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Who's in charge here? Ownership issues with literature study guides

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a rationale and procedure for evaluating literature study guides based on Langer's model for literature study and Cambourne's conditions for learning. Guides for three books are then compared using the evaluation procedure. The evaluation of five publishers' guides shows great differences in treatments of the same books.

Open most of any professional journal related to literacy, and the ads for literature study guides jump off the pages. Perhaps these guides sell because they are of high quality. Or maybe the hectic pace of the elementary school leaves little time to come up with creative lessons on a day to day basis. Or perhaps the guides sell because administrators or teachers feel little confidence about teacher-developed literature-related lessons. Regarding the latter point, Scharer, et al. (1993) report that 45% of the teachers disagree with the statement that "I feel confident about teaching literature without benefit of a published program" — this in the State of Ohio which for over ten years has had an annual literature conference attended by over 2,000 educators and which has a State curriculum emphasizing the use of children's literature. If experienced teachers sometimes feel the need for the support of guides, such would certainly be expected of prospective teachers. In a book critical of basal readers, authors Crawford and Shannon (1994) cited prospective teachers. In a book critical of basal readers, authors Crawford and Shannon (1994) cited prospective teachers who, desiring "to develop a whole language curriculum," still found a teacher's manual to be helpful: "I want it there where I can get at it when I need it" (p. 15) and "I wouldn't mind having some support or resources for certain books" (p. 17). Even as teachers become increasingly proficient in the instruction of literature and as decreasing numbers of elementary classrooms rely solely on basal materials

(Goodman, 1994), history gives us little reason to suppose that the use of commercial guides will not continue.

Educators' positions on the very notion of purchasing guides will undoubtedly differ. Apple (1982), in introducing a notion of deskilling, noted problems when the planning is separated from the execution. Some literature study guides may be said to deskill teachers by providing decontextualized decisions, a concern voiced for basal manuals (Goodman, et al., 1988). Baumann (1992) makes a counter argument in which one of his conclusions is that there is no "simple cause and effect relationship between the materials of literacy instruction ... and teachers' freedom, or lack thereof, to direct literacy lessons." I believe it fair to say that the degree to which deskilling occurs varies by publisher and by user. Ideas published in commercial guides can be sparks just as can ideas from any other source. Educators tend to value ideas shared by teachers in professional conferences, books, and journals, yet we are more leery of ideas published in commercial guides, even though some of these may well be written by teachers. It seems to me that we all profit from idea sharing and that no blanket statement can be made for literature study guides as a whole.

A key question in evaluating these guides is ownership of the reading. Is the process owned by the author of the guide? Does it use the imperative, telling teachers not only what to do, but also what to say, as do many basal manuals (Crawford and Shannon, 1994)? Or does the guide suggest flexibility for the teacher? And what about study ownership of the reading experience?

When I was a reading supervisor for a large urban school district, I was frequently asked about the relative quality of literature study guides. It is in response to these queries that I wrote this article. I here outline and use an evaluation procedure for three titles: the chapter books Julian's Glorious Summer (Cameron, 1987) and Maniac Magee (Spinelli, 1990) and the picture book *The Legend of the Bluebonnet* (DePaola, 1983). In selecting titles common to more than one publisher, I was able to find no nonfiction titles. The titles selected do, however, represent varied difficulty levels, multiple cultures, and the genres of realistic fiction and legend. My evaluation procedure is based on two frameworks: Langer's (1990) model of literature study and Cambridge's (1988) conditions for learning. I critically evaluate both models as frameworks for literature study.

LANGER AND CAMBOURNE MODELS

In searching for models to evaluate literature study guides, several came to mind. Rosenblatt's (1938, 1968) transactional theory first brought into our vocabulary the terms "reader response" and "aesthetic" and "efferent" responses, and her work remains a cornerstone of literature study today. A person or aesthetic stance, while solidly grounded in the text itself (Rosenblatt, 1989), addresses responses such as, "I felt... when..." or "I had a similar experience when..." whereas an efferent stance focuses more on measuring comprehension of the text itself. Teachers are often encouraged to find opportunities to adopt an aesthetic stance which has been associated with an intense level of engagement.

A second possible lens for literature study is that of Moffett (1968), who focused on post-reading rhetorical tasks, e.g., different forms of written response. A third possible lens is that of psycholinguistics, the marriage of psychology and linguistics. Reading as a psycholinguistic behavior, a psycholinguistic guessing game (Goodman, 1970), goes beyond decoding and processing language to "interpreting the deep structure data relative to an individual's established objectives" (Ruddell, 1969, p. 61).

Langer (1990) went on to establish a literature study model which builds on all this prior work. Her model also takes us beyond concerns about poor practice in literary response. For example, Mehan (1979) found that, too often, story discussion consists of a repeated pattern of teacher questioning focused on a story detail, a brief student response, and then teacher evaluation. Similarly, Applebee (1989), after reviewing several studies on the topic, concluded that literature is often taught in an informative manner, as if there is one correct interpretation, and that, even when teachers indicate use of reader response approaches, they often move discussion quickly beyond any personal probes for motivation toward a quest for the "right" answer. Langer's four stances help guide literature study in broader directions:

- Being out and stepping in — Readers make initial contacts with the genre, content, structure, and language of the text by using prior knowledge and surface features to begin to build an envisionment or a fluid understanding about the text. Readers make initial acquaintance with the characters, plot, setting — and how they interrelate.
- Being in and moving through — Readers use both text and background knowledge to develop meaning and ask questions as they read.

- Being in and stepping out — Readers use their text knowledge to reflect on personal knowledge.
- Stepping out and objectifying the experience — Readers distance themselves from the text world. They objectify the text, judge it, and relate it to other texts or experiences.

Langer's model provides a framework which teachers can adopt for any piece of literature, whether they have a study guide or not. The model goes beyond typical directed reading lessons to make writing an integral part of the experience. The model is appealing in its student-centered focus. It is the readers who are to relate to text to personal knowledge, pose questions, build an envisionment. The flowing nature of the model keeps the reader focused on the literary experience. The communal nature of the process invites readers to join the literacy club (Smith, 1988). This is in contrast to study guides which fragment attention as they move from one activity to the next.

The second model which I chose to use is that of Cambourne's (1988) conditions for learning, conditions which he originally observed in homes of young children who were developing strong literacy skills. His conditions seem to apply to all learning, and I have seen them used effectively in many contexts, from handwriting to spelling to general language arts instruction. Applied to literature study, these would be:

- Immersion — Readers are immersed in the piece itself and in connection with other readings.
- Demonstration — Modeling occurs from teachers who demonstrate both aesthetic and analytic responses to the literature and from peers who engage in literary conversations.
- Engagement — Readers see themselves as performers of literacy tasks, e.g., making predictions, relating the literature to their own writing.
- Expectation — Readers are expected to respond both aesthetically and efferently through written and oral conversations.
- Responsibility — Readers are responsible for doing much of the question-asking, the envisionment building, the bringing in of prior knowledge and experiences.
- Approximation — Readers are allowed the freedom to approximate without anxiety, e.g., in decoding and in modeling their writing after that of the author.
- Use — Readers engage in tasks with authentic purposes and audiences.

- Response — The teacher responds orally and in writing, e.g., serving in a facilitative role with literary conversations.

I find particularly appealing the authenticity of purpose, activities, and audience inherent in Cambourne's model. Literary conversations in the classroom emulate those used by adult readers. As with Langer, the model is student-centered, yet with a strong component of teacher facilitation through demonstration and through the scaffolding in approximations. And Cambourne's lens places literature study in the context of conditions which apply to all learning. His model is based on careful research and has proven to be robust over time.

EVALUATION PROCEDURE

The literature guide evaluation procedure makes use of a four-step model for comparing textbooks (Muther, 1988; Radencich, 1995): a) conduct needs assessment; b) become familiar with the research; c) define the idea; and d) conduct the review and make the decision. The procedure is lengthy but can be shortened by reducing the ideal to a few critical elements. The time spent serves not only for evaluation but also as an opportunity for professional growth. This procedure should help both educators who are selecting and modifying study guides or using a study guide as a model for teaching other titles, and publishers of guides looking to improve their products. Following is a summary of the procedure:

1. Conduct Needs Assessment — A needs assessment relates to questions such as: Are the teachers and students experienced in literature study? Is there a desired guide length-tight and well-focused OR longer and full of creative ideas? What components are needed for the teacher and for the students?
2. Become Familiar with the Research — Knowledge of what to look for should precede the examination of the materials.
3. Define the Ideal — Identifying an ideal before examining materials will result in a focused examination helping to bring consensus of any involved educators and avoid selection of materials merely based on attractive packaging or "cute" ideas.
4. Conduct Review and Make Decision — Avoid a "flip test" and allow time to conduct the review. Consider the range of titles available through a publisher. Locate guides for the same title(s) from different publishers; comparing guides for

the same title results in a much clearer comparison than is possible otherwise. Rate each guide as per your ideal (See Table 1). If not already part of your ideal, consider also the teacher- and student-friendliness of the materials' design.

The review process can be fascinating. Finding out that different guides for the same book select different vocabulary words or highlight different elements of authors' craft helps lead to an understanding that guides are not etched in stone but are simply one source of ideas. This experience can help free teachers to see their own ideas as equally or more worthy.

Table 1.

Evaluation Form for Literature Study Guides

	Desired	Publisher 1	Publisher 2	Publisher 3
Length				
Components	1. 2. 3.			
Design	1. 2.			
Langer Stances				
Cambourne Conditions for Learning				

Note.

Considerations for Desired Elements

Length — Short, tight, and well-focused? Long, with many creative ideas from which a teacher might choose?

Components — Suggested pacing? Suggested classroom organization? A detailed summary? Graphic organizers? Interdisciplinary connections? Information about the author/illustrator? Lists of supplementary sources? Parent component? Assessment options? Suggestions for special needs students?

Design — Logical progression? Format which is appealing and user-friendly?

Langer Stances — The feel of a process through the stances?

- Being out and stepping in — Invitations to make initial contacts with the genre, content, structure, and language of the text? To use prior knowledge and surface features to begin to build an envisionment of a fluid

understanding about the text? To make initial acquaintance with the characters, plot, setting — and how they interrelate?

- Being in and moving through — Invitations to use both text knowledge and background knowledge to develop meaning and ask questions during the reading?
- Being out and stepping out — Invitations to use text knowledge to reflect on personal knowledge?
- Stepping out and objectifying the experience — Invitations to readers to distance themselves from the text world — to objectify the text, judge it, and relate it to other texts or experiences?

Cambourne Conditions for Learning — Immersion? Demonstration? Engagement? Expectation? Responsibility? Approximation? Use? Response?

Evaluation of Innovations (Scholastic, Novel Ties (Learning Links), Novel Units, Passports (Harcourt Brace), and Theme Connections (Perfection Learning)

I used the evaluation procedure to examine Julian's Glorious Summer as developed in Learning Links Novel Ties and Harcourt Brace's Passports; The Legend of the Bluebonnet as developed in Novel Units and Innovations; and Maniac Magee as developed in Innovations, Novel Units, and Theme Connections. The Passports guide is part of a "problem solvers" theme, but is also available separately. Passports also has a teacher's handbook for the program as a whole which was not included in this evaluation.

Three comments will clarify my decision-making. First, I left out the needs assessment portion of the procedure because there was no one setting for which my evaluation was to apply. Second, I felt that the amount of detail in my parallel evaluations of guides for the same selection could be cumbersome to readers, and so have chosen to simply summarize findings for each series rather than show the details comparing each part of each model for each selection reviewed. Third, to generalize with some degree of security beyond a guide to the series of which it is a part, I went beyond the basic procedure and carefully compared at least two guides for each publisher. I found formats to be quite consistent within each series.

The sequence for the evaluation is: a) presentation and organization; b) congruence with each model, and c) conclusions. Congruence with each model as a whole and with its components is evaluated for each guide with a X if there is some congruence, or a X+ or X- respectively if the congruence is better than average or not in evidence.

PRESENTATION AND ORGANIZATION

Presentation and user-friendliness can, of course, “sell” a product. Thus, my evaluation begins here. One aspect of presentation can be of special concern, and that is the excessive length of some guides. As Edelsky (1994) notes in complaining about 32 pages of activities for a basal story of 20 sentences, “It practically screams the message: The stories don’t count” (p. 31). Following is a sketch of each series’ page length, appearance, and organization:

1. Page length, Innovations, 24; Novel Ties, 22-31; Novel Units, 33-36 + 45-page packet of ditto masters for some titles; Passports, 24; Theme Connections, 9 + 27 pages of theme connections.
2. Appearance, Passports, and Theme Connections have sophisticated design and color. The other three guides have black-and-white presentations.
3. Organization.
 1. Innovations is user friendly with a Table of Contents, brief overview chart of skills/strategies and literary concepts, brief management system of grouping options, use of oversized section titles, thorough book summary, bibliography, and sections about the genre and the author and illustrator. Instructional sections for picture books are: before reading, read-aloud, during reading, and after reading. Chapter book support is organized in groups of two or three chapters, with each set accompanied by a synopsis of the chapters, a three to four page spread with instructional suggestions, and clear sections for before, during, and after reading. The guides include a sign-up sheet on which students record their progress on a selected activity. The guides end with a five-page Model for Writing and three to four duplicating masters with writing prompts.
 2. Novel Ties includes a story synopsis, related bibliographies, and a For the Teacher page with suggestions for pacing (three to six weeks), grouping, and general organization for instruction of all Novel Ties packets. The study of the book is divided into eight or nine sections, with two to three pages of suggestions for each. The

guides suggest activities to return to, but with no later reminder.

3. Novel Units provides no Table of Contents. It begins with a brief summary followed by a series of initiating activities. Some guides provide information about the author. Chapter books are addressed one chapter at a time with a few discussion questions and sometimes vocabulary and two or three supplementary activities. I was able to discern no organizational pattern for guides to picture books. In many instances, activities are presented which teachers are asked to return to, e.g., a prediction chart, a story map, an Anticipation Guide, other charts, and the “what ifs” after each chapter with no later reminder or, if there is a reminder, no teacher’s guide page number for reference.
4. Passports has multiple aids: a Table of Contents, story synopsis, related bibliographies with short annotations and labeling of book difficulty, an Options for Reading page with grouping suggestions, author and illustrator information, a chart of the guide’s skills and mini-lessons, sidebars for teachers (e.g., on theme connections, a piece of art, use of literature journals, connections to a teacher’s handbook, and suggested mini-lesson), sidebars for students (e.g., “just for fun” suggestions and a “sum it up” activity), and family project page. As with the previous two guides, teachers are invited to return to activities at a later time, but no later reminder is provided. Novel study is divided into four sections, with a two-page spread for each, the left for the teacher and a parallel right page for students. This same two-page format is used after the section studies, for a Writer’s Workshop, a Language Arts Workshop, and Cross-Curricular Projects, the latter with a four-page spread. Clear sections for “before,” “during,” and “after” reading are positioned similarly on each spread. Throughout the teacher pages are one idea each for four special populations — all listed in the Table of Contents. Placement of these ideas was apparently contingent on space availability — a tradeoff in a short guide with a clear teacher side/student side format.
5. Theme Connections is a teacher-friendly packet of manageable length consisting of a folder with laminated cards

and a soft-cover guide. It begins with five pages on teaching with Theme Connections and three pages of introduction to the theme before going into support for each of the three theme novels. Each book is treated as a whole rather than in chapter groupings. Included are interview conference questions, activity evaluation forms, and anecdotal record forms for use in ongoing assessment, as well as an annotated list of additional suggested books, magazine articles, software, and videos.

LANGER COMPARISON

Just as there was much variety in the presentation and organization of the guides, so too do the guides differ in their match with the four stances of the Langer model of literature study (see Figure 2). Picture the difference between studying the Newbery-award winning Maniac Magee, a present-day tall tale, with Theme Connections and in Novel Units. In the former, there is a definite flow and authentic purpose as readers a) step in after the first two pages by examining mood with consideration for the genre, the setting, the time period, and the author's style, b) move through the text completing a mood chart and analyzing the effect Spinelli's writing style has on their mood as they read, and c) step out and decide on a mood to use when writing their next story. On the other hand, in Novel Units the presentation is disjointed. Activity suggestions for stepping into the text are: read and discuss the elements of a myth, folk tale, or legend; make up some tall tales after reading an example; start the book on April Fools Day; discuss the meaning of "maniac" and generate ideas about a book entitled Maniac Magee and read the Before the Story section, focusing on the word "legacy." Only if this latter suggestion is followed is there any flow thereafter; the guide does provide later suggestions for building on the concept of a legacy. Langer's model is very much in evidence in the former guide but not in the latter.

There are some definite strengths in some study guide presentations, particularly in the student ownership of the process encouraged by Innovations, Passports, and Theme Connections. All three guides expected a) that students should engage in grand conversations (Peterson and Fields, 1990) about their reading, e.g., really take charge of discussion as would occur in a book club (Raphael et al., 1992), and b) that students should ask questions of their own volition, a strategy which is central to current understanding of research and practice in literature. It

is of interest to note that those series which lacked these expectations at the intermediate level continued similarly with study guides for the middle grades (Radencich, in press). Each series is now evaluated in turn.

Innovations engages readers when they are Out and Stepping In through means such as predictions, genre study, and background building. It provides a smooth flow in the Moving Through stance and invites personal response as readers Step Out. The flow is lost somewhat with the multiple post-reading options, but some reading and writing options do allow readers to Step Out and Objectify the Experience, judging the text and relating it to other texts and experiences. Overall, Innovations meets both the letter of the law and the soul of Langer's model, the fluid understanding of the text, with a model teachers can follow in teaching other pieces of literature.

Novel Ties is a poorer match to Langer's model. It begins with no clear focus; teachers are encouraged to use several of the Stepping In activities. Activities are often those of traditional workbooks. Readers are invited to use text knowledge to reflect on personal knowledge while In and Stepping Out. But the guide ends with no invitations to judge the text or to relate the book to other texts and experiences. It could do more to help users move through the stances and relate to the work as a whole. Even when a particular theme is addressed periodically, each activity stands alone, with little attempt at cohesion.

Novel Units has ways of engaging readers when they Step In, but, as noted earlier, most of these have no follow-through. As in Novel Ties, a theme is sometimes addressed periodically, but with no explicit tie-ins and no attempt at cohesion. In a guide with a small number of activities, a teacher would see the connections without explicit linkage, but this is a guide with a lengthy and unfocused list of suggestions to wade through. Edelsky's (1994) metaphor of "exercise wolves dressed in 'literature-based' and 'process writing' sheepskins" (p. 21) comes to mind here. One further problem is inclusion of activities which I have to assume are untested in classrooms such as poorly designed graphic organizers and vocabulary lists and activities which seem to be inordinately difficult for the designated grade levels.

In Passports, the "before" and "after" reading sections for each set of chapters provide some continuity to the reading process, but the guide is, overall, not a close fit to the Langer model. The Being Out and Stepping In stance could be stronger by inviting personal connections. Readers are not invited to use personal experiences here nor are they encouraged to use text knowledge to reflect on personal knowledge. Readers do objectify the text by engaging in cross-curricular connections, but

they are not invited to judge the text. Aside from needing greater fluidity through the stances and personal connections to the work as a whole, *Passports* could also make a more explicit connection to the theme of which each book is a part.

Theme Connections. Engaging ways are provided for readers to step in to the text through study of areas such as genre, story elements, and author's craft. The movement through Langer's stances is fluid, with during- and after-reading suggestions for reading and writing activities building on those used for prereading. Questions, some of which relate to personal experience, are posed for journal writing and discussion. Students are also expected to raise questions on their own and to self-evaluate how their ideas about the theme changed during the reading.

CAMBOURNE COMPARISON

All four guides provide ways into the books which are likely to engage students. Beyond this similarity, however, treatments again show considerable differences (see Figure 2). In Cambourne's framework the lack of literature circles and of student inquiry again play a role, this time with lost opportunity for authentic language use. Following are comparative examples of suggestions which do and do not fit the model. I question whether immersion, engagement, or use are likely when there is no real audience as with *Novel Ties*' suggestion that students write a letter to the author of *Julian's Glorious Summer* about a specifically provided topic when no author address is provided, or with *Passports*' suggestion that students create greeting cards from one character to another. Perhaps one can expect more immersion, engagement, and use with *Innovations*' personalized suggestion that students follow the reading of *The Legend of the Bluebonnet*, a Native American legend about the origin of the bluebonnet flower, with learning about the flower of the student's state or learning about Native Americans from the local area. Users will decide. My evaluation of each guide's match to Cambourne's model follows.

Innovations. Options are provided throughout the guide, giving a flavor of respect for teacher and students alike. The guide uses all of Cambourne's conditions for learning. Because of its careful attention to writing process, the conditions of use and engagement are particularly well represented. Immersion, responsibility, and expectation are evident as students sign up for one of four suggested reading activities, select their prewriting strategy, participate in peer conferences, choose when to

share drafts, and identify audiences. Authentic use appears not only in writing, but also in oral language and in reading. Demonstration is in evidence when story situations are used to help students understand similar situations in their own lives. Demonstration and approximation occur when students use the reading as a model for their own writing. Response is specifically built into each stage of the writing process including the use of peer and teacher columns on an editing checklist. Response is also built into the reading at times, with discussion of student responses.

Novel Ties. This guide begins with ideas which are likely to engage students as long as teachers select among them and not try to use them all. Engagement is not likely to follow with Novel Ties' basal-like activities, but may well occur at times, with varied vocabulary activities including student guessing of meanings and then checking these guesses; attempts to make the learning pertinent to students, e.g., with the comparison of a flashback in the book to flashbacks in other media; and personal response writing prompts. Novel Ties places little responsibility on the student. Language use is always in response to prompts and questions and never with process writing. The highlighting of author's craft several times in Novel Ties would be an ideal place for the conditions of demonstration and approximation, but little is done with students using the models in their own writing. The final condition of response is not addressed but could have occurred naturally with a return to the prediction statement for each chapter.

Novel Units. As was the case for Langer's model, Cambourne's conditions are poorly represented in Novel Units. Some, but not all, of the suggested activities may engage students, but engagement is likely to suffer when the basic role is one of passively acting as recipients of analytic questions and activities doled out by the teacher. Again, although there are group projects, there is no clear expectation for grand conversations or for other types of response. Approximation and use are two conditions which are represented. Students are invited to examine the author's writing as a model (approximation) for their own writing.

Passports. This guide promotes engagement through cooperative and paired activities, role play, debate, and art activities. It encourages immersion in literature with suggested related readings. Although the guide is generally teacher directed, there is sometimes the expectation that students be made responsible for making choices when a) they select roles in cooperative groups; b) they participate in the Writer's and Language Arts Workshops (within the parameters of the assigned tasks); and c) (only) the gifted and talented students are challenged to write with

some self-selection allowed. Three conditions little utilized are approximation, demonstration, and use. There are no demonstrations through think-alouds and no suggestions that students take advantage of demonstrations of the author's craft to use in their own writing. There are no authentic audiences for student writing, except for the suggestions that speeches be delivered for classmates and that story sequels be read to or by others. The final condition of response does not occur with any clear suggestions for teacher response, but Passports does invite readers to tell their families about the story and to have peers respond during writer's workshop. The guide misses what could be excellent opportunities for implementing the conditions for learning. Response could occur with the class developing evaluation criteria for the student-written speeches and then using these criteria as the speeches are delivered in character roles. Approximation could occur with directions to follow the author's development of character in their writing of these speeches and of a story sequel.

Theme Connections. As with Langer's model, Cambourne's conditions for learning are represented well in Theme Connections. Students may become immersed not only with the theme structure, but also with an annotated list of additional print and technology resources. Engagement permeates the guide's philosophy. Students are empowered to take charge of some of their learning. They think of themselves as authors and work with partners in decision making. It is suggested that students might choose which book to read, select a strategy(ies), bring materials for the theme center, engage in an inquiry process and choose the materials they need to research their questions, select words which they find interesting or unfamiliar, decide how they will communicate to others what they have learned, assess themselves, and develop criteria for quality work. Expectations are high throughout this guide. Student serve as facilitators for book talk sessions, mark off completed stages in their inquiry process, and respond in interview conferences to questions about their learning process and goals. Student responsibility is concomitantly high. Students are encouraged to use vocabulary they have selected in their speaking and writing. They are responsible for quality responses in their journals, active participation in theme and book discussions, maintaining a bookmark checklist of active reading strategies used, keeping products for portfolios, and monitoring successes.

Demonstration is not provided for most of the activities, but the teacher does participate in a book talk and does use the author's craft as a model which students can approximate in their own writing. Authentic use is represented through suggestions that students attend to specific

aspects of oral language in their surroundings, consider their audience when making decisions about sharing the results of their inquiry research, create products for audiences beyond the school, and share writing and other projects with the class for varied purposes. Cambourne's final condition is response. This guide not only suggests that teachers, along with students, be a part of ongoing assessment, but also provides tools for use in this process.

CONCLUSION

My title for this article questioned ownership: "Who's in Charge Here? Ownership Issues with Literature Study Guides." Are publishers in charge when they produce literature study guides? Only, of course, if teachers allow them to take on this role. According to Venezky (1987), early basal publishers worried that teachers would reject the few suggestions they provided because of their intrusion into teachers' responsibilities. We have moved from that stance to a world which, from one point of view, offers reading as a thing to sell, a commodification of reading instruction (Goodman, et al., 1988). Yet from another point of view (Allington, 1993), the market research which guides publishers to produce teachers' guides is research which is attentive to teachers' requests and thus merits attention.

The guides reviewed here differ markedly in their match to the Langer and Cambourne models and in the degree to which they encourage ownership of the reading by teachers and students. Overall, such ownership was granted most often with Innovations and Theme Connections. A most appealing aspect of Innovations is the rationale given teachers for each instructional suggestion. The rationales are professional in tone and not patronizing. A particularly strong point for Theme Connections is the fact that it is almost a mini-textbook for teachers. Teachers not familiar with, e.g., the inquiry process behind this guide would learn much that they would be able to transfer to future literature study.

Passports provided ownership in areas such as grand conversations and study inquiry. Yet it had activities which were sometimes disjointed and thus unlikely to engage readers in wanting to make use of these opportunities. The guides which provided the least amount of teacher and student ownership were Novel Ties and Novel Units. The latter might improve its fragmentation by addressing groups of chapters at a time and its organization by listing in one place options for ongoing activities to allow for easy evaluation and selection.

Novel Ties and Passports might better serve a teacher experienced in teaching literature than a novice. Both, but especially Novel Ties, present more ideas than can be developed in full in a guide of reasonable length. Thus, a teacher new to teaching literature may well not take maximum advantage of these ideas. Durkin's (1979) cautions come to mind. Just as "mentioning" did not constitute learning for children, mentioning may often be insufficient for teachers as well. However, a teacher experienced with teaching literature might expand on given ideas. I would recommend that users make a "less is more" approach, with fewer activities which are well developed and which tie together for a unified whole. Supplementary activities could then be listed more briefly. Passports approaches such a plan, with concise "before reading" and "after reading" sections for each chapter set, "alternative" activities throughout the guide, and Writers' and Language Arts Workshops at the end of the guide, but without a cohesive linking of the before- and after-reading sections.

Do the guides basalize the literature? On a holistic level, they did tend to be teacher-dominated, as one would find in many basal manuals. And critics would argue that the literature study guides replicate what basals do with three-art lesson plans (Goodman, 1994), phony lesson plans and phony projects (Edelsky, 1994), and pushing students through a linear writing process (Maras, 1994). Indeed, an argument can be made that real literature provides sufficient material and of itself (Fox, 1994), and that our money should be spent only on "real books written for children" (p. 141). I am less critical perhaps, glad to see guides with expectations for grand conversations and for student inquiry, glad to see some examples of the fluidity expected with Langer's model of literary study and of Cambourne's conditions for learning. On a more atomistic level, there are several problems often found with basal study which warrant a look here.

1. Excessive amounts of passive ditto masters? Novel Ties and Novel Units are completely reproducible, but most Novel Units pages are intended for the teacher. Innovations and Passports had few reproducible pages. Instead of reproducible pages, Theme Connections provided a few laminated cards on which students might write.
2. Slow pacing with excessive time spent on vocabulary words, low level questions, and questionable activities? This was a problem only for Novel Units.
3. Fragmentation of a book into too many parts? This was a problem only for Novel Ties.

Despite shortcomings, each guide had creative ideas which could be selected by the discerning teacher.

To what degree the guides should resemble basals really goes back to the needs assessment and the definition of the local ideal. The desired length of a guide and the necessary components are largely contingent on the level of teacher and student experience with literature study. Some scaffolding may be necessary for teachers used to a high degree of structure.

SUMMARY

Literature study in the elementary school has come a long way in the last two decades. Prior to the work of pioneers such as Goodman and Rosenblatt, we were not talking about the reader's objectives or reader response, much less literature circles or grand conversations. In this article I began with some of this history in establishing a framework for an evaluation procedure for literature study guides. I then established what would be, for me, an ideal guide, one based on Langer and Cambourne models. Finally, I used the evaluation procedure to compare literature study guides for three selections.

Any procedure for materials evaluation must recognize that it is the teacher and the classroom context which are primarily responsible for quality instruction. Nonetheless, reliance by busy teachers on commercial guides warrants an examination of the contents of these materials. I hope that the procedure outlined here can be used or adapted to help educators with their evaluations and help publishers as they produce new generations of teacher support materials.

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