that are not always the most fun for them in order to increase their knowledge of subjects like history, science, or math. As adults, we also read books that are on our level. We sit on the couch after a long day at work or lie in bed before falling asleep clutching the newest mystery, sci-fi thriller, or romantic comedy. We choose these books because they are interesting to us and because we are able to read them comfortably. Students should also be allowed to read books for pleasure, books that are "just right" for them as well. These kind of books continue to stimulate their understanding of literature and ideas but are also just fun and interesting to read. Finally, as adults, we read books that are too easy for us. We sometimes feel as though our brain cannot take any more thought. So we pick up a newspaper or a magazine (texts which are easy to read) in order to find an interesting topic. We might also read a children's book with our kids at bedtime or to our students in class. While reading these books may not increase our knowledge, the choice to read them is purposeful and

helpful to us at that point in our lives. It is the same for children. Reading books that are too easy for them can be motivating. They begin to feel comfortable and confident with their reading ability. This might lead them to try something more challenging the next time they choose a text. At all three levels, any reader is making progress. However, it is clear that students (and adults) are more motivated to read when allowed to choose their own materials (Kragler, 2000). Prohibiting them from doing so may hinder their desire to read.

Time to Read Self-Selected Books

Allowing students to self-select their own literature is an important first step in reading engagement; however, students must also have time to read what they have chosen. This may be accomplished by providing blocks of independent reading time (Fisher, 1994). The National Reading Panel Report (2000) and the ensuing *Put Reading First* (2001) document has put into question the value of independent reading with such statements as, "No research evidence is available currently to confirm that instructional time spent on silent, independent reading with minimal guidance and feedback improves reading fluency and overall reading achievement" (p. 25) and "Rather than allocating instructional time for independent reading in the classroom, encourage your students to read more outside of school" (p. 29). Many educational researchers have called into question the validity of the studies the panel considered "scientific" research (see Allington, 2002 for an in depth discussion). Teachers must put such statements into perspective by thinking of their own experiences with children. How many students do not have access to a diverse collection of children's books outside of school? How many students spend a majority of their time after school in a childcare program, sports, music or other activity? How many students are positively influenced by teacher and peer book recommendations as a result of in-class independent reading time? If your response to any of these questions includes even a few students, then independent reading time is well spent. Richard Allington (2001) states:

In learning to read it is true that reading practice - just reading - is a powerful contributor to the development of accurate, fluent, high comprehension

reading. In fact, if I were required to select a single aspect of the instructional environment to change, my first choice would be creating a schedule that supported dramatically increased quantities of reading during the school day. (p. 24)

Independent reading time should be provided at least once every day (Sanacore, 1999; Sebesta, 2001; Graves, Watts-Taffe, & Graves, 1999). Allington (2001) recommends a minimum of 90 minutes of in-school reading per day. At first, this may seem impossible - there's already not enough time to teach everything *and* prepare for mandated testing! But, according to Routman (2003) "When an independent reading component is added, test scores go up" (p.83). Take a careful look at how much of the school day is spent on non-instructional activity-opening and ending procedures, intercom announcements, and paperwork. With some improvements in organizational efficiency, it may be possible to find 30 to 50 minutes for reading every day.

Independent reading time during the school day increases reading achievement and engagement because it helps students enjoy reading, expands their experiences, provides them with context to practice skills such as decoding, and increases their vocabulary (Anderson, Higgins & Wurster, 1985). Johnson and Giorgis (2002) state in their article, *Pleasure Reading*, that "Time to read books of their own choosing, for their own purposes, and without having to prove that comprehension has occurred remains significant in the ongoing development of readers" (p. 780).

Accountability for Reading Self-Selected Books

Choice and accountability build responsibility for students (Nations & Alonso, 2001). Students must not only be allowed to choose their own books and have the time to read them, but they must also be accountable for the decisions they have made. During self-selected reading time, teachers can educate students on how to choose quality literature that is just right for them through individual conferences and then continue to monitor and evaluate student choices over time. By meeting with each student as often as possible, teachers become aware of the needs of the

class and of the individuals within it. Many times, that knowledge results in the need for whole class mini-lessons on relevant topics and small group guided lessons about reading strategies for students needing more guidance, or to introduce new genres, literary elements or devices. While the teacher's role may appear less challenging in this type of reading instruction, it is instead much more demanding.

With the inclusion of self-selected independent reading time, and student-teacher conferences, each student is given the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. Taking ownership of the reading process encourages students to read more and often, allowing them to become master decision-makers; skills that are important in life. Rasinski (1988) believes that "Interest, purpose, and choice need to be at the heart of the literacy curriculum at all levels" (p. 400). Unfortunately, while educators may see the need and relevance of this statement, they may still feel wary and/or unprepared to create such an environment in their own classrooms.

Creating a Supportive Environment for Self-Selected Reading

One of the most significant needs in a classroom encouraging student self-selection of literature is an appropriate physical environment. Teachers can create a silent reading area away from the mainstream of class activities. Students should feel at ease in this area. Some teachers include pillows, beanbag chairs, or even a couch in this area. Others allow younger students to bring in a favorite pillow pal (stuffed animal) to read to during silent reading time. The most important aspect of this silent reading area is that it be both comfortable and inviting (Reutzel & Cooter, Jr., 1992).

Classrooms must have libraries! Regie Routman (2003) states, "I have seen excellent classroom libraries transform children as readers. Conversely, when there are no libraries, or poor ones, students often do not like to read and do not achieve their highest potential" (p. 81). Classroom libraries must be filled with literature that is both interesting and diverse. Neuman (1999), in her study of preschoolers, found that young children "need rich and diverse reading materials" in order to acquire "the complex set of attitudes, skills, and behaviors associated

with literacy development" (p. 306). Worthy, Moorman, and Turner (1999) found that reading preferences, availability, and access to diverse texts such as magazines and comics for the middle school students in their study had a strong affect on the amount of time the students spent reading. Placement of texts is also extremely significant. Books must be in close proximity on shelves either at or below the eye level of students. This attention to shelving positively influences the likelihood that a book will be selected (Reutzel & Gali, 1998; Neuman, 1999).

In addition to creating a comfortable and stimulating physical environment, classroom teachers must attempt to promote a positive mental environment as well. The main way to accomplish this task is by demonstrating that the classroom is one that values reading and literacy. Read-alouds should occur frequently to help students become aware of the many possible book choices that are available to them (Rasinski, 1988; Sanacore, 1999; Stone & Twardosz, 2001). Read-alouds can include picture books or an ongoing novel. Mini-lessons can be introduced with a read aloud. Mini-lessons are brief, explicit teaching opportunities, usually at the beginning of a sustained period of silent reading in which the teacher demonstrates reading strategies and skills that efficient readers employ when reading. Mini-lessons can also include the value of literacy, the love of reading, and how to select literature (Heibert, Mervar, & Pearson, 1990; Fountas & Pinnell, 2000). Students can also buddy read. Children are able to help each other with words through conversation and become both learners and teachers simultaneously. Buddy reading is an activity that builds a community of readers and encourages supported risk-taking (Fresch, 1995). Furthermore, in order to create the ideal mental environment, teachers must be very familiar with two main things: literature and their students.

Becoming acquainted with all types of literature is not something that occurs overnight. However, knowing where to find the right types of books is a good beginning. One way educators can find out about quality literature is by looking for books that have received honors and awards. For instance, Newberry and Caldecott awards are given yearly to those distinguished pieces of writing and illustrations, respectively. The Coretta Scott King Award goes to quality literature dealing with African American themes. The Pura Belpre Award is given to those pieces of

good literature focusing on Latino issues and characters. There are also a variety of book lists that lend themselves to choosing the best literature of the year. Examples are the *Reading Recovery*® booklist, the National Book Award lists, and the Orbis Picture Award lists (Sebesta, 2001). Teachers can also consult websites relating to literature, such as the Children's Literature Web Guide, The Reading Zone of the Internet Public Library, or the Children's Book Awards website (Appendix A). Finally, educators can find a resource in annotated bibliographies. Examples like the Association for Library Service to Children, Notable Children's Books, and the Hornbook Guide to Children's and Young Adult Books can be very helpful (Leu & Kinzer, 1999). Other sources are *Choosing Books for Kids* (Oppenheim, Brenner & Boegehold, 1986), *The New York Times Guide to the Best Books for Children* (Lipson, 2000), and *Children's Literature in the Elementary School* (Huck, Kiefer, Hepler, & Hickman, 2003), three well-respected, comprehensive sources for studying high quality literature (Stone & Twardosz, 2001). By consulting these types of sources, teachers can become extremely familiar with all types of literature, thereby better preparing themselves for recommending and discussing good books with students.

It is also essential that teachers know the needs of their students. They must be "kid-watchers," always observing, assessing, and evaluating the capabilities of the children (Nations & Alonso, 2001). According to Nations and Alonso (2001), "When you know what they can do, then you can find ways to move them forward in their learning. When you know where they struggle, you can provide more support and in turn give them success with literacy tasks in the classroom" (p. 46). Observation and awareness are the keys to ensuring an understanding of students' strengths and needs, but teachers must also be conscious of student interests. They can find out about the interests of their students by administering an interest inventory. Interest inventories allow teachers to discover what each child enjoys in reading and in everyday life. By combining this knowledge with that of the needs of students, teachers are able to guide students in appropriate book selection. In addition, interest inventories also inform teachers on what to include in their classroom book corner.

Teachers must also serve as models for their students. Ollman (1993) "found that methods that were modeled by the teachers were more frequently used than methods that were just taught to the students" (p. 10). Students benefit from watching teachers demonstrate the joys and frustrations that come with choosing a piece of literature that is just right for them. Teachers can even "think aloud" as they choose a book, making the thought processes that take place when choosing a book visible. These efforts will serve students by allowing them to share in the wonder about the appropriateness of our choices (Routman, 2003; Stone & Twardosz, 2001). Modeling provides motivation for students. As children see teachers reading and making quality choices, they too will be encouraged to do the same. Teachers can also model and encourage students' book choices through persuasive book talks, correspondence with a favorite author, or a file of book critiques on index cards (Wilhelm, 2001).

One specific strategy geared toward the modeling process is what Ohlhausen and Jepson (1992) call the "Goldilocks Strategy." These educators have created an analogy that compares the experiences of Goldilocks to those of students attempting to find "just right" books. Goldilocks made choices, so we can assume that because she made them, "she learned from her mistakes and deepened her understanding of what it means to be responsible for her own actions" (pp. 31-32). By taking advantage of the opportunity to make choices and to learn from them, Goldilocks takes a step forward toward self-discovery. So, too, do students move toward an awareness of their needs by choosing their own literature.

Ohlhausen and Jepson (1992) offer specific models for mini-lessons to show students how to identify books that are "too hard," "just right," or "too easy." When introducing the Goldilocks Strategy, teachers must explain ways to identify these categories. These authors suggest that teachers say:

A "Too Hard" book is one you'd really like to read -perhaps one your big brother or sister has read or one I've read aloud to the class. But you know it's too difficult for you right now. That's okay. You can pull it

out every once in a while to see if it's getting easier. If it is getting easier what's happening to you? Right! You're getting to be a better reader! Sometimes it might be just a few months before you'll be able to read it better; but sometimes it might be years (p. 34).

After sharing this concept with students, a teacher can then show an example of a book that is too hard for him/her. For example, the teacher might pull out a book read in college and read a passage aloud to the students that was too difficult. The students will quickly notice how their teacher is having trouble with reading, and it will be an eye-opener for them. Next, the teacher should explain the just right books:

"Just Right" books are books you want to read. A "Just Right" book is one that isn't too difficult - one or two words per page that you don't know. You can use this book to help you learn to read by practicing the strategies you've been learning. After you've learned to read it really well, then maybe you'll be able to change it to a "Too Easy" book (p. 35).

After explaining, the teacher will share a passage from a book that he/she is currently reading for pleasure, preferably one that the students have seen him/her reading. Then the teacher can give a short summary to show the students the understanding he/she has of the book. Students will notice that the book the teacher has shared is "just right."

Finally, the teacher should tell the students about "Too Easy" books:

"Too Easy" books are old favorites. They're books you like to read for fun and for independent reading times like SSR. They're ones you might decide to pick up and read when you need a break from hard books, when you're feeling kind of low, or when you just need a "good read." Often it's a book you've read before, or one you've practiced reading lots of times. It doesn't always have to be a storybook; it can be a magazine, newspaper, joke book, comic book, or nonfiction book (p. 35).

After explaining what a "too easy" book is, the teacher can read a favorite picture book to students, explaining that while it is too easy, he/she still enjoys reading it to the students.

The Goldilocks Strategy is just one way of introducing and modeling the role of self-selection to students. It is a prime example of modeling how to choose a book that is "just right" for each student. As with any learner, students will feel more comfortable with choosing texts once they have been taught how to do so. However, there are other ways to help students feel comfortable when making literature decisions.

One common method associated with book choice is the five-finger method. This method is also called the rule of thumb, sticky palm, and greasy fingers (Reutzel & Cooter, Jr., 1992; Baker, 2002). Students are instructed to open the book to any page and begin reading. As they read, the student will put up one finger for each word with which he/she is not familiar. If the student finishes the page and is holding all five fingers up, he/she will know that that particular selection is too difficult. If they are holding no fingers up, the book choice is too easy. If there are two or three fingers held up, the selection is probably a "just right" book. The five-finger method is a fairly simple method to help students find a way to choose appropriate books.

There are a variety of other possible self-selection strategies (Routman, 2003; Wendelin & Zinck, 1983). It is clear that those strategies that are considered the most useful vary from grade to grade; therefore, it is the teacher's job to recognize this fact and find new and positive strategies to lead the students toward those that will be most beneficial to the students' particular reading level and understanding of literature.

Alternative Approaches to Total Student Self-Selection

It is also important to note that those who are hesitant to allow full student self-selection in their classroom have other possibilities to which they can turn. The middle road of book selection is often found in the form of text sets (Darigan, et. al., 2002). For instance, teachers can offer students a choice from among several "suitable" pre-selected books.

Younger children might have their own book boxes with several predetermined books to choose from during self-selected reading. Intermediate and older students might have a list of books from which they may choose for studying topics in social studies or other content areas (see sample text set on the Revolutionary War in Appendix B). This idea aligns well with the use of literature circles. In literature circles, students are allowed to choose books, but this choice can be guided by particular parameters.

Monitoring Student Progress

No matter what parameters or guidelines are set, teachers must be aware that the student self-selection of reading materials is often difficult. It takes a large amount of teacher support and student reflection to get to a point where teachers feel confident that students know how to choose an appropriate book (Baker, 2002). While it is necessary for teachers to know the needs of each student and use that knowledge to guide the literature selections of those children, additional accountability measures must be in place as well to monitor student progress.

One popular way to monitor the knowledge and understanding gained by students is through responses to the text. Students may respond orally by communicating with the teacher during individual conferences, sharing during a group discussion time, or with a peer. Students can also respond through writing in reading response journals or creative writing projects such as developing book jackets, or even ads for a particular story. Additionally, students can respond through drama by creating mini-plays and reenacting the events of a story (Zarillo, 1989). All of these suggestions provide ways for teachers to monitor student progress.

Students are also capable of evaluating their own choices. Teachers can set up a series of questions by which students can monitor their own selection process. McLaughlin & Allen (2002) created a set of questions for students to ask themselves after reading in order to determine the appropriateness of a text. Some of those questions include:

- Were you able to concentrate as you read independently?
- Did the ideas in the book hold your attention?

- Did you get mixed up in any place? Were you able to fix it?
- Were there words you didn't know? How did you figure them out?
- Were you hoping the book would end, or were you hoping it would go on? (p. 68)

By answering questions like these, students are able to monitor their reading progress. With guidance from the teacher, students will know that they want to read a book that captures and holds their attention; one they hope will go on forever. Therefore, by answering no to those particular questions, a student might realize he/she should abandon the book he/she is reading and choose another.

Ohlhausen and Jepson (1992) also created some questions to accompany their Goldilocks Strategy. Students who answer yes to these questions know that the book they are reading is either "Too Easy," "Just Right," or "Too Hard." Some of the questions these educators provide are:

Too Easy:

- Have you read it lots of times before?
- Do you understand the story very well?
- Can you read it smoothly?

Just Right:

- Is this book new to you?
- Are there just a few words per page you don't know?
- When you read, are some places smooth and some choppy?

Too Hard:

- Are there more than a few words on a page you don't know?
- When you read, does it sound pretty choppy?
- Are you confused about what's happening in most of this book? (p. 36)

Again, these questions are helpful to readers who need to determine their success with a particular book. By being taught how to use them,

students are able to monitor their own progress without the help of a teacher.

Choosing appropriate strategies to use when teaching children to self-select their own literature is essential to creating a positive reading environment. Teachers must recognize that each class of students will have differing literary needs. A combination of self-selection strategies will be necessary when attempting to create a self-selected reading environment.

Conclusion

Time spent reading, like time spent loving, increases our lifetime.
(Daniel Pennac, 1999, *Better Than Life*)

Most of us do not need scientific evidence to know that our lives would not be as fulfilling without love. Love brings meaning to our lives. Reading should also be a meaning making process. But, far too many times, reading is only presented to children as the sum of its parts - phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension - especially in light of the National Reading Panel report, the *Put Reading First* document, and national and state mandated testing that are currently driving reading instruction in the United States. Pavonetti, Brimmer, & Cipielewski (2002) remind us:

We must not be driven by promises of short-term gains. Forced by public opinion, principals, administrators, and teachers strive to achieve immediate results regardless of long-term consequences. All eyes are focused on year-by-year comparisons of nationally standardized or state-administered tests. Few stop to consider the effects of such testing on students' abilities....What will these students be like in 10 years? Will they be responsible employees who exhibit initiative? Will they be involved parents who read to their children at bedtime? Or will they be so "tested" that they will remove themselves from all contact with school, teachers, and even books? (p. 310)

An overemphasis on reading skills can lead to unengaged reading. "No immediate benefits and few lasting by-products can come from unengaged reading. If the reader is not involved with the text—not engaged in the information or the experience—the reading is empty and unproductive" (Darigan, Tunnel, & Jacobs, 2002, p. 6). Without reading engagement, children become unmotivated and uninterested in reading, resulting in children who can read, but choose not to.

The importance of student self-selected reading in reading engagement, motivation, and interest has been made clear through research. This research demonstrates that respecting students' literature choices:

- allows them to value their decision-making ability;
- fosters their capacity to choose appropriate literature;
- gives them confidence and a feeling of ownership;
- improves reading achievement, and most importantly;
- encourages them in becoming engaged readers.

In order for students to become life-long lovers of reading they must be fully engaged in it. Self-selection makes this possible by creating both a positive attitude toward reading and a greater proficiency when reading. This must be the goal for all readers.

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Appendix A

Internet Resources for Quality Children's Literature

Online Children's Literature Journals

- *The ALAN Review*
(<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ALAN/alan-review.html>)
- *Amazon.com* (<http://www.amazon.com>)
- *Booklist* (<http://www.ala.org/booklist/index.html>)
- *Horn Book* (<http://www.hbook.com>)
- *The Lion and the Unicorn*
(http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/lion_and_the_unicorn/index.html)
- *The New York Times Book Review* (requires registration)
(<http://www.nytimes.com/books/specials/children>)

Web Sites with Resources on Children's Book Awards

- *Children's Book Awards*
(<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/awards.html>)
- *The American Library Association's web site* hosts home pages for the Coretta Scott King Award, Pura Belpre Award, John Newbery Medal, and the Randolph Caldecott Medal
(<http://www.ala.org>)
- *National Book Award* (<http://www.nationalbook.org/>)

Internet websites devoted to children's literature

- *Children's Literature Web Guide*
(<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/>)
- *The Reading Zone of the Internet Public Library*
(<http://www.ipl.org/div/kidspace/browse/rzn0000/>)
- *Carol Hurst's Children's Literature Site*
(<http://www.carolhurst.com/>)
- *Child Lit. Site*
(<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~mjoseph/childlit/about.html>)
- *Kay E. Vandergrift's Special Interest Page*
(<http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/~kvander/>)

Appendix B

Sample Text Set: The Revolutionary War

Title	Author	Grade Level
<i>Sam the Minute Man</i>	Nathaniel Benchley	2 nd / 3 rd
<i>George, the Drummer Boy</i>	Nathaniel Benchley	2 nd / 3 rd
<i>The Hatmaker's Sign: A Story by Benjamin Franklin</i>	Benjamin Franklin and Candace Fleming	2 nd / 3 rd
<i>The 18 Penny Goose</i>	Sally M. Walker	2 nd / 3 rd
<i>Good Children Get Rewards: A Story of Williamsburg in Colonial Times</i>	Eva Moore	2 nd / 3 rd
<i>Revolutionary War on Wednesday</i>	Mary Pope Osborne	3 rd
<i>Hannah's Helping Hands</i>	Jean Van Leeuwen	3 rd
<i>Hannah of Fairfield</i>	Jean Van Leeuwen	3 rd / 4 th
<i>Hannah's Winter of Hope</i>	Jean Van Leeuwen	4 th
<i>Phoebe the Spy</i>	Judith Berry Griffin	4 th
<i>George Washington's Socks</i>	Elvira Woodruff	4 th
<i>Toliver's Secret</i>	Esther Wood-Brady	4 th
<i>The Secret Soldier: The Story of Deborah Sampson</i>	Ann McGovern	4 th
<i>Little Maid of Virginia</i>	Alice Turner Curtis	4 th
<i>The Fighting Ground</i>	Avi	5 th
<i>Molly Pitcher Young Patriot</i>	Augusta Stevenson	5 th
<i>The Arrow over the Door</i>	Joseph Bruchac	5 th / 6 th
<i>Sarah Bishop</i>	Scott O'Dell	6 th
<i>Early Thunder</i>	Jean Fritz	6 th
<i>My Brother Sam Is Dead</i>	James Lincoln Collier	6 th
<i>Cast Two Shadows: The American Revolution in the South</i>	Ann Rinaldi	6 th / 7 th