

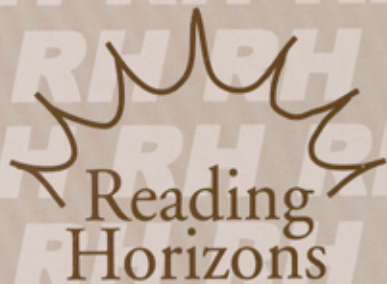


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Reading Horizons

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FAB:ulous! Family Literacy Nights: Learning to Listen to Families

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This article describes our implementation of a program aimed at supporting families' literacy through books and strategies and through capitalizing on what the families know and care about. We held several Family Literacy Nights in which we planned activities, workshops, and book give-aways around families' interests, discerned during the first event. We struggled with simultaneously accomplishing our goals and those that reflected the families. In this article we share our successes as well as the lessons we learned about how to do this work.

ONE EVENING IN SPRING, more than 100 families gathered at an urban elementary school to hear, read, and write poetry together. From a topic selected by many of the families, the project organizers decided to use the genre to connect more deeply with families around reading and writing. This was not hard to do. After many readings of poetry of all sorts and a short lesson on some attributes of poetry, the families set out to create their own poem to be hung on the school wall. More than 200 voices could be heard murmuring in the large recreation room—in English, Spanish, Dinka, Urdu, Chinese, Japanese, and more. By the end of the evening, children and their parents or guardians proudly mounted their poems to be displayed on the school walls for weeks to come.

What gets families to come to school and participate in literacy activities? How can schools reach out to families in a variety of ways? How can families and schools work together for higher student achievement? As university professors interested in literacy and home-school relationships, we used these questions to guide us in implementing a program in an urban elementary school that brought children, teachers, and families together around books.

Our inspiration for the project began when we received a grant from the state's attorney general's office to implement a reading program in an urban school. One of us wrote a proposal that included families for the purposes of sustaining literacy activity after the project was over. We knew that the best projects were those with staying power, and that involving families in schools and academics is critical for sustaining literacy (Epstein, Salina, Sanders, & Simon, 1997).

We shared our idea of hosting several family literacy events with the principal and teachers of an urban elementary school with whom we had previously worked. This project became a collaborative university-school project in which teachers took leadership roles in planning and hosting events, while the university researchers provided grant support, guidance in book selection, assistance during each of the events, and taught during events as well. We called the project FAB:ulous! The acronym stands for "Families And Books: Using Literacy Opportunities to Unleash Success!"

Our goals for the project were two-fold: to build on families' knowledge and interests (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992; Tharp, Estrada, Dalton, & Yamauchi, 2000) and to teach specific ways families can assist their children with literacy. The goals were sometimes difficult to accomplish simultaneously. This article is the story of the benefits for families and teachers in our project as well as lessons we learned about doing this kind of work.

The School and Community

The elementary school served 600 students, some of the poorest children in our large urban school district, with 97 percent of the students participating in the free or reduced breakfast and lunch programs. The student body consisted of about 50 percent African American students and 50 percent other, with approximately 10 percent of the student body speaking English as a second language.

We found particular interest in this school because of the diverse population and its strong leadership and commitment to the community. The principal had worked at this school for over 20 years. She demonstrates her commitment to the families in a myriad of ways. Besides greeting each student every morning, she stays late to support ongoing evening community programs held at the school. Because she knows each child by name, she writes comments on each student's report card and provides post cards for the teachers to send to their students before school starts to welcome them to the new school year. In addition, the principal emphasizes the importance of knowing the school's families. For instance, she has taken her faculty on walking tours of the surrounding community.

The local housing in the community consists primarily of small, wood-frame, single-family homes and two large subsidized housing complexes. The school is situated in a high crime area. A number of assistance programs located in and around the school support families in poverty and/or crisis. While some of the students are bused to the school, most students come from this surrounding community. Many of the participants walked to the evening gatherings.

Our Perspective

As university professors, we have long recognized the value of family involvement (Epstein, et. al, 1997; McIntyre, Kyle, Moore, Sweazy, & Greer, 2001; McCarthy, 2000). But our most recent focus has been to work with families in creative ways as a means of raising student school achievement (Kyle, McIntyre, Miller, & Moore, 2002; McIntyre, Rosebery, & González, 2001). Traditional views of family involvement seek to change families or to teach families that which they lack or what others assume they lack. We knew that getting poor and working class families to do what schools wanted them to do has not necessarily affected achievement. We also knew that "one-shot" parent involvement interventions have not worked to build either positive home-school relationships or increase student achievement. We did not want a "drop your kids off" program either.

Further, we view literacy broadly, and we wanted the project to reflect these views. Literacy includes reading as a necessary component, but also focuses more broadly not only on the act of reading, but on the beliefs, attitudes, and social practices in which literate individuals and social groups engage in a variety of settings and situations, including those involving technology (Pearson & Raphael, 1999). Literacy involves knowledge of the underlying discourses in a group (Gee, 1990); that is, the values, viewpoints, "funds of knowledge" (Velez-Ibanez & Greenburg, 1992), and language patterns established by members of that discourse group. In addition, we recognize the difference between *school* literacy and *community* literacy (Bloome et al., 2000). Rueda and McIntyre (2002) explain:

School literacy, or what we call 'reading' is characterized by practices we see in school—reading as an assignment, completing homework; drilling and practicing with print to 'get better' at it. This is in contrast to community literacy which includes practices that serve a community function—to find something out (what happened to the fired police chief), for entertainment (to find out when the game is on), to run the family more efficiently (writing grocery lists), and so

on. As we become literate, we learn the discourses underlying the literacy we are engaged in learning (or acquiring). Again, these discourses have to do with language patterns and internally accepted meanings and ways of behaving (p. 192).

With these views, we knew we wanted the evening events to build on the families' literacy. We knew that we must have families engaging in both school and community literacy activities. We decided we would interview groups of parents about their interests, funds of knowledge, and ideas for future FAB:ulous! programs.

We also knew we wanted to spend the majority of the grant funds on books—highly recommended, culturally appropriate books for the population of students in the school. With backgrounds in elementary literacy and social studies, we knew many culturally appropriate books for the diverse cultural backgrounds of the families at the school. We also knew effective ways of supporting children's reading and writing. With this knowledge we decided to host evening literacy-focused events seven or eight times each academic year for two years. We decided to provide a light meal because the events would occur at the dinner hour, have activities for children and workshops for parents and guardians, and give away a book to each child at the end of each evening.

We had several committed teachers who worked, not only to organize the events, but also to help bridge the work at school with the work at these family events in order to capitalize on instructional strategies (or school literacy). We had solid goals, but they were not always easy to put into action. At issue was *how* we would work on our goals for literacy and engage family knowledge simultaneously. We discovered that we needed to listen and observe the families carefully at the beginning in order to be sure their needs were being met.

Getting Started

We met with a faculty advisory board at the school in the spring of the preceding year to plan the program. In the fall we met with all the teachers in the school to explain the program and our theory of literacy

instruction and family involvement, and to ask for volunteers to work on the program. Then we made the organizational plans for the first night, which was focused on "Sports," as recommended by the teachers. We ordered food, bought materials, selected and ordered sports books and magazines for give-aways, and hired childcare workers. The teachers prepared for their roles as group leaders who would hold interviews with the adults to discern family knowledge and interests.

Family Knowledge and Information

On the very first FAB:ulous! night program, after dinner, we separated the children for activities while we met with the adults. We held small group sessions, led by several classroom teachers and ourselves. We hoped that in the small group format we could elicit information from parents and guardians to use in planning subsequent sessions. We wanted to find out about families' interests, funds of knowledge, dispositions (especially regarding literacy), and educational goals. We also wanted to know about the adults' concerns for helping their children as readers and writers and any assistance the adults may want in meeting their goals. We took notes as the adults talked and provided response sheets for those who preferred to write their responses. We found out more about the children than about the adults and more about interests (i.e., children's activities, book preferences, interests, experiences, knowledge, and writing at home, and adults' concerns about helping with literacy) than funds of knowledge. The list below shares our findings from interviews with adults:

- Children's activities. The adults identified a wide range of activities that their children enjoyed. However, sports, games, and "play" were among the most frequently mentioned. Play was often described as dress up, action figures, socializing and many included visual entertainment (popular culture and media) as a primary source of entertainment as well, such as TV, movies, music, video games, and the like.
- Children's book preferences. The adults mentioned many categories of topics of books that their children enjoyed, often reflecting the children's activities. Sports, animals, fairy tales,

poetry, science, mysteries, and those of popular culture (Snoop Doggy Dog, Pokémon, Barbie, Disney Channel, Animorphs). In identifying children's favorite books, the parents provided more specific titles for fiction than for nonfiction. These were well-known, easily available books such as Dr. Seuss, Disney, Berenstain Bear books, Arthur, Clifford, Franklin, RugRats. For nonfiction, they listed topics (e.g., how-to books, science/chemistry experiments, army, dinosaurs) rather than titles.

- Children's interests. The adults listed a wide range of interests for their children as well. However, unlike those listed for reading preferences, this list represented more topics that would likely be in a school curriculum, such as the human body, science, solar system, math, astronauts, computer, different cultures, cursive handwriting, foreign languages, animals, and nature. Many said their children wanted to know more about people of the past than those of the present. (However, Michael Jordan and Ricky Martin did make several lists!) Some adults also indicated that their children wanted to know more about their own family members, especially grandparents.
- Children's knowledge. When asked about what topics their children know, the adults generated a list that reflected their activities: video games, Pokemon, cartoons, movies, sports (pro wrestling, car racing, football, and fishing), religion (church, Jesus), current social trends (fads and fashions, slang, music, haircuts) and other topics such as carpentry, girls, trucks, horses, snakes, and chores. Five responses reflected topics typical of a school curriculum: math, computers, dinosaurs, science (plants and the solar system).
- Children's writing at home. From the responses of parents, it seems like children's writing at home was mostly functional: letters to family, thank you cards, lists, phone numbers, and even several "running away from home" letters. Some family members mentioned creative writing (poems, portraits, music, journals, doodling), and a few mentioned school-related writing

such as homework, definitions, spelling words, etc. This is similar to the types of writing in middle class homes (Taylor, 1985) and to the scope of writing in similar working class homes (Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988; Teale, 1986).

- Concerns about helping with literacy. Parents had a variety of concerns with regard to helping their children achieve as readers and writers. Some were general such as how to help improve study habits or how to help with reading skills (phonics and comprehension). Other comments were very specific: Do you review? How do you review? How important is spelling? Most often parents or guardians asked questions about how to help children with the processes of reading and writing (rather than merely on the mechanics). For example, several asked how they could help their children enjoy reading more and how to help with focus and expression. A few asked about how to help with handwriting or grammatical skills.

These summaries served as our plans for the year's schedule.

The interests and knowledge were rich and varied, in contrast to often-perceived notions of what families of poverty know (Kyle, McIntyre, Miller, & Moore, 2002). Indeed, this highly multicultural group of families knew so much about the world including its geography and culture, that we decided to plan one evening that focused on "Around the World." Many of the African American families expressed an in-depth interest and understanding of African and African-American history. From this, we planned an event focused on leaders and significant historical figures, with an emphasis on people of color. The children's interests proved typical of today's media-saturated youth (TV, videogames, computers), but were academic (science, poetry) as well. We wanted the evenings to reflect as many of the common interests as possible.

After the first night, we examined the data from the families and made plans. During the next year, we focused the literacy nights on topics that emerged from the interviews and taught strategies based on

what the families wanted and what we believed they might need. Our schedule looked like this:

<u>Topics</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Sports	Group interviews of adults on knowledge and interests
Around the World (Multi-cultural)	Ten Ways to Increase Reading in Your Home
Animals	Helping Your Child With Reading
Science	Helping Your Child With Writing
People Who Made a Difference (Biographies)	How to Select a Book for Your Child
Dr. Seuss	Reading and Writing Bingo Game
Poetry	Writing Family Poetry
Writing	Written Conversation

In each of the sessions, we provided handouts for the parents to take home. We tried to keep the handouts simple and handy for regular use. For example, the evening we taught "How To Help Your Child During Reading," we provided prompts for parents when they listen to their child reading and hear the child pause at an unknown word. Prompts were written on a bookmark, and the bookmarks laminated. We taught the parents how to use them, had them practice them with the children during the family literacy evening, and allowed them to take as many bookmarks as they thought they might need. The bookmark looked like this:

Help With Words

Does that make sense?

Does that sound like language in a book?

Read it again, a bit faster.

Read it again, slower this time.

Look at the picture.

What is a better way to say that word?

Try skipping the word for now and read to the end of the sentence.

Can you make a guess?

Can you cover up part of the word?

Find the little word in the big word.

Can you sound it out?

Look at the vowel sound.

Say every sound in the word.

Go on and read.

Listening to the Families

While gaining the interview information from the families was essential, we soon learned from the next two sessions that the families wanted to spend these evenings *together*. In our attempt to provide for each group, we had separated the adults and children. We planned fun events for the children while we “taught” the parents lessons that extended from their interests in literacy strategies from our initial group interviews. The adults were pleasant and cooperative, but not always enthusiastic. When we asked adults for feedback at the end of the sessions during the first three events, several said they enjoyed the activities. However, many were more specific about needs and desires:

“More hands-on activities.”

“More on how to motivate reluctant readers.”

“More help when a child doesn’t know a word.”

“Would like to work with my child when I am here.”

“Keep us with our children.”

“I would like to pick the book *with* my child.”

This sample of responses reflected what the parents and guardians wanted. They wanted to *live* the literacy experiences and do it *with their children* that evening, not after they got home or later in the week. Indeed, upon reflection, our presentations on "How to Read to Your Child" and so on looked more "sit and get" than hands-on (and we knew better). Early on, we did not have parents actually learning the strategies alongside their children. Thanks to the families, we could see that our events were at cross-purposes to what we wanted to do. We know that historically African American and Hispanic families are very family-oriented communities (Edwards, 1993; Valdes, 1996). We soon became more responsive to the families and we moved to more of a workshop approach with families and children working together, making games, making books, writing poetry, and writing conversations.

On one particularly successful night, we showed the parents and children a model of how to write a poem, and they wrote together. They then mounted their products on attractive paper and hung them in the school building. We heard many proud comments from the adults as they gazed at their work on the wall. One of the teachers told us, "They [families] loved it [the poetry evening]. [One of the parents] came the next day and said, 'Here, we finished ours when we got home. Here's our poetry to hang on the wall.'" One teacher explained how proud her students were the next day at school. She said, "It didn't matter who they grabbed in the hall, it was 'Come look at what I did. Look what Mama did.' I was sorry I didn't go to that workshop."

A second popular event was the evening we talked about writing. Many of the parents had questions about spelling and how much they should insist on correct spelling and when. We wanted to get parents writing with their children in order to experience themselves the sense of when it might be appropriate to correct spelling (when your poem is hung on the wall) and when mere communication is important (as in a written conversation with your child). We also wanted the parents and children to become metacognitive (Baker & Brown, 1984) about their reading because we believe the more they think and talk about literacy acts, the more the acts will become part the participants' identities. Thus, we had parents and children engage in a written conversation

around reading. After modeling one on the overhead, the adults paired with their children and wrote (See Appendixes A, B, C).

Upon reflection, these latter events met both of our goals:

- to capitalize on the interests, backgrounds, and needs of families (poetry, working together, questions about writing and spelling), and
- to promote our literacy agenda (get children reading and writing more with their families).

One parent recognized the changes we had made, and she preferred the latter workshops. She said that she wanted, "...more interaction with the children. I know in the beginning that wasn't really incorporated, and I don't know if it had to do with people's comments [on the surveys], or if you all were just trying to get a feel for, you know, how it would go, but I liked the way you had us in a group...the parents as well as the kids learned. So, I really enjoyed it towards the end."

One of the teachers liked it too:

I think if you had more workshop sessions where the parents actually work with their kids, and then they feel like, you know, we can tell them what to do, but if they can *actually do it* and ask questions while they are doing it, they'll be more motivated to go the extra mile with their kids, and the kids can see they can learn too. Not just the kid learning, but also the parent.

Thus, while our schedule was packed full of worthwhile literacy activity, how we initially organized it needed to be re-thought. We might have started more with the workshop and interviews, and later implemented the "stand and deliver" messages about techniques. The latter only work when real trust is built anyway, and these kinds of "stand and deliver" workshop lessons can emerge from the needs and desires of the families.

After the end of the first year, we also interviewed a few adult family members in-depth about the program, as well as about other issues in the community. All of the respondents were enthusiastic about the program, particularly our change to have more family workshop time:

"I like the interaction time."

"I like the one-on-one time with my child."

"I liked the one [lesson] on how to interact with my child during reading."

"Keep the one-on-one time."

When asked about the literacy techniques, some of the responses included:

"I liked the 'echo reading' strategy."

"Asking good questions."

"I liked the techniques, and getting the books."

When asking whether they used the strategies, many said they had:

"Yes, we are trying them and they are working." (not specific)

"Spending more time reading, less TV." (echoed by many)

"Making them think about what words make sense."

"The best thing was being more, keeping your mind fresh with things to do with 'em. Especially if you're not used to kids being around, you forget how you actually learned to do it."

One excerpt from an interview typifies what many of the adults believed about the program:

Interviewer: What did you like best about the program?

Parent: The books, I have to be honest, the books. I liked the parent interaction, some things I knew, but I did learn some other pointers to help her [child] become a better reader.

Interviewer: Can you get specific about anything you remember that you learned?

Parent: Well, one thing is I didn't know whether to be, to correct her all the time. And I didn't know whether to let her on her own, and then, it is the process. It taught that, you know, just let her read and let her tell me what kind of help she needs.

Interviewer: Do you do anything differently because of something you learned at the program?

Parent: I go to the library more, and I made her go with me. She's got her own card. Cut the TV off. I had to learn to do that, we both did. Like the other day, the lights went out and she said, 'Well, we could read.'

Listening to Teachers

Of course, planning family events around families' interests and funds of knowledge is only half of family-school connection goal. We also needed to engage classroom teachers, and make a direct connection to curriculum in the classroom with what we were doing at the FAB:ulous! events. We included teachers' attitudes, values, and beliefs when we considered the curriculum. From the beginning, we had the support of the faculty and the help of several teachers. During the second FAB! night, a few of the teachers in the school presented to the parents. One reported:

It went great! I spent extra time on the prompts and talked about taking the child beyond "sounding it out." I really tried to hit meaning hard and the basics of crosschecking. The adults responded really well. They asked specific questions about their children. I had most interest in the prompts and what they could do to help their children with an unknown word. I had a parent come up to me afterwards and ask me about programs for adult reading to make herself a better reader!

At the end of the school year, we surveyed the teachers on their perspectives on the FAB:ulous! Program. Fifteen teacher surveys were returned. Fourteen of the fifteen respondents attended at least one FAB:ulous! night; two attended most; six attended all. When asked about overall impression, thirteen respondents gave high praise; one gave a "good" assessment, and three gave no response. Examples of some of the high praise include:

"Very successful. The parents found the information valuable. I saw many families implement what they learned."

"This was a wonderful opportunity for our population to actually learn how to help their children read. The books they were given were great."

"I'm very impressed. I think parents learned how to work with their own kids' understandings of reading."

"I was impressed with how much actually goes into the program and the number of people that attend."

"Great. Something we really need. Our parents really need help in how to help their kids! Free books and food get them in the door."

Some teachers responded that they believed the "family togetherness" was the most impressive part of the program, while others thought giving away books the best. Several said that they saw positive attitudes on the parts of adults and children while at the event, and some said that many of their students talked about the program and the books they received in school after each program. A few teachers said the strategies they taught or observed being taught at the family night reinforced their own activities at school. Another said she has made a special effort to use the strategies taught during the family nights at school. When we asked if they did things differently since the program, they responded, "We bring up more, the importance of books. It's not just something we read out of a basal or content book."

We knew that to make the program work and to sustain it for years, we had to cultivate relationships with the teachers. While we had several teacher participants involved from the beginning, we gradually invited some of them to take over organization of the program, and we paid them a small stipend for their time. One teacher remarked that she was impressed that they were respected enough to be paid. She commented, "It involves a lot of people and a lot of logistics and all that. But this school has really embraced that. Like you got paid to do, to present a workshop and this sort of thing."

We also knew that teachers needed to see the families in a new way, and that no amount of explicit teaching about what families know would do if we did not directly involve the teachers. And some of the teachers did begin to see the families in new ways by the end of the first year of the program. Some of the comments included:

"I have heard some people say these people only come to FAB for the free food, but these women are trying the strategies you teach them here, at home!"

"I see how much the parents value reading and time with their children."

"I think one of the biggest, the biggest benefit to come out of this was making parents more comfortable with their ability [to help their child with reading]."

"The kids got to see another side of me. I am only doing science, OK, so they saw another teacher, me, involved in reading. I am hoping they thought, OK, science can be reading too."

Lessons Learned

Our success in hosting the FABulous program did have its struggles. During our first few sessions we learned a number of valuable lessons. We had originally invited speakers based on the topic (e.g., a national sports hero for our night focused on sports) who did not engage the families and could barely be heard with pre-schoolers on the laps of

adults. We had initially separated children from adults with different activities, but then learned that the families wanted this time together. We sometimes shared wonderful literature during the literacy strategy sessions and then did not have those books available for the give-aways because they did not match the event's theme. We learned these lessons the hard way, but we did learn to listen and watch and ask the families what they want.

In fact, one of the things we learned as we continued the program into the upcoming year is that adults like and value reading for themselves too. During the interviews, more than one parent said, "I want a book, too!" Another suggested that the following year we focus more on parents, "Maybe parents...stress to the parents the importance of continuing their education and reading, and continue to read. Because not just work related items but just for personal leisure, enjoyment." Our current project does just that. We now buy a book or magazine for each adult who shows up as well as continually providing books for the children. Our goal is to have discussions about literature with children participating and observing their adult loved ones getting excited about literature. We continue to recognize that good ideas about curriculum usually come from the participants themselves.

We learned other unexpected lessons as we went on which could not be easily addressed. In particular, the stereotypes that the teachers at the school embraced surprised us. On looking back at interviews and incidents, we noticed beliefs on the part of the faculty that "these" families needed fixing, rather than a belief in a partnership built on funds of knowledge and school valued learning (or built on community literacy and school literacy). The nature of these perceptions across race and class lines are not uncommon, just surprising given the level of involvement that the school as an institution had in the community. We know that doing this kind of work takes a long-term effort with teachers as well as families.

Conclusion

Overall, we remain impressed with the commitment and enthusiasm of the faculty and principal at the school. The project fostered real

connections between university, school and families. We loved the literature shared with families and the literacy and literate activities that the project supported. As noted, we originally hoped to build literacy events from families' interests and knowledge and to simultaneously help families learn new ways of assisting their children with literacy. This project reminded us of the challenges involved in such work and of the time needed to build trusting and respectful relationships with families. We learned to listen more intently to what families needed and wanted from the project and to respond appropriately. And, perhaps, most importantly, we learned (again) that schools and families working together offers the most promise for all children becoming successfully literate.

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Appendix A

FAB:ulous! Family Reading Program

Written Conversation About Reading

Adult: Hi Robert. In the last year or so, what has been your favorite thing to read?

Child: Ancient Greece.

Adult: Where did you get that book? I don't remember that one.

Child: At a fab night: this school year.

Adult: Have you read this book more than once?

Child: I have not even read it once.

Adult: I asked you in the first place what ~~was~~ has been your favorite thing you have read in the last year.

Child: So what was it?

~~didn't~~ didn't really read the book, I read the contents to see what things in the book sounded interesting

Adult:

Child:

A Picture of Your Favorite FABulous! Night

doing the cha-cha
Je part two



*For child or children.

The best book I read in the last two years

was Aliens Are My Homework

Signature of Adult Family Member Shelia Tenney

Signature of Child or Children Brandon Tenney

Appendix B

FAB:ulous! Family Reading Program

Written Conversation About Reading

Adult: Do you like to read?

Child: It all depends on the book.

Adult: When you say depends on the book

Child: Explain.
I like books that have comedy and some interesting.

Adult: If you take time to read all books are interesting. Do you agree?

Child: No because some books are boring

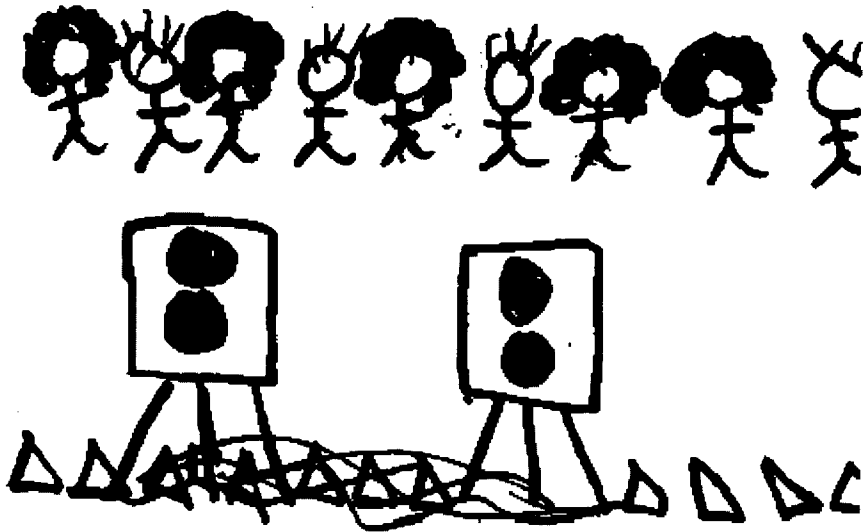
Adult: If you have not read the books how do you know if they are boring?

Child: By looking at the cover.

Adult: The cover on the book can be deceived. Remember the saying "you can't judge a book by the cover."

Child: ☺ That's right, from now on I'll read one page of the book to understand.

A Picture of Your Favorite FAB:ulous! Night



*For child or children:

The best book I read in the last two years

was the journey parents by carter b.

Signature of Adult Family Member

Ruby Colbert

Signature of Child or Children

Anderson R. Bryant

Appendix C

FAB:ulous! Family Reading Program

Written Conversation About Reading

Adult: Sherika, Have you read any good books lately?

Child: Yes I have. Have you read any books?

Adult: Yes, I read Milk in My Coffee. It was very interesting. Have you read?

Child: ~~Today~~ I read There's something in the Attic.

Adult: What kept you reading?

Child: The way it kept me hook was I wanted to know what was that something.

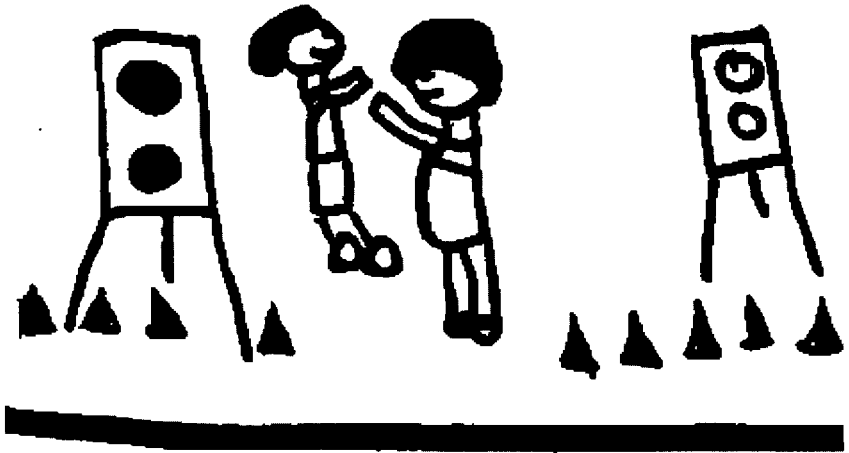
Adult: Did you find out?

Child: Yes I did. it was a toy store.

Adult: Will you continue to read?

Child: Yes I will continue to read!!
FAB:ulous

A Picture of Your Favorite FAB:ulous! Night



*For child or children

The best book I read in the last two years

was The sign of the loover

Signature of Adult Family Member

D. Ziering

Signature of Child or Children

Shirika



Perceptions of Preservice Elementary Teachers on Multicultural Issues

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This paper reports an exploratory study of preservice teachers' knowledge of multicultural education and preparedness for literacy instruction with diverse populations. We conducted the study across a variety of college and university contexts. Results showed that preservice teachers did not feel well prepared to teach children of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. We also found evidence that these preservice teachers had not developed a strong knowledge base about multicultural education, despite the fact that they had all been introduced to multicultural topics in their teacher education coursework. This study demonstrates that there is a need for examination of current methods of preparing teachers for providing literacy instruction that addresses diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

ACCORDING TO DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH, it is probable that today's preservice teachers across their careers, will teach large numbers of students who are linguistically and culturally unlike them (Au, 1993; Bruner, 1996; Delpit, 1991, 1993; Devine, 1994; Gee, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Perez, 1998). It follows that there is a need for literacy educators in elementary teacher preparation programs to address linguistic and cultural issues in the context of literacy instruction (Perez, 1998).

One approach to addressing linguistic and cultural differences in classroom literacy instruction receiving much attention in recent years is using multicultural literature (Radencich, 1999). In children's literature courses for preservice teachers, students are typically introduced to a great deal of literature representative of many cultures. The thinking has been that it is essential for preservice teachers to have an extensive knowledge base about books representing a variety of cultures, and an understanding of the rationale for including these titles in the delivery of literacy instruction (Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd, 2001; Radencich, 1999). Multicultural literature is viewed as one of the most effective means of teaching children about their world and its peoples and cultures (Au & Scheu, 1996; Ferdman, 1991; Ogbu, 1991; Perez, 1998; Purcell-Gates, 1995; Radencich, 1999; Reyes, 1992).

Like children's literature courses, most elementary language arts courses address multicultural issues. Many instructors address multicultural issues related to approaches to teaching writing. In addition, it is common for language arts instructors to include in their course sessions and readings consideration in the use of dialect in student writing and spelling (Alton-Lee, Nuthall & Patrick, 1993; Delpit, 1993; Dyson, 1993; Fox, 1990; Oldfather, 1993; Perez, 1998; Schor, 1987; Willis, 1995).

The examination of multicultural issues has also become a common element in preservice courses in reading. Reading instructors commonly deal with multicultural issues as they relate to the selection of reading material for children, teacher response to children's reading development and second language acquisition, and teacher planning and instruction

(Applebee, Langer & Mullis, 1988; Atwell, 1987; Bernhardt, 1994; Fitzgerald, 1995; Morrow, 1992; Perez, 1998; Prawat, 1995; Purcell-Gates, 1995; Stuckey, 1991; Teale, 1986; Willis, 1995).

There is abundant literature that addresses the importance of and suggested methods for including a multicultural focus in elementary literacy teacher preparation, and there is much evidence of a solid movement in literacy teacher education toward multicultural education. The impact of this movement on preservice teachers has not been thoroughly assessed. In this study, as a beginning step in an examination of the impact of addressing multicultural issues in the context of preservice literacy instruction, we examined preservice teacher perceptions across a variety of college and university contexts. We performed this study to:

- investigate preservice teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to work with multicultural populations
- examine preservice teachers' general knowledge of multicultural education topics

Method

Population

Instructors at seven colleges and universities surveyed groups of preservice teachers currently taking literacy education courses. A total of 223 students participated in the study. All of the students were undergraduates with the exception of one group, who were Master's level students. The Master's level population was from a state that requires that preservice teachers complete a Bachelors in a content area and a Masters in Education in order to obtain teaching licensure; thus it was not possible to examine a population of undergraduate elementary education students in this state. Divisions of numbers of students by institution are included in Table 1.

Table 1. Locations, context, and numbers of students participating

<u>Location</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u># Students</u>
Florida, USA	Urban, High MC	25
Louisiana, USA	Urban, High MC	21
Illinois, USA	Suburban, Med. MC	11
Illinois, USA	Urban, High MC	10
Ohio, USA	Rural, Low MC	65
Wisconsin, USA	Rural, Low MC	52
New Brunswick, CAN	Rural, Med. MC	14
California, USA	Urban, High MC	25

(High MC = 30 percent or more of the local population is non-Caucasian in linguistic and cultural background, Med. MC = 15-30 percent of the local population is non-Caucasian in linguistic and cultural background, Low MC = 15 percent or less of the local population is non-Caucasian in linguistic and cultural background.)

Instrument

Janet Richards developed the open-ended survey instrument used in the study. She began by pilot testing an instrument that used a Likert-type scale. She found the instrument to be of very limited value; students knew what the "politically correct" answers should be and provided them. Using similar concepts to those addressed in the pilot test, Peter Fisher revised the survey using an open-ended format.

Survey questions focused on preservice teacher perceptions of their preparedness to work with multicultural populations, their ideas about appropriate methods for addressing diversity in the classroom, and their knowledge of multicultural literature and scholars. The survey questions are included in Appendix A.

Many of the students who completed the survey found it "too difficult." Numerous students made this comment after completion of the survey. Also, students did not respond to some of the questions. All but three students responded to the question on preparedness. For the other questions, we saw a response rate of 60-95 percent across all of the students for each question. Student discussions with researchers indicated

that they answered if they thought they knew an appropriate response and left no response if they could not think of a possible correct response.

Analysis

In examining preservice teacher perceptions across a variety of college and university contexts, we compiled student responses to each of the survey questions and looked at percentages of responses where appropriate. We analyzed open-ended questions qualitatively. We categorized responses according to emerging themes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Results and Conclusions

Perceptions of Preparedness

Within this population, 95 of the students (43 percent) felt that they were prepared, and 125 (57 percent) felt that they were not prepared to teach children with linguistic and cultural differences. It appears that, in general, the work of teacher educators in the area of multicultural education is not inspiring confidence in preservice teachers. However, we found a great deal of variation in these figures.

More than 80 percent of the respondents in the Master's program felt prepared. These were the only master's level students participating in the study, and their responses to other parts of the survey demonstrated higher levels of knowledge than responses from the other colleges and universities.

Field Experiences

The survey included questions asking students to identify:

- the number of field experiences in which they had worked with children of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds
- the number of university-related community experiences that had provided experience with children of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds

Table 2. Student perceptions of their preparedness to work with multicultural student populations

<u>Location</u>	<u>Not Prepared</u>	<u>Prepared</u>
Florida	7	18
Louisiana	14	7
Illinois (suburban)	7	2
Illinois (urban)	4	5
Ohio	28	37
Wisconsin	7	45
New Brunswick	7	7
California	21	4
Totals	95	125

The majority (85 percent) of the students indicated that they had completed either one or two field experiences, and less than 10 percent of the students reported being engaged in community-based experiences with children.

Perceptions of Preparation for Working with Children of Diverse Backgrounds

Participant comments about their preparation for working with children of diverse backgrounds focused on field experiences. This response can be considered a result of wording on the survey. Question 5 asked that participants describe the kinds of "experiences" they need to prepare them for work with students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Because we asked for "experiences," they naturally described field experiences as opposed to other possible learning approaches in which they might gain more knowledge.

We found a relationship between student responses to Question 3 and Question 5. If preservice teachers had been involved in teaching experiences in which they had worked with children of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, they tended to think that these experiences had prepared them for future teaching experiences with such children. If they

had not worked with children of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds in teaching settings, these students viewed themselves as unprepared to work with such children in the future. Similarly, almost all student recommendations for improving their preparation for working with multicultural populations in the future centered on the need for actual teaching experiences with these populations (or more of these experiences).

Some participants focused on language differences in discussing reasons for not being prepared to work with children of diverse cultural backgrounds. Seventeen students said that they were not prepared to work with multicultural populations because they spoke no languages other than English. Several stated that they would need to learn another language in order to teach these children.

Helpful Literacy Experiences for Children of Diverse Backgrounds

All students in the Master's program proved capable of answering the question on helpful literacy experiences for children of diverse backgrounds (question 2) in some manner, while 107 of the 198 students from other institutions did not do so. The participants who responded to the question provided many different kinds of possible learning experiences. The experiences noted by five or more students were:

- the use of the students' background experiences
- reading aloud
- the use of visuals
- shared reading
- group work
- use of good literature representative of many cultures
- journaling
- discussion
- the study of other cultures
- personal writing
- reading and writing in one's own language
- hands-on experiences
- the use of hand gestures

The most common response among the Master's students was the use of hands-on experiences. The most common response among other students involved the use of multicultural literature. The vast majority of suggestions would be appropriate for any children in any classroom. These results left us wondering whether these students understood that good literacy instruction can apply to all children, or whether they lacked knowledge of specific strategies for students of diverse backgrounds and therefore provided responses based on their general knowledge of literacy instruction.

Relevant Literature for Children of Diverse Backgrounds

Of the 223 students who participated in the study, 85 responded to the question about relevant literature for children of diverse backgrounds. Many students contributed more than one idea (total of 134 ideas). The categories that emerged through our analyses were:

- descriptions of types of literature or comments about literature
- names of authors
- titles of children's books
- titles of books related to teaching

Descriptions of types of literature included topics such as African American literature, immigrant literature, politically correct literature, and informational literature. One response provided sixteen times was "literature that relates to 'their' culture."

Of the 12 authors noted by the participants, six could be considered authors who write about and/or represent varied cultures and whose works are appropriate for elementary children (Mildred Taylor, Ezra Jack Keats, Eloise Greenfield, Lawrence Yep, Patricia Polacco and Tommie dePaola). Two students listed Eloise Greenfield; thus a total of seven students identified names of authors of children's books that are multicultural. The students provided a total of 33 book titles. We found some titles unfamiliar, and they did not appear upon conducting a literature search. We deemed other titles inappropriate for elementary children (for instance, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and *Don Quixote*). We identified 11 book titles as appropriate for elementary children and

relating to multicultural topics (*Tar Beach*; *Cinder-Elly*; *Little Lil and the Swing Singing Sax*; *Honey I Love*; *For the Love of the Game*; *Amazing Grace*; *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*; *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky*; *The Rainbow Fish*; *Stellaluna*; and *Journey to Jo'burg*).

Taken together, of the 223 students, 17 identified either an author of multicultural children's books or a title of a multicultural children's book (7 percent). The majority (over 70 percent) of the students had completed courses in children's literature that centered on multicultural titles and were at the time of the study taking reading courses with a focus on multicultural issues in literacy and the use of multicultural children's literature.

Student-Identified Scholars Who Write about Multicultural Issues

The students provided a total of 75 names in response to a question that asked them to identify scholars who write about multicultural issues. The 47 students identified 14 "legitimate" scholars. (We defined "legitimate multicultural scholars" as being individuals who had published journal articles or scholarly books dealing directly and primarily with multicultural issues). Within the 47, 23 students identified legitimate scholars who were also their professors. The complete list is included in Appendix B.

We did not consider the majority of students' responses identifying as legitimate scholars those who write about multicultural issues. We understood how students might list Maya Angelou, Richard Wright, and Langston Hughes as scholars. It surprised us to see the numbers of names of professors, media/political personalities, and authors of children's books. Some students listed the same names for both the question on relevant literature and the question on scholars.

Writing Activities for Children of Diverse Cultural Backgrounds

There were 55 responses to item 8 on the survey, with the majority of students providing no response. About 75 percent of the students had completed language arts courses that centered on writing and dealt with cultural and language issues as they relate to language arts instruction. It

may be that the students found the survey to be so difficult that they had given up by the time they reached this point. Again, the Master's students had a higher percentage of responses than the undergraduate participants.

More than one student identified twenty-three activities or ideas. The activities identified by more than five students included:

- letter writing
- oral dictation
- creative writing
- personal writing
- writing about the students' own cultures
- journaling

Twenty-seven respondents suggest journaling, making it by far the most popular response. Only one of the suggestions was an activity that was specific to culturally diverse populations - "using their primary language." Otherwise, all of the suggestions were for appropriate activities for all students in elementary classrooms.

Discussion

The results indicate that the majority of these preservice teachers do not feel well prepared to teach children of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In all seven universities, we saw a strong focus within children's literature courses on multicultural titles; yet these students remembered few authors and titles. Despite our reported required readings and discussions of authors such as Delpit, Kozol, Banks, and Au, these preservice teachers did not remember their names. Instead, they provided names of authors and personalities like Maya Angelou, Langston Hughes, Oprah Winfrey, and Jesse Jackson. These findings imply that preservice teachers are not gaining a useful and memorable knowledge base relative to literacy education for diverse linguistic and cultural populations. These students are simply not learning and remembering what we would have them learn and remember.

These preservice teachers indicated that they most needed experience working with children of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in order to be prepared to work with these children. This perception proved consistent across institutions where students had numerous experiences in schools with majority, culturally, and linguistically diverse populations and institutions where students had not been exposed to such populations. If preservice teachers do not remember the recommended research-based strategies or the authors and books that have been presented to them as being supportive of educating multicultural populations, it is illogical to think that additional experiences with these populations will lead the students to successfully use proven strategies and multicultural literature in field experiences with these children.

This study did not lead us toward understandings of ways of improving our approaches to preparing preservice teachers for work with diverse student populations. In terms of approaches to enhancing preservice programs, our immediate recommendation is for research involving situated tasks that engage students in in-depth examinations of multicultural issues, and simulations of strategies and tasks that are appropriate for children of diverse backgrounds. Specifically, we recommend investigations of case methodology and biography and/or autobiography for the examination of multicultural issues, and literature response simulations that use multicultural children's literature (Radencich, 1999). Engagement in activities of this kind may lead to more powerful constructions of knowledge; however, this research is likely a first step in a continuing process.

In designing this study, we knew that scrutiny of our students' knowledge and perceptions about multicultural issues (using difficult questions and an open-ended format) could prove to be disappointing. Yet, as individuals, we did not foresee the result. When the surveys were completed, they were mailed to one of the authors. The envelopes full of surveys came with explanatory notes. One researcher commented at length on her disappointment in the results. Another stated that after scanning the surveys, she felt that she and her department needed to take a fresh look at their elementary education program and what it was accomplishing with regard to multicultural education. In truth, we were

all embarrassed for others to see the data our students had provided; we felt that the data made us, our universities, and our teacher preparation programs look weak. Upon realizing that we all had similar results, we felt strongly that a great need for further inquiry exists.

It is possible that these preservice teachers could not provide strong evidence of their levels of knowledge as a result of our method of data collection. The survey used in this study was problematic. The participants found it to be very difficult. In designing the study, we had not predicted that the open-ended survey would be so difficult. Given the multicultural focus within the programs in which we taught, we expected that all of the preservice teachers would have the ability to provide responses for all of the questions. The students viewed the survey as being much like a "pop test," and some felt compelled to assure us that they had done well on tests of this content and activities dealing with these topics in their classes. Some of the students commented that they knew where to find this information, and would be able to locate it and make use of it when they started teaching. We wondered why it had not been memorable to them, and whether or not they would choose to look for information on these topics when they started teaching.

Despite our knowledge that students are not blank slates upon which we write, we felt personal disappointment that the students reproduced so little of what we thought we had taught well, and what we thought students should have learned in memorable ways. Did students learn the material for as long as they thought they needed to know it to take a test or complete a project? Students make their own choices about what is essential knowledge and what is not, and these decisions impact which knowledge is retained in more and less enduring ways. Teacher education students have already developed perceptions and values about the world in which they live and the world in which they believe they are going to teach, and their own cultural insights ultimately control what is retained and what is not. Could there be a certain resistance to gaining multicultural understandings in some students? If such resistance exists, chances are that it could be addressed within the context of teacher education prior to or as a part of the development of knowledge of multicultural issues. Research is needed to examine the possible

existence of resistance to learning about multicultural issues related to literacy education.

Further research on preservice teacher perceptions about multicultural literacy education and their preparedness for working with students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds should involve alternative data collection methods. For instance, preservice teachers might be able to provide greater evidence of their knowledge and insights in an interview or focus group setting, as opposed to a perceived "pop test" made up of survey questions.

This study demonstrates a need for examination of current methods of preparing teachers for providing literacy instruction that addresses diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The participants in this study were all taking part in preservice teacher programs in which there was a strong focus on preparation for multiculturalism and diversity within the context of literacy instruction. They had all completed courses that included instructional threads designed to assure that students gain knowledge of instructional approaches for cultural and linguistic diversity. As researchers who also taught these students, we had personal feelings of embarrassment about their lack of knowledge and insight.

As a group, we concluded that we had been too centered on assuring that students had been introduced to these topics in the context of literacy instruction, and that our assessments of student learning had been too centered on insuring student demonstrations of surface knowledge of topics. Introductions to topics and assessments of knowledge do not provide the depth of understanding that is needed, particularly for candidates whose teacher preparation occurs in regions where experiences with diverse children are rare and whose backgrounds do not include significant contact with people from linguistic and culturally diverse backgrounds. There is a need for the development of very in-depth constructions of knowledge, and preservice teacher preparation programs need to look far beyond introductions and surface knowledge. Teacher educators must begin to consider approaches that will engage students in constructing knowledge of multicultural education that will be of such value that it will be both useful and unforgettable.

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Appendix A

Multicultural Survey for Preservice Teachers

Please respond freely and anonymously to these open-ended statements. Your personal perceptions will help us examine and, if appropriate, to restructure course experiences that will enhance future teachers' abilities to meet the literacy-learning needs of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Answers may be continued on the back.

1) I am (prepared) (not prepared) to teach reading and language arts to students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds because

2) The following kinds of literacy-learning experiences are especially helpful to students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds

because

3) I have participated in _____ (Write in a number) field experiences where I worked with students from diverse cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds.

4) I have participated in _____ (Write in a number) university related community experiences where I worked with students from diverse cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds.

5) I need the following experiences to help prepare me to work with students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds:

6) The following literature is especially relevant for students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds:

because

7) I am familiar with the work of the following scholars who write about multicultural issues:

8) The following writing activities are especially beneficial for students who speak variations of standard English:

because

11) Name of your college/university

Please write your comments below. How do you think that we, as literacy teacher educators, can enhance your abilities to meet the literacy learning needs of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds?

Appendix B

Student-Identified Relevant Literature for Children of Diverse Backgrounds*

Descriptions of literature or comments about literature

African American literature (4)
Immigrant literature
All literature (2)
Literature relating to "their" culture (16)
Literature written by authors of "their" own culture (3)
Literature in the primary language (3)
Books they can connect/relate to (8)
Literature that represents a variety of cultural backgrounds (10)
Literature based in different countries
Literature that has different cultures interacting with each other
Literature that connects students rather than divides them (3)
Books about cities, children living in cities
All of the classics (2)
American Literature
Historical literature (2)
Politically correct / multiculturally correct literature (3)
Fiction and Nonfiction
Informational literature
Folk tales (5)
English books
English Dictionary or Thesaurus (2)
Anything not of the WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) culture (2)
Easy to read and patterned books (2)
High interest/low vocabulary books
Picture books (4)
Big books (2)
Silver Burdett Ginn Literature books
Trade books
"I have a list at home"
"I'm not sure of titles, but I know that such literature exists"

Authors:

Mildred Taylor
Ezra Jack Keats
Angelou
Alik
Hughes
Carlsen

Silverstein
Eloise Greenfield (2)
Sheila Hamaoka
Lawrence Yep
Tommie dePaola
Patricia Polacco

Titles:

Tar Beach
Cinder-Elly
The True Story of the Three Pigs
Little Lil and the Swing Singing Sax
The Moon Came Too
Moon Soup
What a Wonderful World
Go Away Monster
Sad Monster, Glad Monster
Arthur series by Mark Brown
Honey I Love
For the Love of the Game
Amazing Grace
Journey to Jo'burg
Les Miserables
Of Mice and Men
Grandfather

Tangrams
Anne Frank
To Kill a Mockingbird
Don Quixote
Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters
Eagle Brother, Sister Sky
Who's the Beast
Stellaluna
The Rainbow Fish
Follow My Leader
Scorpions
A Country Far Away
Verdi
Just Adrian
Mrs. Rhumfias
Heckedy Peg

Books about Teaching:

The Art of Teaching
Multiple Paths to Literacy
Resources for Teachers

* Note - Where only one student provided a given response, no number was noted. Numbers are noted in parenthesis representing the total number of students providing like responses.

Appendix C

Student-Identified Scholars Who Write about Multicultural Issues

People identified by students whom the researchers considered legitimate scholars who write about multicultural issues:

Banks

Jim Flood (7) (also a professor of the students who listed him)

Diane Lapp (7) (also a professor of the students who listed her)

Richard Cornejo (5) (also a professor of the students who listed him)

Junko Yakota (4) (also a professor of the students who listed her)

Jonathan Kozol(7)

Kotlowitz (2)

Krashen (4)

Lisa Delpit (3)

Cummins (5)

Eugenia Berger

Kazan (2)

Christine Bennett

Verna Hildebrand

Professors with whom students had worked:

Dr. Richards (8)

Dr. Tran

Dr. Gipe (2)

Dr. Pang (2)

Dr. Shulte (2)

Dr. William Little

Dr. Klesius

Dr. William Martinez

Dr. Mora

Dr. Young

Dr. Mathieson

Authors of texts used by students and researchers studied by students:

Lucy Calkins (3)

Fountas (3)

Tompkins (2)

Templeton

Pinnell (2)

E.D. Hirsch

Piaget

Margaret Mooney

Media/Political persons:

Oprah Winfrey (3)
Jesse Jackson
Gloria Steinem

Authors of adult literature and poets:

Richard Wright (2)	Toni Morrison
Langston Hughes (3)	Chaim Potok
Maya Angelou (9)	Chinua Achebe

Authors of children's books:

Ezra Jack Keats	Robert Munsch
Mildred Taylor	Eric Carle
Brian Pinkney (3)	Hamilton
Jerry Pinkney (3)	Patricia Polacco
Faith Ringgold (4)	W. Nikola-Lisa
Lois Lowry	John Steptoe
Judy Blume	Verna Aardema
Avi	Allen Say
Eloise Greenfield (3)	Walter Dean Myers

* Note - Where only one student provided a given response, no number was noted. Numbers are noted in parenthesis representing the total number of students providing like responses.



**Development of Pedagogical Knowledge Related
to Teaching At-Risk Students:
How Do Inservice Teachers and Preservice Teachers Compare?**

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This study examined the development of pedagogical knowledge of preservice and inservice teachers as they implemented newly learned assessment and instructional strategies with at-risk readers in clinical settings. The preservice teachers worked in pairs to tutor children during the regular semester at a university reading clinic; the inservice teachers worked for four days a week for six weeks in a special reading academy. Four stages of development emerged from the examination of the reflective responses of teachers that they wrote after each tutoring sessions with the at-risk readers. The stages identified were: novice, advance beginner, competent, and proficient.

MOST UNDERGRADUATE and graduate programs in reading provide students with opportunities to work with individual children who are at-risk for reading failure. The importance of this type of authentic activity in teacher education is well-documented in literature (Bonar, 1985; Gipe, Duffy & Richards, 1989; McDiarmid, 1990). Other researchers have noted additional benefits of teacher reflection related to these teaching experiences (Bartlett, 1994; Bonar, 1985; Commeyras, Reinking, Heubach & Pugnucco, 1993). Although working with at-risk children does provide for authentic experiences related to teaching, preservice and inservice teachers face unique and challenging instructional questions and dilemma when planning lessons. With this study we hoped to determine how preservice and inservice teachers made instructional decisions for at-risk readers and if the teachers moved through definable stages as they made these decisions.

Stages of learning and development are not new in educational literature. William Perry (1970) described stages of intellectual development that have pertinence to the training of teachers. His work documents that university students generally move from a stage in which they look to the professor as the authority with all the answers to a stage in which they accept that knowledge is contextual. More specifically, Black & Ammon (1992) and Kitchner & King (1990) have documented that as new teachers practice their craft, they move from a passive/recipient stage to an active/participant stage.

In the area of literacy, some recent research has focused on how university students learn about teaching children who are at-risk for reading failure. Walker & Roskos (1994) and Walker & Ramseth (1993) have investigated what types of activities in university courses assisted students who succeeded with at-risk readers. The findings from these studies indicated that preservice teachers benefited from a combination of lecture and actual experience (tutoring) and that this type of activity assisted them in developing a procedural knowledge more specific and free of personal feelings. Kostelnik and Allen (1995) found that preservice teachers successfully proceeded through predictable stages of learning and became more proficient when asked to tutor an at-risk reader and reflect on their practice.

Our study builds on this previous research by seeking to elaborate and expand knowledge related to the development of good teachers of reading at both preservice and inservice levels. By determining how teachers progress toward an understanding of assessing and implementing literacy instruction to address specific student needs, perhaps university instructors can develop more effective scaffolding techniques and can adapt their instruction to better assist in this process. Specifically, the following research questions were posed as guidelines for this study:

- What stages of development do preservice and inservice teachers experience when they work in an inquiry-based instructional model with at-risk readers?
- What is the nature of these stages?
- How do the stages of pedagogical concepts differ between the two groups of teachers?

Research Design and Methods

Participants

Eighteen preservice teachers from one university and eleven inservice teachers from a second university were the participants in this mixed design/descriptive study. The undergraduate preservice teachers were enrolled in a junior level reading assessment course in which they tutored elementary children at a university reading clinic. The class met once a week at the clinic. Students tutored elementary aged children during the first hour of class; the last two hours of class were devoted to debriefing about tutoring sessions and learning new instructional and assessment techniques. The tutors worked in pairs and alternated teaching one week with observation through a one-way mirror the following week. Although the preservice teachers were encouraged to select literature used in the lessons and to develop strategies and activities appropriate for the child with whom they were working, all lesson plans included the following parts:

- new reading of a selected piece of children's literature with assistance from the teacher

- study of specific word or comprehension strategies determined by the needs of the child
- writing
- reading for enjoyment

The eleven inservice teachers were enrolled in a six-hour practicum which is required of those students completing the Special Reading Certification. These students worked in the Summer Reading Academy, which ran four days a week for six weeks during summer school. Each inservice teacher worked with three elementary or middle school children for two and a half hours each day. During part of the session each day all of the inservice teachers and their students worked together in a theme-based big group activity. The professor and inservice teachers met for an hour each day before tutoring began and for half an hour after. During this time they shared problems/solutions and new strategies and coordinated the big group portions of each day's activities.

Data Sources

Data sources for this study included teacher written reflections, lesson plans, and observations by both teachers and university faculty. This allowed for triangulation of the data which "contributes to the trustworthiness of the data" (Glesne, 1999, p. 31).

After each lesson, the participants responded in a one-page reflection paper. We offered three guiding questions to facilitate their writing, but encouraged them to write a narrative about the session and to refrain from simply answering the questions. The guiding questions were:

- What was the most significant thing that happened in your tutoring session today?
- What did you learn from this experience?
- How does this experience inform your instruction?

The professors provided both written and oral feedback to the students regarding their reflections, observations, and instructional decisions. We also collected lesson plans as a means of monitoring the types of

activities planned and to determine if the reflections gave an accurate view of what was happening in the sessions.

Data analysis

Each of us read and coded each set of reflections for types of instructional decisions and reasons for the decisions on a weekly basis for our particular class. Our discussions at the beginning of the study resolved any differences in coding of items from the reflections. At the end of the terms we compared all reflections for each group, preservice and inservice, and patterns of responses and changes in patterns over time. Through discussion and rereading of reflections, we collapsed the categories into four defined stages of development. We compared patterns across the two groups for similarities and differences related to predominant patterns and sequence of development. We compared this information to lesson plans and observational notes of instructional activities to determine if the patterns of responses were indicative of instructional practice.

Description of Stages

We identified four specific stages and their attendant characteristics: 1) novice; 2) advanced beginner; 3) competent; and 4) proficient.

The first stage, **novice**, may be characterized by no risk taking, little instructional planning or evaluation, self-doubt, inappropriate choice of materials and/or activities, broad statements without documentation, and/or little self-reflection or evaluation. A teacher at this stage needed more direct assistance with the selection of materials and the development of activities using these materials. At this stage there was an inability to assess student work and to make instructional decisions based on student responses to a task. The following are examples of comments made by preservice teachers at the novice stage:

- Help!
- I was kind of nervous and I still am because the whole idea of teaching boggles my mind.

- I'm just wondering now what kind of activities I'm going to have to plan to keep him more focused. This is going to be a very big challenge. It's hard for me to see me getting anywhere in the next few weeks.

The teachers at this first stage are clearly more concerned with their own needs than those of their students. Teachers at this stage often wrote comments that indicated they were somewhat overwhelmed by the prospect of actually having to plan and execute lessons.

The characteristics of an **advanced beginner**, the second stage, included taking risks but seeking reassurance from instructor, offering tentative suggestions for activities, designing instructional plans that reflect some basic knowledge of literacy and assessment concepts, beginning to document assessment with specific performance of students, and/or becoming more self-reflective. An advanced beginner would often make statements about what s/he would do, but would follow that directly with a question to the instructor in an effort to determine if the decision was a correct one. Teachers at this stage made comments similar to the following:

- I think I know what I'm doing, but I still need your support and help.
- I'm not sure, but this is what I'll try.
- Bekah sounds out each individual word even if it is a word that she knows by sight. I am trying to think of ways to make her more comfortable reading words that she already knows and this is something I will try and do during our next session.

The teachers at this stage fluctuated between concern for their own needs and those of the students they were instructing. There was some confidence in their abilities, but not much; they realized the magnitude of the responsibility and needed assurances that they could successfully teach the child they were tutoring.

The third stage of pedagogical awareness is the **competent** stage. Teachers at this stage exhibited some or all of the following behaviors: taking risks easily, observing progress of student and relating it to student, planning appropriate lessons based on student needs, and/or

engaging in frequent self-reflection. Students more clearly demonstrated their repertoire of strategies and activities. The reflections these students submitted were more analytical of their lessons and student response to those lessons. The following are examples of comments made by teachers who are at the competent stage:

- We are making a difference and Bekah shows me every week that when you provide children with positive, and well-thought lesson plans the experience proves to be meaningful.
- This is what I decided to do with my student.
- Jody is beginning to respond to the think alouds and I can tell she comprehends better.

Confidence of the teachers is evident at this stage. They make instructional plans decisively and implement them successfully. The teachers are more focused on student response and progress, and they are beginning to measure the success of the lesson by closely observing student actions and responses.

Teachers at the fourth, or **proficient** stage, engaged in the following behaviors: making insightful observations which inform instructional decisions, looking for the deeper causes for student behavior and performance, and/or facilitating mediated learning activities. The teachers who reached this level were very confident in their abilities to assess student needs and to plan instruction accordingly. They often accepted the role of mentor to other teachers. Sample comments from representatives of the proficient stage include:

- If I know what my students can do, I can focus in and use what they know to teach what they don't know.
- I realize that the girls are more involved and excited when they lead and I just guide.

We also tried to determine if teachers moved through the identified stages as they tutored and worked with children. Movement from one stage to a higher stage was evident for both the preservice and inservice teachers in this study. For the preservice group 57 percent (8 students)

were at the novice stage at tutoring session #2, 36 percent (5 students) were advanced beginners, and 7 percent (1 student) were already at the competent stage (See Table 1). By session #5 24 percent (4 students) were still at the novice stage, 41 percent (7 students) at the advanced beginner stage, and more than one third (35 percent or 6 students) at the competent stage. At the end of the semester no student remained at the novice stage, one third (31 percent or 6 students) of the students remained at the advanced beginner stage, and 69 percent (11 students) were at the competent stage.

Table 1. Number of Preservice Teachers at Each Stage of Pedagogical Awareness

Stage	Session 2	Session 5	Session 9
Novice	8	4	0
Advanced Beginner	5	7	6
Competent	1	6	11
Proficient	0	0	0

At the beginning of the summer session, nine percent (1 teacher) of the inservice teachers were at the advanced beginner stage, 64 percent (7 teachers) were at the competent stage and 27 percent (3 teachers) were at the proficient stage (See Table 2). By session #5 nine percent (1 teacher) of the inservice teachers were still at the advanced beginner stage, 55 percent (6 teachers) were at the competent stage, and 36 percent (4 teachers) were at the proficient stage. Analysis of the session nine responses showed 55 percent (6 teachers) of the students were at the competent stage and 44 percent (5 teachers) were at the proficient stage. The responses following session 13 indicated that nine percent (1 teacher) were still at the advanced beginner stage, while 36 percent (4 teachers) were at the competent stage, and 55 percent (6 teachers) were at the proficient stage. Session 17 was the final tutoring session and analysis of the responses showed 11 percent (1 teacher) was at the advanced beginner stage, 44 percent (4 teachers) were at the competent stage, and 45 percent (4 teachers) were at the proficient stage.

Table 2. Number of Inservice Teachers at Each Stage of Pedagogical Awareness

Stage	Session 1	Session 5	Session 9	Session 13	Session 17
Novice	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced Beginner	1	1	0	1	1
Competent	7	6	6	4	4
Proficient	3	4	5	6	4

All preservice teachers began at the novice stage, although their time at that level varied across the group. None of these students advanced beyond the competent level. One inservice teacher began at the advanced beginner stage and made no progress during the term. Seven inservice teachers began at the competent stage, and four at the proficient stage. This knowledge and understanding of how the teachers moved along the continuum to improved decision-making allowed the professors to provide appropriate instruction and scaffolding for their learning.

While not all teachers (preservice and inservice) experienced all stages, at least one teacher represented every stage with the exception of the novice stage in the inservice group. One inservice teacher began at the proficient stage and stayed at this level for the entire session. This may be indicative of a fifth level of teaching performance, however, with only one example we could not say with confidence that another stage existed or describe the stage with any level of credibility. With a longer study or a second study a fifth stage might emerge.

Discussion

In this study, we wished to examine whether providing authentic and mediated teaching experiences allowed preservice and inservice teachers to improve their instructional decision-making skills, especially with at-risk readers. This study indicates that this type of mediated instruction results in progress from one stage of pedagogical awareness to another and is as important for inservice teachers as preservice teachers. These findings support the work of Perry (1970), Black and Ammon (1992), and Kitchner and King (1990) who documented that

students become more proficient as they gain new knowledge and have new experiences. Smith and Hill (1999) indicated that the tutors in their study moved from a teacher-centered stance to one more focused on the student. That clearly occurred in this study as the teachers moved from the novice stage to the competent stage. The direct work with children in this study with input and mediation from the professors and classmates also assisted the students in developing higher levels of pedagogical and procedural knowledge (Walker & Ramseth, 1993; Walker & Roskos, 1994; Allen & Kostelnik, 1995).

Movement through the first three levels (novice, advanced beginner and competent) appeared to occur as almost a natural progression for most teachers in this study. Understanding this allowed university professors to improve their own instruction. For example, we have used this information to better prepare students to anticipate and respond to concerns and issues as they occur in their teaching. During direct observations of both preservice and inservice teachers faculty have a better sense of how specifically to assist them in relation to their stage of pedagogical knowledge. Sometimes students struggle but continue to make progress; faculty now have a way to gauge whether a teacher would benefit from direct intervention or from continuing to work through a problem. However, advancement from competent through the proficient pedagogical stage is more difficult to predict and leads one to question how teacher educators can best impact the development of necessary thinking skills to advance through these levels. Additional research of the higher levels of pedagogical thinking are needed to provide us with enough information to become effective instructors for these teachers. Finally, it should also be noted that movement from one stage to another does not occur in only one direction. Although these preservice and inservice teachers generally moved to advanced stages, there were instances in which they moved to a lower stage. This should serve as a caution to professors that pedagogical knowledge develops over a period of time and that they should view a student's progress over time as well as lesson by lesson.

This study adds to earlier research about teacher pedagogical knowledge and growth. However, much research is still needed to inform the way university faculty guide teachers, particularly those that work

with our most needy students. Future research should focus on the nature of these stages and what strategies teacher educators might implement to support teachers, as they become masters of their craft in the classroom.

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The Relationship Between Positive Adolescent Attitudes Toward Reading and Home Literary Environment

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While factors known to positively affect attitudes toward reading have been investigated, the relationship between attitudes toward reading and home literary environments, particularly with older students, needs to be more fully explored. This investigation focused on the nature of the relationship between high school students' reading attitudes and the literary environment in which they were raised.

THE LITERARY DEVELOPMENT of adolescents is just as important and requires just as much attention as that of beginning readers. Yet local, state, and national debates over reading have focused primarily on beginners. Today's adolescents live in a world that requires them to be more literate and to engage in more kinds of reading and writing than was required of their counterparts in previous generations. (IRA Advertisement for the Commission on Adolescent Literary)

According to Vacca (1998), neglect of adolescents' literary development manifested "...itself through educational policy, school curricula and a public mindset on literacy that doesn't appear to extend beyond learning to read and write in early childhood and elementary school" (p. 605). He added, "Research funding for adolescent literacy...is minuscule in relation to the big bucks federal and state agencies spend on early literacy and early intervention research" (p. 605).

Research related to adolescent readers also falls short when compared to early readers. Research that does exist regarding adolescent readers tends to focus on cognitive factors associated with learning to read while affective factors related to reading are often overlooked (Cramer & Castle, 1994). While knowledge of cognitive factors remains important in understanding the reading process, affective factors, which include attitude, are equally as important in the reading process (Cramer & Castle).

Attitudes toward reading, defined as an individual's feelings about reading, caused learners to approach or avoid a reading situation (Alexander & Filler, 1976; Guthrie & Wigfield, 1997). Harris and Sipay (1990) stated that, "pupils' attitudes toward reading can be an important factor in their voluntary reading and reading achievement" (p. 668). Farnan (1996) agreed that attitude directly affects reading achievement; more specifically, she stated that attitude, motivation, and interest are interrelated terms associated with feelings, and with learners' inclinations to learn, or in the case of reading, with readers' inclinations to read. Gillespie's (1993) investigation with older readers concurred with this notion, "For students to be successful readers they must have a positive affective predisposition toward reading instruction" (p. 336).

Reading achievement and reading time increase once a positive attitude is developed (Alexander & Filler).

Factors Affecting Adolescents' Reading Attitude

While it is generally acknowledged that positive reading attitudes lead to positive reading experiences which, in turn, lead to higher academic performance, how one develops a positive reading attitude has not been thoroughly examined with adolescents. Some recent studies focused on identifying variables that influence the development of positive attitudes toward reading in secondary students (Bintz, 1993; Kubis, 1996; Russ, 1989; Spiegel, 1994; Walberg & Tsai, 1983).

Walberg and Tsai (1983, 1985) concluded that a positive attitude toward reading is one of the strongest correlates of reading achievement. Factors that contributed to a positive attitude among adolescents included:

- believing that reading is important
- enjoying reading
- having a high self-concept as a reader
- having a verbally stimulating home environment where verbal interaction takes place regularly

Russ' (1989) investigation explored the relationship between the attitudes of secondary students toward reading and their academic achievement. Russ concluded that higher positive attitudes toward reading correlated significantly with exceptional performance in reading.

In Bintz's (1993) study, secondary students who regarded reading as an attractive and preferred activity identified positive role models such as parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, neighbors, and other relatives as responsible for their love of reading. According to Bintz, these role models constituted "reading families" or "communities of readers" whose members valued and supported reading.

Spiegel (1994), who investigated parents of successful readers, recognized the importance of positive role models for reading. What parents

do in their homes (their literary environment) significantly affected the development of positive attitudes toward reading. According to Spiegel, home literary environments included several components, such as artifacts (books, newspapers, pencils, paper, letters, junk mail, and other print-related material) and events (reading to children).

Kubis (1996) concluded that students attribute their positive attitudes toward reading to a significant event or person. Kubis stated that, generally, students read to as children and who owned personal book collections exhibited more positive attitudes toward reading than those who did not. Moreover, Kubis explained that families of students with positive attitudes toward reading received more magazines than families of those with negative attitudes. Another literary event influencing attitude development was visiting the public library. Kubis added that students who had been taken to the library and who possessed library cards reported more positive attitudes toward reading.

While factors known to positively affect attitude toward reading have been investigated, the relationship between adolescent attitudes toward reading and home literary environments needs to be more fully explored. Cramer and Castle (1994) explained that affective elements related to reading can and should be measured and that it is necessary to establish a more systematic research in the affective areas of reading. Given this backdrop, we focused on answering the following research question: What is the nature of the relationship between adolescent students' positive reading attitudes and the literary environment in which they were raised?

Methods

Our purpose was to investigate and examine the relationship between positive attitudes of adolescent students toward reading and the literary environment in which they were raised. We did not attempt to change attitudes, only to measure adolescent students' attitudes toward reading and investigate home environmental factors influencing those attitudes.

Participants

The 160 tenth-grade students surveyed attended two high schools distinctly different in size. The first school contained approximately 1,300 students; the second school, approximately 350 students. The population of both schools was predominately White; most students attending both schools came from lower-middle to upper-middle socioeconomic backgrounds. We investigated 10th graders in 10th grade English classes because the schools mandated enrollment for all sophomores, thereby providing a more representative sample of tenth-grade students. All students in the tenth-grade English classes could participate without regard to age, sex, race, or cognitive abilities.

Instruments

Harris and Sipay (1990) stated that attitude is a mental construct that cannot be measured directly but must be inferred through observations, self-reports, and projective techniques, such as sentence completion. They explained that self-reporting is useful if the scale or questionnaire is reliable and valid while projective techniques, sometimes considered unreliable, are desirable because they are less likely to evoke socially desirable responses (Harris & Sipay).

The Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment Survey (Tullock-Rhody & Alexander, 1980) assessed attitudes toward reading in secondary schools. The test-retest reliability of the scale was 0.84. We established validity by:

- including items constructed from secondary students' comments
- a t-test score of 4.16 which discriminated between students perceived as having a positive attitude and those having a negative attitude
- by acceptable correlations between items retained on the final scale and the total scale (Tullock-Rhody & Alexander)

The survey consisted of 25 statements that allowed students to respond with a five point Likert scale. See Appendix Part A. A very positive score received a score of five, and a very negative score received

a score of one (Tullock-Rhody & Alexander). The possible scores ranged from 25 to 125.

The Home Literary Environment Survey attempted to establish the literary richness of the environment from which a student has come (Kubis, 1996). Field-testing on this survey involved two freshman English classes and two senior-level Advanced Learning Program classes (Kubis). See Appendix Part B.

For cohesiveness in responding, and to facilitate a comparison between the students' reading attitudes and home literary environment, we retyped and combined The Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment Survey and the Home Literary Environment Survey. The researcher eliminated some questions from the Home Literary Environment Survey deemed not relevant to the investigation.

Procedures

We explained the purpose of the study (to evaluate the relationship between attitudes toward reading and home literary environment) to the students and informed them that the survey was voluntary. To assure anonymity, respondents did not write their names on the surveys. Instructions for completing the survey included:

- read each statement to select the letter that best describes your reaction to the statement
- skip questions if you can not remember the answer, or if something does not apply
- if your family situation has changed since you were preschoolers, answer the questions as they apply to you before you started school

Surveys were administered in each school's English classes on one day. All students had an unlimited time to respond.

Data Analysis

All 160 students completed the combined inventories. After scoring the responses on the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment Survey, we identified the top 25 percent of the scores ($n = 40$) as having the most positive attitudes toward reading and the lower 25 percent ($n = 40$) as having the most negative attitudes toward reading. We further analyzed these 80 surveys for home literary variables.

Next, we calculated frequencies of responses on the Home Literary Environment Survey from the students in both the positive and negative attitude groups. For data analysis, we used a Chi-square Test for Independence ($p = .05$) to determine whether significant relationships existed between variables in the students' home literary environments according to the Home Literary Environment Survey and the development of a positive attitude toward reading defined by the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment Survey.

Results

Attitude scores for the 40 students with most positive attitudes toward reading ranged from 92 to 125 (125 points possible), and for the 40 students with negative scores from 25 to 57. We compared frequencies of responses on the Home Literary Environment from the students in both the positive and negative attitude groups. Among the students with positive attitudes, 34 reported being read to often as a child while 6 said they remembered being read to sometimes. Among those with negative attitudes, 16 indicated they were read to often as a child while 20 said sometimes and 4 reported never being read to as a child.

When asked who read to them the most, those identified as having positive attitudes indicated mother (24), father (8), older sibling (2), and other (6). Among those identified as having negative attitudes, 21 students reported mothers read to them the most, followed by father (7), grandparent (4), and other (4). When asked the educational level of the parent or guardian with

whom they spent the most time with when they were a preschooler, those with positive attitudes reported some high school (1), high school (11), some college (4), college graduate (12), advanced degree (10), and 2 reported that they did not know. Among those with negative attitudes, one reported some high school, (15) high school, (5) some college, (4) college graduate, (5) advanced degree, and 9 indicated they did not know.

Of the students with positive attitudes, 7 indicated that they had no periodical subscriptions coming to their home, 8 reported one or two subscriptions, 6 reported three subscriptions, while 19 students responded that they had four or more subscriptions coming to their homes. Of the students with negative attitudes, 5 reported that they received no periodical subscriptions, 18 indicated that one or two subscriptions came to the house, 8 said they had three subscriptions while 9 reported that they had four or more subscriptions coming to their homes (see Table 1).

The Chi-square Test for Independence ($p = .05$) compared each item on the Home Literary Environment Survey with those students who demonstrated a positive attitude toward reading and those who demonstrated a negative attitude toward reading as determined by the Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment Survey (see Table 2).

Items 25, 26, and 27 sought to determine the types of periodicals received by parents and students, and those periodicals the students read as a child. There were a variety of titles that respondents reported their parents or guardians received. Students listed approximately 65 periodical titles. Of those 65, the most popular were *Time* (17.5%), *Reader's Digest* (15%), *Better Homes & Gardens* (12.5%), *Newsweek* (12.5%), *Consumer Report* (10%), *Good Housekeeping* (10%), and *People* (4%).

Students who reported receiving magazine subscriptions also reported a wide variety of titles. The three most popular magazines among these students were *Young & Modern* (27.5%), *Seventeen* (25%), and *Teen* (15%).

Among the students who reported receiving magazines as a child, a majority recalled receiving *Highlights* as young children. Many recalled receiving some type of zoo magazine, *Ranger Rick*, *National Geographic World* and *Consumer Reports for Kids*.

Discussion

This investigation supported the findings of earlier studies (Bintz, 1993; Kubis, 1996; Spiegel, 1994; Walberg & Tsai, 1985). Our results suggest that students' positive reading attitudes are significantly related to the following literary environment variables:

- being read to as a child
- having been read to by more than one person on a regular basis
- giving books as gifts
- possessing a library card
- educational level of parents
- parental book collections
- personal book collections
- parental interest in child's reading
- parental discussions with children about books or magazines.

Significant to our study, we identified another variable important in developing a positive attitude toward reading peer influence. Having friends who like to read, and with whom they can discuss and recommend books correlated significantly with positive attitudes toward reading.

The home literary environment significantly affected those tenth-grade students' identified as having positive attitudes toward reading. It is reflected in their active participation in home reading-related activities and in interactions with parents and peers who also value reading.

Conclusions

This investigation supports the notion that the formation of a positive attitude toward reading develops at an early age. It also supports previous research, which suggests that the development of a positive attitude toward reading is dependent upon the home literary environment.

Several other conclusions can be drawn from the results of this investigation. First, the development of a positive attitude toward reading was not influenced by who read to the child (Question 2), but rather what mattered was that the child WAS read to (Question 1) and that it was done on a regular basis by a variety of people (Question 3).

Second, owning a library card (Question 7) contributed to a positive attitude toward reading. However, visiting the library as a child (Question 5) and attending story hours or other programs at the library (Question 6) did not significantly contribute to the development of a positive attitude toward reading.

Several of the questions considered to be related to socio-economic status yielded mixed results. No significant relationship existed between the primary caregiver working outside the home (Question 4) and the development of a positive attitude toward reading. Additionally, no significant relationships appeared between newspaper subscriptions (Question 17) and positive attitude, or magazine subscriptions received by the parent (Questions 14 and 24) or child (Questions 15 and 16) and a positive attitude toward reading. However, a significant relationship existed between giving books as gifts (Question 8) and the development of a positive attitude toward reading. The presence of parental home libraries (Question 9) and student home libraries (Question 10) significantly related to a positive attitude toward reading. The findings in this study also indicated a significant relationship between the educational level of the primary caregiver and a positive attitude toward reading. Interestingly, almost one-fourth of the students with negative attitudes indicated they did not know the educational level of their primary caregiver.

Parental involvement with reading also seemed to be a strong factor related to the development of a positive attitude toward reading. Questions 11 and 13 related to parents showing an interest in what their children were reading and discussing their children's reading. Both correlated significantly to the development of a positive attitude toward reading.

Of greatest significance is the finding that a relationship existed between peer influence and the development of a positive attitude toward reading, questions 18, 19, and 20. All related significantly to the development of a positive attitude toward reading. According to Bintz (1993) friends are a part of a "community of readers" present in the lives of children who enjoy reading.

Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to determine the nature of the relationship between tenth-grade students' positive attitudes and the home literary environment in which they were raised. This investigation suggested that it is not necessarily the amount of reading materials in the home that is significantly related to a love of reading, but what is done with those materials. Secondary teachers must be aware that attitudes, both positive and negative, develop at an early age; however, for many students, positive attitudes toward reading were not fostered at home. Teachers must assume responsibility for implementing a variety of activities to change their students' attitudes toward reading. No longer can teachers be satisfied with promoting positive attitudes; they must actively pursue changing students' negative attitudes toward reading.

To begin changing attitudes, it first makes sense for secondary teachers to ascertain the attitudes of their students prior to instruction. Many instruments are available for assessment, including the ones used in this investigation. According to Heilman (1977), "Once a child has developed a dislike for reading...he is not likely to give up his aversion as a result of persuasion based on the authoritarian statements that reading is fun, pleasant, and important" (p.73).

Using Heilman's statement as a call to action, secondary teachers must focus their efforts on demonstrating and modeling the importance of reading, and, most important, be proactive in creating classrooms that promote reading as fun and pleasant. One significant change would be to include activities such as SSR (sustained silent reading) and DEAR (drop everything and read). These activities encourage reading without endless testing and lengthy discussions of the deep hidden meanings within the

pages of text. This is distinctly different from other strategies, such as Accelerated Reader, which require that students be tested after each book.

Teachers should also ensure that materials students want to read are available. Several lists, including the International Reading Association's Children's Choice, which include adolescent/young adult selections, should be used by teachers when recommending books to the school librarian. Secondary teachers should make a concerted effort to determine what students are reading and to provide access to these books by working cooperatively with librarians.

Secondary teachers should also develop a community of readers within their classroom to take advantage of the influence of peers on the development of a positive attitude toward reading. This can be accomplished in a few easy steps. First, classroom libraries must be developed that contain a variety of interesting, age-appropriate books, newspapers and magazines. Some inexpensive ways to build libraries are through buying books at garage sales and used bookstores. Second, teachers need to create comfortable areas in the classroom where students can share books with one another. Third, teachers should provide books on tape for the less able readers so that they can also participate in the reading community. Audiotaped books can be purchased or the classroom teacher can buy inexpensive cassette tapes and ask students, parent volunteers, etc., to read the books onto the tapes. Finally, a classroom community of readers would not be complete without discussions about books. Students, parent volunteers, teachers, and principals could give "book talks" to small groups of students or the entire class. These "book talks" give the listening students an opportunity to hear about books that they might also enjoy reading.

While teachers should also engage in other more traditional practices such as allowing students to self-select reading material, reading aloud to students, and ensuring that all students have library cards, it is important for teachers to broaden their scope in terms of what constitutes acceptable reading material. Moje, Young, Readence and Moore (2000, p. 402) stated that, "an expanded notion of text includes film, CD-ROM, the Internet, popular music, television, magazines, and newspapers, to name a few." From personal experience, manuals that

accompany computer software (word processing, games, simulations) can be challenging for any reader. Moje et al., also recommended that schools allow adolescents to explore and experiment with multiple literacies, not just school-sanctioned literacy. Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, and Rycik (1999) agreed that adolescents deserve access to material that they can read and that they want to read.

Teaching students to be critical consumers of alternative texts and to engage in critical literacy seem to be more appropriate focus, given today's technology-based society. How do students know if a biography on the WWW is accurate? How does a student know whether information on the Internet or is biased, accurate, etc.? When *the Blair Witch Project* was released, there was a great deal of discussion about whether it was fiction or non-fiction. How would a student determine that? Where would he/she go/do to get answers? Was *Saving Private Ryan* fiction or non-fiction? Were the Sullivan brothers real? Did the military really change policies because of this episode? What do the lyrics to Billy Joel's *We Didn't Start the Fire* mean? What historic events are represented in the song?

Finally, at least half of the students in this study identified as having a negative attitude toward reading may be considered marginalized readers "...who are not connected to literacy in classrooms and schools," (Moje et al., 2000, p. 405). This definition does not distinguish between those who struggle with reading and those who choose not to read. Mark Twain once said that those who can read and don't are no better off than those who can't. Efforts to reach these students may involve transforming what texts are being used in the classroom to encourage adolescents to want to read. "Drawing lines of demarcation between topics that adolescents find appealing to read, write, and talk about in our classes and those that adults find worthy of taking up school time is a counterproductive pedagogical practice" (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000, p. 437). Teachers may need to re-focus their thinking about the types of students in today's classrooms, concentrating on those students who are not connected to the literay of the classroom or school. As stated by Anderson, "Increasing the proportion of children who read widely and with evident satisfaction ought to be as much a goal of reading instruction as increasing the number who are competent readers," (as

cited in Cramer & Castle, 1994, p. 1). Secondary school teachers should adapt this statement to read, "Changing the proportion of adolescents/young adults who read widely and with evident satisfaction ought to be as much a goal of literary instruction as increasing the number who are competent readers."

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Table 1. Summary of Student Responses to Home Literary Environment Survey

	Positive		Negative	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Did more than one person read to you on a regular basis?	35	5	18	22
2. Did your primary caregiver work outside of the home when you were young?	17	23	25	15
3. Did you visit the public library when you were young?	37	3	31	9
4. Did you attend story hours or other programs at the public library?	23	16	23	17
5. Do you presently have a library card?	38	2	27	13
6. Do you and your family give each other books as gifts?	31	9	11	29
7. Does your parent(s) or guardian(s) have a collection of books they own at home?	35	5	26	12
8. Do you have a library of your own books ?	37	3	8	32
9. Does your parent(s) or guardian(s) show interest in what you read?	29	11	13	27
10. Does your parent(s) or guardian(s) often ask you what you learned in school?	32	8	27	12
11. Do you ever discuss books or magazine articles with your parent(s) or guardian(s)?	34	6	15	25
12. Does your parent(s) or guardian(s) subscribe to magazines that are mailed to your home?	32	8	33	7
13. Do you have your own magazine subscriptions?	30	10	31	9
14. Do you remember having subscriptions as a child?	29	11	25	15
15. Is there a newspaper coming to your home on a daily basis?	33	7	33	7
16. Do your friends like to read books and/or magazines?	33	7	20	18
17. Do you discuss books you've read with your friends?	28	12	1	39
18. Do you and your friends recommend good books to each other?	29	10	1	39
19. Did your parent(s) or guardian(s) restrict the number of hours or the shows you watched on TV when you were young?	13	26	9	31
20. Do your parent(s) or guardian(s) restrict the number of hours or the TV shows that you watch now?	4	36	6	34

Note: Group sizes vary because all respondents answered not all questions on the Home Literacy Environment survey.

Table 2. Chi-Square Test by Item

Question	χ^2	P
1. Were you read to as a child?	$\chi^2(2, N = 80) = 18.02$	$p < .05^*$
2. Who read to you the most?	$\chi^2(4, N = 76) = 6.51$	$p > .05$
3. Did more than one person read to you on a regular basis?	$\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 16.16$	$p < .05^*$
4. Did primary caregiver work outside of the home when you were young?	$\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 3.2$	$p > .05$
5. Did you visit the public library when you were young?	$\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 3.52$	$p > .05$
6. Did you attend story hours or other programs at the public library?	$\chi^2(1, N = 79) = 0.02$	$p > .05$
7. Do you presently have a library card?	$\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 9.92$	$p < .05^*$
8. Do you and your family give each other books as gifts?	$\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 20.04$	$p < .05^*$
9. Does your parent(s) or guardian(s) have a collection of books they own at home?	$\chi^2(1, N = 78) = 4.36$	$p < .05^*$
10. Do you have a library of your own books?	$\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 42.7$	$p < .05^*$
11. Does your parent(s) or guardian(s) show interest in what you read?	$\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 12.84$	$p < .05^*$
12. Does your parent(s) or guardian(s) often ask what you learned in school?	$\chi^2(1, N = 79) = 1.22$	$p > .05$
13. Do you ever discuss books or magazine articles with your parent(s) or guardian(s)?	$\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 19.0$	$p < .05^*$
14. Does your parent(s) or guardian(s) subscribe to magazines?	$\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 0.08$	$p > .05$
15. Do you have your own magazine subscriptions?	$\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 0.08$	$p > .05$
16. Do you remember having subscriptions as a child?	$\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 0.92$	$p > .05$

Question	χ^2	P
17. Does a newspaper come to your home on a daily basis?	$\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 0.00$	$p > .05$
18. Do your friends like to read books and/or magazines?	$\chi^2(1, N = 78) = 7.98$	$p < .05^*$
19. Do you discuss books you've read with your friends?	$\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 39.44$	$p < .05^*$
20. Do you and your friends recommend good books to each other?	$\chi^2(1, N = 79) = 43.3$	$p < .05^*$
21. Did your parent(s) or guardian(s) restrict the number of hours or the shows you watched on TV when you were young?	$\chi^2(1, N = 79) = 1.15$	$p > .05$
22. Do your parent(s) or guardian(s) restrict the number of hours or the TV shows that you watch now?	$\chi^2(1, N = 80) = .46$	$p > .05$
23. What is the educational level of the parent(s) or guardian(s) with whom you spent the most time with when you were a preschooler?	$\chi^2(5, N = 80) = 12.2$	$p < .05^*$
24. Number of subscriptions currently coming to your house?	$\chi^2(4, N = 80) = 8.28$	$p > .05$

*Significant difference determined between those students with a positive attitude toward reading and those students with a negative attitude toward reading.

Appendix

Combined Survey Form

Reading Attitude Scale Part A

Directions: This is a test to tell how you feel about reading. The score will not affect your grade in any way. Read the statements and then put an X on the line under the letter or letters that represent how you feel about the statement.

SD - Strongly Disagree
A - Agree

D - Disagree
SA - Strongly Agree

U - Undecided

	SD	D	U	A	SA
1. You feel you have better things to do than read.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. You seldom buy a book.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. You are willing to tell people that you do not like to read.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. You have a lot of books in your room at home.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. You like to read a book when ever you have free time.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. You get really excited about books you have read.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. You love to read.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. You like to read books by well-known authors.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

SD - Strongly Disagree

A - Agree

D - Disagree

SA - Strongly Agree

U - Undecided

	SD	D	U	A	SA
9. You never check out a book from the library.	—	—	—	—	—
10. You like to stay at home and read.	—	—	—	—	—
11. You seldom read except when you have to do a book report.	—	—	—	—	—
12. You think reading is a waste of time.	—	—	—	—	—
13. You think reading is boring.	—	—	—	—	—
14. You think people are strange when they read a lot.	—	—	—	—	—
15. You like to read to escape from problems.	—	—	—	—	—
16. You make fun of people who read a lot.	—	—	—	—	—
17. You like to share books with your friends.	—	—	—	—	—
18. You would rather someone just tell your information so that you won't have to read to get it.	—	—	—	—	—
19. You hate reading.	—	—	—	—	—
20. You generally check out a book when you go to the library.	—	—	—	—	—

SD - Strongly Disagree
A - Agree

D - Disagree
SA - Strongly Agree

U - Undecided

	SD	D	U	A	SA
21. It takes you a long time to read a book.	—	—	—	—	—
22. You like to broaden your interests through reading.	—	—	—	—	—
23. You read a lot.	—	—	—	—	—
24. You like to improve your vocabulary so you can use more words.	—	—	—	—	—
25. You like to get books for gifts.	—	—	—	—	—

Literary Environment Survey

Part B

Please answer the following questions by circling the best answer.

1. Did your parent(s) or guardian(s) read to you when you were a young child? a.) Never b.) Sometimes c.) Often

2. Who was the person who read to you the most?

Mother or guardian
Older brother or sister
Other:

Father or guardian
Grandparent

3. Did more than one person read to you on a regular basis?
Yes No

4. Did your primary caregiver work outside the home before you began kindergarten?

Yes No

5. Did you visit the public library when you were young?

Yes No

6. Did you attend story hours or other programs at the public library?

Yes No

7. Do you presently have a public library card?

Yes No

8. Do you and your family members give each other books as gifts?

Yes No

9. Does you parent(s) or guardian(s) have a collection of books they own at home?

Yes No

10. Do you have a library of your own books at home?

Yes No

11. Does your parent(s) or guardian(s) show interest in what you read?

Yes No

12. Does your parent(s) or guardian(s) often ask you what you learned in school?

Yes No

13. Do you ever discuss books or magazine articles with your parent(s) or guardian(s)?

Yes No

14. Does your parent(s) or guardian(s) subscribe to magazines, which are mailed to your home? If they do, please list the titles at the end of this survey.

Yes No

15. Do you have your own magazine subscriptions? If you do, please list the titles at the end of the survey.

Yes No

16. Do you remember having subscriptions as a child? If you do, please list what you can remember of them at the end of this survey.

Yes No

17. Is there a newspaper coming to your home on a daily basis?

Yes No

18. Do your friends like to read books and/or magazines?

Yes No

19. Do you discuss books you've read with your friends?

Yes No

20. Do you and your friends recommend good books to each other?

Yes No

21. Did your parent(s) or guardians restrict the number of hours or the shows you watched on TV when you were young?

Yes No

22. Do your parent(s) or guardian(s) restrict the number of hours or the TV shows that you watch now?

Yes No

23. What is the educational level of the parent or guardian with whom you spent the most time when you were a preschooler?

Some high school
Some College
Advanced degree

High school graduate
College graduate
I don't know

24. Number of subscriptions currently coming to your house for your parent(s) or guardian(s):

0 1 2 3 4 or more

25. Please name the magazines that your parent(s) or guardian(s) receive. (You can describe them if you cannot remember the titles.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

26. Please list the magazines that **you** currently receive:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

27. Magazine(s) you remember receiving as a child: (Describe them if you cannot recall titles.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

If you can think of one person who or one incident, which had a very big, effect on the type of reader you are today, please tell me about him/her in a few words or sentences.

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