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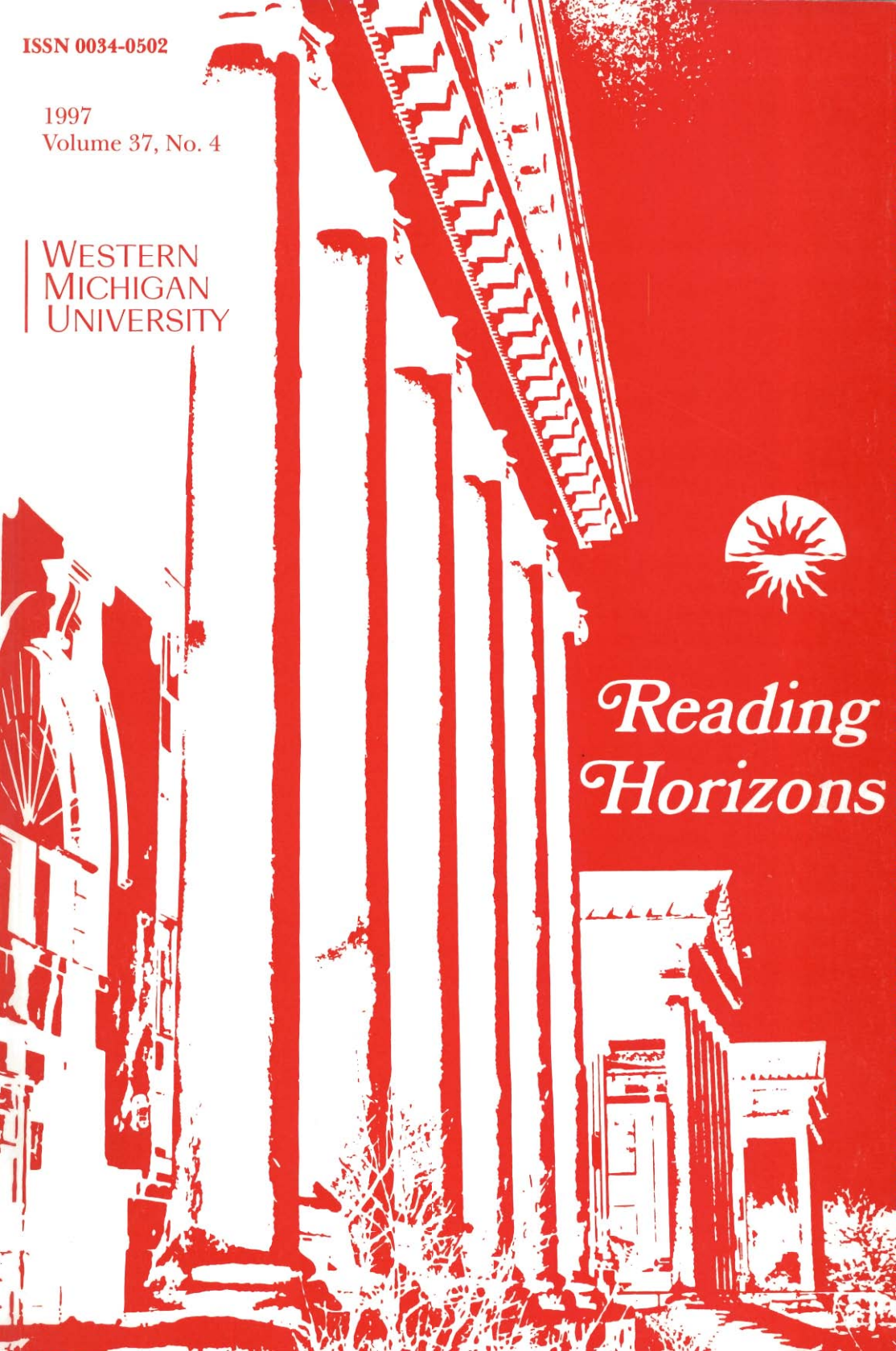
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Reading Horizons





READING HORIZONS:
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Editors: Karen F. Thomas & Paul T. Wilson
Executive Assistant: Susan Standish

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There is no more crucial or basic skill in all of education
than reading.

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The Role of Shared Reading in Developing Effective Early Reading Strategies

Kathryn Button
Margaret Johnson

Shared reading is a part of a balanced early literacy framework. The shared reading experience offers a way teachers can use engaging texts and authentic literacy experiences to help children develop the strategies necessary for effective, independent reading.

One January morning in her kindergarten class, Ida Patacca selected *I Went Walking* by Sue Williams to share with the children. This appealing picture story book has print large enough for the children to follow along, an interesting repetitive text, and clear illustrations that support the story. Ida had read the book several times; now, children joined in easily.

"I went walking. What did you see?" As she reads, Ida pointed underneath each word, indicating which way to go when reading and showing the children word by word matching. The illustration on that page depicted the back of a pink and black pig standing near a mud puddle.

The children answered Ida's question eagerly. "Pig!" "A black pig." "A pink pig!" Their replies predicted the answer that would appear on the next page.

Two children offered suggestions on the upcoming text. Brittany said, "I think it will say, 'I saw a black pig looking at me.'" Kyle said, "I think it will say, 'I saw a pink pig looking at me.'"

"Wait a minute," Ida said. "We have a way to figure this out. If the text says 'pink pig,' what letters would you expect to see?"

"I'll see a 'p' and a 'k' if it's pink," Kyle noted.

"And what letter would you expect to see at the beginning of the word if it says 'black pig?" Ida asked.

"Black," said Brittany. "I hear a 'b' at the beginning and a 'k' at the end."

Ida turned the page. The children searched the text. Vanessa pointed and exclaimed, "Pink! I see a 'p' at the beginning of the word a 'k' at the end."

"You're right," replied Ida. "Read the sentence with me as I point under the words."

This engaging scene took place in a kindergarten classroom during shared reading time. First, shared reading offers a context in which a teacher can demonstrate early reading strategies as children are actually engaged in the process of reading a meaningful text while gathered on a carpet near their teacher who is seated on a low chair. Second, the entire class reads a common text, in this case a picture story book with print large enough for all children to see. Finally, this process of shared reading has a research base with objectives supporting a balanced literacy curriculum.

Shared reading within a balanced literacy curriculum

Shared reading is one component of the Early Literacy Framework developed at The Ohio State University (Button, Johnson, & Furgerson, 1996; Pinnell & McCarrier, 1994). The framework outlines a balanced literacy program that immerses children in using written language. Several contexts in the framework support reading: 1) selected books are read

aloud to children; 2) small group reading instruction is provided through guided reading (Fountas and Pinnell, 1996); 3) time is provided for children to read independently, and 4) development of early reading strategies is supported through shared reading. Writing is also a prominent part of the framework. Children work together to compose and write meaningful stories during interactive writing (Button, Johnson, & Furgerson, 1996), receive one-on-one support during guided writing, and have opportunities to build their ability to write words and stories during independent writing. The children's progress is carefully documented by the teacher through multiple forms of assessment, providing on-going information to guide daily instruction.

Shared reading, as defined above, was created in New Zealand to support children who had limited experiences with print prior to entering school. Holdaway (1979) described shared reading as "the unison situation properly controlled in a lively and meaningful spirit, [which] allows for massive individual practice by every pupil in the teaching context" (p. 129).

Objectives of shared reading

During shared reading teachers use a familiar text to help children engage in the act of reading even before they can independently decode words. This engagement supports the development of critical concepts about print. The text might be a big book, poetry charts, or any product of interactive writing such as a survey question, a story retelling, or the rules of the classroom. Teachers often use shared reading time to explicate such concepts as left and right directionality, differentiation between letters and words, recognition of high frequency words, and utilization of graphophonic cues.

All readers use strategies, the "in the head" operations that enable them to access the information they need swiftly and flexibly (Clay, 1991). Teachers can support children's development of these "in the head" strategies during shared reading. For example, they may ask questions to help children predict what might come next in the story or what they might expect to see in the text. Children search to confirm their predictions. When children's predictions are not confirmed by what they encounter, they learn — under the teacher's guidance — to cross-check different cueing systems to make sense of the text. Teachers might suggest for example, that children use illustrations, look carefully at the print, consider sentence syntax, or re-read a passage.

Through shared reading, children experience and enjoy literacy texts they are not yet ready to read independently. Teachers focus on specific concepts of print and strategies of reading; teaching is often direct and explicit, but it takes place within a highly meaningful context. Sometimes teachers select texts the children themselves have written during interactive writing. At other times teachers choose powerful examples of children's literature that contain vivid language and will hold the interest of children over multiple readings. The power of literature provides support for children to develop a sense of story and how narrative and expository texts are organized. As children become a community of readers, the teacher encourages them to use all that they know, to search for meaning, and to take risks.

Shared reading emerges from and is closely connected to other classroom literacy events. It is not a program for teaching specific reading skills in a predetermined sequence. As teachers and children work together on gaining meaning from print, "teachable moments" occur. With careful monitoring the teacher may identify those moments and provide

the children with just the instruction they need. The purpose of shared reading is to help students become independent, problem solving readers who choose to read.

Research supporting shared reading

Shared reading is well supported by research and theory in the area of emergent literacy. Holdaway (1979) developed big books to emulate lap reading experience of young children and their care givers. He noted the benefits of the highly interactive exchanges between care givers and children and found that this same level of interaction could be created through shared reading in school settings. In lap reading the child often reads along with the care giver. Holdaway described unison activities during shared-book experiences. As the text becomes familiar, children join in the reading of it with their teacher. Holdaway stressed the individual nature of these unison activities. Children participate according to their levels of understanding and confidence, some with complete proficiency and others with approximations of the actual text. Because the texts used are meaningful and engaging, the children actively and enthusiastically choose to participate.

Teachers in New Zealand have used shared reading for many years and studied its effects on emergent readers. A guide published by the New Zealand Department of Education (1985) stated that the main purpose of shared reading is for children to be introduced to "the riches of book language, and given shared opportunities to develop the strategies of sampling, predicting, confirming, and self-correcting for future independent use" (p. 58).

Clay's work (1966, 1979, 1991) on shared reading stemmed from her extensive observations in New Zealand of what good readers do. She found that skilled readers attend to

meaning and syntax before print details. In shared reading, teachers use meaning and syntax to scaffold children's developing knowledge of print. Clay (1991) emphasized the supportive nature of the group to individual learners and the importance of reading meaningful and connected texts. The child tentatively joins with the group to exhibit "more responses [to texts], finer discrimination, and more flexibility" (p. 227). She noted that texts might range from "the most enjoyable story books to very simple books, but are not just word labels on pictures" (p. 226). According to Clay, children always need to be reading for meaning and to address the analytic aspects of texts within the reading of real stories, both narrative and expository. As children engage in reading, they learn more about text structure.

Fisher (1991) described shared reading in her kindergarten classroom. She modeled her shared reading practices on Vygotsky's notion that children benefit from the scaffolding of learning experiences. The focus on meaning supports the children's growing awareness of concepts about print. As the children interact with print, they not only develop strategies for deriving meaning but also gain confidence in their competence as literacy users. Drawing on the work of Holdaway, Fisher (1991) stated that through shared reading her students begin to move to the 'early reading stage' in which they attend more closely to the visual details of the graphophonic cueing system, becoming what we recognize as 'true readers.'

Weaver (1988) noted that as children develop understanding of print naturally, they move from addressing the meaningful whole of a text to attending to its parts. The children move from relying most heavily on their own schema to greater reliance on semantic/syntactic cues and then to graphophonic cues. Eventually, Weaver concluded children

are able to coordinate all cueing systems and cross-check one against the other as they become independent readers.

Shared reading in one kindergarten classroom

In a kindergarten classroom in West Texas, Paige Furgerson and her children were engaged in a study of the weather. After hearing *Rain* (Kalan, 1978) and *Outside, inside* (Crimi, 1995) as read aloud selections, the children decided to write their own big book about the weather which they entitled *After the Rain*. Before beginning to write their next page of text, the children re-read what they had already written. Brody volunteered to point to the text as his classmates joined in the reading.

Paige asked Brody, "Where will you start reading?" He pointed to the upper left hand corner of the page.

The children joined Brody and, in unison, read, "See the sun. See us play outside."

Paige asked, "Why did Brody point only one time under the word 'outside?'"

XuChen replied, "'Outside' is a compound word."

Paige replied, "You are right, XuChen. We match our pointing with each word, and 'outside' is one word." Turning to the class, Paige asked, "Why did Juan draw a sun on this page?"

Keith responded, "So the pictures match the story."

Paige then asked, "How did you know this word was 'sun?'"

Brody pointed to the word and said, "It starts with 's' and ends with 'n.'"

Paige said, "You're right. Both the pictures and the letters can help you."

As material for shared reading, Paige used an informational text written by the children. She began by asking the class questions related to concepts about print. She then made

explicit the children's use of cross-checking different kinds of cues by helping them check graphophonic information against the illustration.

During another shared reading episode in Paige's classroom, Paige and the children read Margaret Miller's *Whose Shoe?* The repetitive nature of the text supports the children's reading of this informational book. The text is organized so that the question "Whose shoe?" appears on the left of each two-page spread. On the right appears a large, colorful photograph of a shoe. On the next page is a photograph of the person who would wear the shoe. The text tells the person's occupation.

Paige held up the book in her left hand and pointed under the text with her right hand as the children read, "Whose shoe?" Pictured was an athletic shoe with cleats. The children suggested possible owners.

Brody suggested, "It's used to play soccer."

Paige asked, "If it's used by a soccer player, what letter would you expect to see at the beginning of the word 'soccer' on the next page?"

The children repeated the word, "soccer," and predicted it would begin with the letter 's.'

Keith said, "It looks like a football shoe."

Paige replied, "If the text is 'football player,' what will you see at the beginning?" Jessica suggests that there would be an 'f' at the beginning of the word "football."

Rosa thought that "it looks like a baseball shoe to me."

Paige asked, "If it's worn by a baseball player, what would you see?"

XuChen repeated the words, "baseball player" and told Paige that there would be two words on the page and baseball would begin with a 'b.'

Paige summarized the students' statements: "If it's soccer, the word will begin with an 's,' if it is football, the word will begin with an 'f,' and if it's baseball player, the first word will begin with 'b.'"

Paige turned the page and the children leaned forward to check their predictions. Qhang said, "It says 'baseball player.'"

Paige asked, "How do you know?"

Jacob said, "I play baseball and I have shoes like that."

XuChen offered, "Baseball begins with a 'b' and it's a long word."

In other shared reading episodes Paige consciously helped children coordinate different cueing systems as they problem solve to derive meaning from print. Paige used a pop-up counting book, *How Many Bugs in a Box* (Carter, 1988), as her shared reading selection. The illustrations appear on the right side of each two page spread. On the left is text such as "How many bugs are in the tall box?" and "How many bugs are in the green box?" Paige selected one word in a line of text to mask so that the children could predict what the word might be.

Paige pointed under the text as the children shared in the reading of the words: "How many bugs are in the..." The children stopped reading when they came to the masked word.

Paige asked, "What's wrong here?"

Rosa said, "I can't see the word. It's covered up."

Paige then asked, "Let's see if we can guess what the word might be. Could we check the picture? What would make sense?"

Keith said, "The word has to tell us about the box."

Paige said, "Yes. On the other pages the author told us about the color or size of the box."

Rosa suggested, "I think the author says it's a little box."

XuChen noted, "It could say it's a yellow box, because it is yellow, actually."

Paige said, "Let's take off the masking paper and check." She removed the paper.

The children looked at the word and several of them exclaimed, "It's small!"

"Does that make sense? Does it look right and sound right to you?" asked Paige. "Let's re-read the sentence and see."

In this example Paige used a masking technique to prompt the students to use all they knew about syntax and semantics to make predictions. They then checked their predictions by using graphophonic cues. Through her questions, Paige supported her students' use of the three cueing systems and modeled the "in the head" problem solving procedures good readers use.

Concluding remarks

Any text that engages the children and is large enough for all to see the print can be a successful text for shared reading. Variety is important to help young readers develop a broad repertoire of examples. The children's own writing can serve as a text as can narrative and expository children's literature selections. As the children revisit a familiar text, they develop the strategies necessary for effective reading while deriving meaning from print.

Within the components of a balanced literacy framework, shared reading makes a unique contribution. Because it emerges from classroom literacy activities, shared reading requires that we as teachers know about effective early literacy operations and the behavior that provides evidence of children's growing knowledge. Our goal is to ensure that all

children develop the skills they need to be successful in literacy. Shared reading offers a way teachers can use engaging texts and authentic literacy experiences and help children develop strategies to become independent readers. Rather than teaching skills in isolated ways, teachers can use the powerful examples that arise while children are engaged in shared reading to explicate and illustrate principles and strategies. Teaching is efficient and effective because the observant teacher is attuned to children's behavior and engages the children's attention. Skills are explicitly taught. The teacher has good information about what children need to know; shared reading offers numerous opportunities to prompt children's attention to strategies. When used within a balanced literacy framework, shared reading is a powerful means of supporting children as they build a repertoire of strategies for reading.

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Improving Parental Involvement in Children's Literacy

Kathy Everts Danielson

The influence of the home environment on children's learning has long been recognized as significant. While many schools strive to involve families, others complain about parent apathy. Mavrogenes (1990) points out that teachers and principals need to question their assumption that low-income parents do not care about their children's education. It is likely that many parents are willing to help, but have few ideas about how to provide help, or have negative memories of school themselves. Parents' insecurity in the school setting may indeed be read as parental apathy (Greenberg, 1989; Moles, 1982).

Schools are generally staffed by middle-class teachers who "reflect middle-class, culturally defined views of what literacy is and how it is best developed" (Cairney and Munsie, 1995,). Particular linguistic styles, curricula, and authority patterns may send messages to diverse cultures about appropriate learning environments and thus alienate various parents (Bourdieu and Passerson, 1977). Partnership programs that seek to educate and cooperate without alienating families are indeed needed for all children. This paper presents some exemplary programs and guiding principles which teachers can share with parents to promote their children's literacy.

Parents as teachers

Parents as teachers (PAT) is a program that supports the home-school connection. "Begun in Missouri and replicated in 36 other states and Australia, the Parents as Teachers program is based on the philosophy that parents are a child's first and most influential teachers, and that the school's role in the early years is to assist families in giving their children a solid educational foundation" (Winter and Rouse, 1990).

Parents as Teachers programs involve home visits, information on developmental ways to enhance learning, group meetings for sharing and support, and screening for detection of possible developmental delays. Parents involved in this program are often given information without being lectured, or as one parents put it, "This program doesn't tell parents what they are doing wrong, but rather offers suggestions for improvement." This program focuses on what parents can do to enhance children's literacy. "Without acknowledging the learning environment of the home and developing strategies to build on family strengths, we cannot hope to make a difference in children's literacy" (Winter and Rouse, 1990).

Winter and Rouse (1990) described the benefits of Missouri Parents as Teachers program. Children in the pilot study were, at age three, significantly more advanced than comparison group children in language, social development, problem solving, and other cognitive abilities. School districts were also viewed more positively by project parents than by those in comparison groups.

Applying the principles of parents as teachers

There is much to be learned from the structure of the Parents as Teachers program. An effort is made to get to know the family and to support what the parents are already

doing. Information is given in a non-threatening manner, and appropriate strategies are modeled. Parents are seen as partners in the process of education, not entities to be blamed for why kids aren't learning.

As children come to school, these programs can be emulated in classroom activities. One way to do this is to have a workshop session for parents on ways in which they can enhance their children's literacy learning. Mavrogenes (1990) suggested that parents be trained or helped in a workshop manner, "If all these elements are present in a training workshop for parents — a warm and accepting attitude, presentation of rationale, modeling, practice, and feedback — the outcomes should be more lasting than a mere list of suggestions on yet another ditto sent home." (Mavrogenes, 1990).

Another way to involve parents is to provide materials for reading and writing activities at home. Shockley (1993) described a literacy project which involved parents in reading the books their first graders had selected and writing about these books in home response journals. This project enhanced parents' involvement in their children's literacy learning and, as Shockley writes, "I saw children and parents building relationships around books" (Shockley, 1993).

Whatever the parental involvement program might be, the following elements are essential. Teachers must first be supportive of what parents are already doing to enhance learning. Information can then be shared that will help parents help their children. This information should be shared ideally by modeling it with parents and children. In this way, parents can see the process in action. Expensive materials are not necessary for enhancing literacy. Simply demonstrating how to read a book to a child and encouraging discussion of the book is an important lesson in literacy learning. "Most

things that parents can do to encourage reading and writing involve time, attention, and sensitivity rather than money" (Mavrogenes, 1990). Moreover, a rationale should always be provided and there should be some mechanism set up for parents to voice questions and concerns and to receive feedback from the teacher.

Conclusion: Ways to enhance literacy with your child

If we truly wish to enhance parental involvement in schools, we also need to train teachers in the art of working with parents. Chavkin and Williams (1988) reported that of 575 teacher educators surveyed, only 37% reported having as much as one class period on parent-teacher relations. If teachers are to work more closely with parents, then teacher education programs must focus more on building this important relationship as well.

In the conclusion are ten simple reading-writing activities that could be shared with parents at an open-house or workshop on literacy learning. Modeling these processes with the parents is the best way to make it memorable and will help parents to see possibilities.

1. Take lots of photographs and make your own books by labeling or writing about the pictures taken and pasting them in a notebook or pieces of paper stapled together. For instance, use the picture book *All I Am* (Roe, 1990) as a model and then write your own books based upon your child's interests. A child pictured with siblings could write "I am a sister" or a picture of a pet could be labeled "I am a pet owner." Encourage children to write the words themselves as best they can.

2. Make puppets and retell a familiar fairy tale or favorite story. Paper bags and paper plates make wonderful, inexpensive puppets.

3. Make a trip to the library a part of your weekly routine. Encourage children to check out books, magazines, poetry anthologies, and other materials as you do the same.

4. Encourage children to read the book after watching the video. For instance, the popular films, "Matilda" and "James and the Giant Peach" are still available as books written by Roald Dahl. Videos of Ramona books (by Beverly Cleary) are also of high quality and available at most libraries. Make a game of finding the book title from the closing credits of a video or movie and then find the book at your library. As you read the book with your children, talk about similarities and differences between the book and the video.

5. A good general procedure to follow while reading aloud: Show the book's cover. Read the title, author, and illustrator. Have children make predictions about what the book might be about. Talk about the author and illustrator. Have children try to remember if they have read other books by this author or illustrator. As you read the book, stop periodically and have children guess what might happen next. Ask why. Offer your own predictions and reasons for making those predictions.

6. Keep a daily calendar or journal where you and your child write down your favorite part of the day or what you learned that day.

7. Read several books by the same author and talk about the author/illustrator's style. Good choices for young children are: Eve Bunting, Eric Carle, Nancy Carlson, Donald

Crews, Tomie dePaola, Kevin Henkes, Steven Kellogg, and Cynthia Rylant.

8. No matter what the age of your child, read aloud to them daily. Choose nonfiction as well as fiction. If you are really pressed for time, read a poem from a poetry anthology.

9. Keep a journal and write your responses to the book in the journal. Or draw pictures in response to the journal. Some good prompts (Kelly, 1990) to start this journal: a) What did you notice about this book?; b) How did it make you feel and why?; c) What did it remind you of?

10. Be a role model of a lifelong reader yourself. Let your child see you reading a variety of materials, including the newspaper, cookbooks, telephone books, magazines, books, maps, etc. Provide a variety of these reading materials for your child as well.

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Mindplay releases *Word Hound* for Windows

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What is the Standard for State Standards? An Investigation of the State English Language Arts Standards of Colorado, Florida, Michigan, and New Hampshire

Heidi Anne Mesmer

It is no wonder that the NCTE Elementary Section Steering Committee, comprising some of the most imaginative and introspective minds in the English language arts field, would eloquently encapsulate a pivotal issue in the nationwide standards dialogue. Within the group's four page position statement is tucked this truth, "Standards represent what we value (NCTE Elementary Section Steering Committee, 1996, p. 2)." This brief declaration speaks to the enormous emotional investment which standards discussions involve and exemplifies the responsibility of creating standards.

As a formal participant in one state's English language arts standards group, I learned that the development of an exemplary product was only one goal of the project. Standards, viewed as perfect documents, are not living texts but static icons of educational holiness in danger of being debunked.

"The key function of any standards document is to support and encourage educators to engage in their own processes of thinking about what they value and know about learning and language (NCTE Elementary Section Steering Committee, p. 10)." I learned that I had become part of a conversation and that the act of writing standards is not a conclusive accomplishment, but rather a cyclical process of continual reflection, debate, revision, improvement, and learning. As we assert the importance of lifelong learning for our students, we must also embrace the ongoing contemplation of our own frameworks and beliefs.

The release of *The Standards for the English Language Arts* written by International Reading Association (IRA) and National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) in March of 1996, unfortunately replicated the organization of most states' existing English language arts standards. Although this timing was inauspicious for the groups constructing new state standards, it does offer a perfect opportunity to compare the work of one highly respected group with that which has naturally arisen from states around the country. This article will analyze the English language arts content standards of four states, Colorado, Florida, Michigan, and New Hampshire, in the areas of organization, style, and content, using the IRA/NCTE publication, *The Standards for the English Language Arts*, as a guide.

What is the standard for standards?

As states have written model standards and professional organizations have contributed to the venture many questions have emerged, the most important of which is — What exemplifies strong standards? The answers range from the American Federation of Teachers' (AFT) very academic and concrete position, to documents which include more abstract and affective goals (Gandal, 1995). In discussing the English

language arts content standards, the work of the IRA/NCTE group is the best place to start. The IRA/NCTE group defines standards as, "Statements that define what students should know and be able to do in the English language arts (p. 2)." To this basic definition, the group adds important qualifiers and explanations which further inform the standards discussion.

In reviewing *The Standards for the English Language Arts*, along with a policy study by the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE), several conclusions seem warranted about the characteristics of exemplary learning standards. It appears that writing quality standards relies upon balancing opposing forces. Standards writers must weigh using documents to support a consensus with developing standards that encourage innovation. For example, the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) framed standards which were built upon both consensus and innovation. That group launched broad consensus-building efforts which also yielded cutting edge standards (CPRE, 1993). Most experts agree on the status of the NCTM standards, "While some disputes linger, the degree of acceptance NCTM has achieved is what other standard-setting groups aim to emulate (CPRE, 1993, p. 2)." The IRA/NCTE standards reflect innovative components such as a standard devoted to technology and a standard addressing the needs of Limited English Proficient students. Writers of *The Standards for the English Language Arts* also profess goals of consensus-building; "Our goal is to define, as clearly and specifically as possible, the current consensus between literacy teachers and researchers about what students should learn in the English language arts" (p. 1).

Interestingly this quote also denotes an additional balance that standards writers must strike between specificity and generality. Specificity is needed to ensure clarity and quality, but generality is necessary to accommodate many different

curricula and teachers. The IRA/NCTE document uses a glossary and precise vocabulary to promote clarity but writes standards which are applicable to learners at all levels.

CPRE makes several other recommendations about writing standards which apply to understanding the IRA/NCTE document. An exploration of the nature of the subject area is suggested as a first step (CPRE, 1993). The second step includes selecting a format which fits the idiosyncrasies of the subject area. *The Standards for the English Language Arts* explains the English language arts by giving an informative overview of their nature and presenting an interactive model. This model places the learner at the center, surrounded by areas of primary emphasis — development, content, and purpose (IRA/NCTE, 1996). The format of the IRA/NCTE document consists of four chapters, which give a brief explanation of standards, a model interpreting the teaching and learning of language arts, an explanation of twelve standards, and sets of vignettes illustrating the standards. To include pertinent information in an easily referenced format, the document includes a glossary of terms and six appendices listing the history of the project, participants, resources, and state contacts. The IRA/NCTE participant list covers hundreds of experts, teachers, state commissioners (including those of the four states being discussed), citizen groups, businesses, teachers' associations, councils, committees, minority coalitions, reviewers, and standards workshop participants. The format both communicates vital information and lends itself to the interactive nature of the language arts.

As our country has entered into the standards debate, many participants have contributed to an understanding of what comprises quality standards. In reality, these qualities include balancing tensions inherent in the process, such as consensus and innovation, and specificity and generality.

Strong standards projects start with an investigation of the nature of the discipline area and use this information to select a complementary, flexible format which matches the character of the subject area. Finally, the formation of standards should include many different professionals and organizations.

A comparison of organization

For the purposes of this work, organization will be defined as how a document is assembled including constituent parts, breakdown of parts into various levels, and layout of sections throughout the document. The organization of a document is vital because it indicates to readers the purpose and audience of a text. It also reveals subtleties of a piece, such as author perspective and the nature of the chosen topic. Organization is a crucial element in determining how user-friendly a document is, and the ease with which it accomplishes its intended purposes. In considering the organization of state standards documents, the following questions are important: 1) Does the organization of the standards document reflect an understanding of the needs of the audience/classroom teachers? (e.g., Is it user-friendly?); 2) Does the organization allow the document to easily accomplish its purposes?; 3) Does it provide ways for a reader to be generally informed as well as, specifically informed?

The organization of *The Standards for the English Language Arts* reveals its purpose, audience, and authors' perspectives. The purpose of the document is to fully clarify a consensus on best practices. The carefully crafted expository text manifests the authors' intentions to thoroughly describe the complex nature of the English language arts. Furthermore, this format fits the wide audience of national practitioners and policy makers. Purposes of precision yield an organization which is complete, but not brief. One

exception to this elaborate format is the list of the standards, which is brief and easily located.

State standards are organized somewhat differently, due partially to their distinct audiences and purposes. The purposes of state standards are more practical because they are meant to direct teachers in planning instruction. The audiences of these documents are generally teachers and local curriculum decision-makers. Thus, organization must be friendly to the time-burdened teacher. The documents of these four states, as a whole, tend to be less focused on model and theory and more focused on specific learning outcomes. Knowing that standards booklets compete with other documents in demanding a teacher's time, state standards writers do not include extensive models of English language arts learning as did *The Standards for the English Language Arts*.

However, each state does organize its standards with a brief introduction. Introductions include varying levels of explanation of the document and its uses to teachers. The New Hampshire standards, for example, use a series of questions to explain the purposes, definitions, and organization of the document. In a succinct one and one-half page explanation, the reader is given a global understanding of this state's standards (New Hampshire Department of Education [DOE], 1996). The introduction of the Colorado standards gives a one page opening about the importance of the English language arts and the goals of the standards (Colorado Department of Education [DOE], 1995). The Michigan document gives a four page introduction including a brief chronology of the project, goals, a vision statement, and an explanation of each standard (Michigan Department of Education [DOE], 1995). The Florida English language arts standards are packaged together with other content areas standards and have no introduction. The Florida Curriculum Framework, however, includes extensive

information about the standards movement, vision statements, and information about organization (Florida Department of Education [DOE], 1996). It is my opinion that the user friendly question format of the New Hampshire standards best reflects its audience of teachers and purposes of providing salient information in an accessible format.

The arrangement of the body of the document also significantly impacts the ease with which the standards accomplish their purposes. Typically the layout includes a progression from general to specific. All states frame their standards documents with broad standards applicable to all grade levels. To these standards, states add benchmarks, or specific statements of learner expectations. Benchmarks are grouped into different developmental levels (See Table 1). Though using slightly different divisions or wording, states generally divide schooling into primary, intermediate, middle and high. Michigan's levels are the most flexible, leaving specific grade level cutoffs to local school systems. Interestingly, Colorado includes an added developmental level pertaining to extensions for students. [This level is actually never labeled. The wording "extension" is chosen because each of these added benchmarks begins with the phrasing, "For students extending their skills ..." (Colorado DOE, 1995)]

Table 1
Developmental Levels of State Standards

Colorado	[K-4]	[5-8]	[9-12]	extension
Florida	[K-2]	[3-5]	[6-8]	[9-12]
Michigan	Early Elem.	Late Elem.	Middle	High
New Hampshire	[K-3]	[4-6]	[7-10]	

Several states add pieces to this basic format to better describe their standards (See Table 2). Colorado and New Hampshire add more written explanation, while the documents of Florida and Michigan are leaner. Each organization has its advantages. The more brief documents allow for quicker reading and easier use, but the more explanatory documents ensure an unambiguous understanding of the standards.

The standards for Michigan, New Hampshire, and Colorado include all the benchmarks at all levels under each standard within 1-3 pages. Each developmental level incorporates the expectations of the previous level. This organization facilitates forming a cohesive picture of expectations from one developmental level to the next. The reader comes away, not only with knowledge of what is expected at his/her level of instruction, but also with the scope and sequence of a standard and how specific expectations fit into the larger picture. Michigan's layout of benchmarks is extremely helpful in accomplishing a global understanding of expectations. Benchmarks under a given standard are aligned horizontally from one level to the next, so that the reader need only follow straight across the page to see the progression of a standard from early elementary through high school. This arrangement lends itself to increasing communication across grade levels.

The Florida document, *The Sunshine State Standards*, makes understanding the scope and sequence of a standard more challenging. *The Sunshine State Standards* includes all standards for all subject areas in one developmental packet. For example, math, science, English language arts, and other subject areas are all included in a K-2 or 3-5 packet. This has obvious advantages for the classroom teacher, who is most likely a generalist, but it inhibits understanding the

progression of one standard through several developmental levels. The Curriculum Framework does group the benchmarks of all levels under each standard. However, each page contains only 1-3 benchmarks, requiring the reader to flip between 5-10 pages to understand the scope and sequence of only one standard.

Table 2
Layout of State Standards

<u>Colorado</u>	<u>Florida</u>	<u>Michigan</u>	<u>New Hampshire</u>
Numbered standard	Subject area title	Numbered and labeled standard	Purpose
Expanded standard	Numbered standard	Numbered benchmarks	Numbered standard
Rationale	Benchmarks		Bulleted proficiency standards

Three key features of organization are found to enhance the purposes of standards documents. First, an introduction with a brief explanation of the uses, purposes, definitions, and organization of the document guides the reader. Second, developmental divisions, must be included to address the needs of a wide age-range of learners. Finally, the arrangement of benchmarks under a standard should allow a means by which the user can easily see the scope and sequence of a standard.

A comparison of style

An analysis of the style of standards focuses on how standards are written. The word choice and sentence structure of standards both point to the degree to which standards are concrete, integrated, and flexible. The following questions are relevant to comparing standards in terms of stylistic influences: 1) How does the style of the document reflect

attitudes and beliefs about teaching and learning?; 2) Within the confines of many restrictions, how do state documents differ in style?

The IRA/NCTE's standards are marked by certain stylistic choices which reveal beliefs about learning and teaching. Foremost, *The Standards for the English Language Arts* is respectful of teachers and students. Standards are concrete in expectations for students but not restrictive. Detailed content, when mentioned specifically, is written in parenthetical expressions to illustrate a concept or give examples of a term. For example, Standard 2 is written, "Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g. philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience (IRA/NCTE, 1996, p. 3)." A great deal of flexibility is allowed in this standard because the teacher is not being told prescriptively what to teach but is being asked to use his/her own expertise to expose students to high quality literary choices. Other standards are also broad, not narrowly calling for one specific learning strategy but instead expecting that students use many strategies, texts, and processes from which to learn. The IRA/NCTE standards serve as a starting place for teachers and students. In this sense, standards are not written as mandated minimal expectations by which instruction can be limited, controlled, or assessed but rather places to begin limitless learning.

Admittedly, state standards are not allowed many freedoms. Governmental agencies place requirements on these documents and assessments are built from them. However, even with such parameters, state English language arts documents do vary in their styles, showing degrees of flexibility, specificity, and integration. The Goals 2000 legislation, which has largely motivated the standards movement, defines content area standards as general statements of what a student

should know and be able to do ("Goals 2000," sec. 3, 1994). Laws typically use such subjectively defined language and this act is no different. Thus, states vary in their interpretation of the definition of standards and reflect these understandings through stylistic choices.

States' standards range in the degree of detail which is included. The standards of Florida and Colorado are stated in brief, straightforward sentences. For example, Florida Reading Standard 1 states, "Student uses the reading process effectively (Florida DOE, 1996, p. 2)." Colorado Standard 1 simply states, "Students read and understand a variety of materials (Colorado DOE, 1995, p. 2)." These types of standards are general and quickly match to a subject area within language arts. Michigan and New Hampshire's standards are more complex. The New Hampshire Reading Standard states, "Students will demonstrate the interest and ability to read age-appropriate materials fluently, with understanding and appreciation (New Hampshire DOE, 1996, p. 4)." The use of the adverb "fluently" describes the type of reading expected and the qualifiers "with understanding and appreciation" place higher expectations on the task. Michigan Standard Three, Meaning and Communication, states, "All students will focus on meaning and communication as they listen, speak, view, read, and write in personal, social, occupational, and civic contexts (Michigan DOE, 1996, p. 2)." This standard is indicative of the integrated nature of Michigan's standards. The standard includes details about the foci of reading.

Understandably, the states which wrote standards in the least specific terms, (Florida and Colorado) provide the most prescriptive and explicit listing of requirements in benchmarks. New Hampshire's proficiency standards appear to be in the middle of the continuum for specificity, while Michigan's benchmarks are the least explicit and most

flexible. Essentially, benchmarks for Florida and Colorado read as lists of skills which are to be introduced at specific developmental levels. New Hampshire's benchmarks are also list-like but the wording is more suggestive and open. Perhaps listing skills fits the perceived purposes, but, in using these documents, a teacher may feel creatively limited by the scope of each list. The exhaustive nature of the benchmarks, may also create a "coverage mentality" whereby teachers focus on covering material for accountability purposes but not on ensuring students' mastery.

Standards initially appear to be devoid of style, but when compared to each other, they show variations which exhibit attitudes towards teaching and learning. The IRA/NCTE group creates standards which are concrete but at the same time flexible. The work of this group encourages the expertise of teachers.

On the other hand, the prescriptive nature of state's standards and benchmarks reveals an attitude of "teacher proofing" the curriculum. I do not criticize those who write these state documents, for I know that state agencies, federal grant specifications, and state commissioners play powerful roles in directing the work of state committees. Committees have varying amounts of freedom and are given different perceptions of what their tasks include.

A comparison of content

Certainly no discussion of standards documents would be complete without addressing the very purpose for which they have been created; to communicate the content knowledge and skills which students should have as proficient users of the English language. Inspecting the content of standards is important because it provides a view about how state curricula match national consensus and how state curricula

compare to each other. Teachers in areas with great geographic separations, population differences, and multicultural communities, are interested in seeing how their curriculum is similar to that of other states. As reflective professionals, they are asking — Are there other ways to teach? Am I meeting the needs of my students with my present methods? Fully analyzing the content of *The Standards for the English Language Arts* or any of the state's standards, is beyond the scope of this article. Instead, this work will address essential questions relating to the content of English language arts standards such as: 1) how does the content of state standards compare to the work of the IRA/NCTE group? Do they include the same innovative ideas?; 2) What is the same and different in the content of state language arts standards? Is there a commonality to what we are teaching nationwide?

The content of the IRA/NCTE document, includes common curricular pieces which are familiar to educators nationwide. It also contains rare gems of innovation which inspire new avenues of teaching and learning. The more common content emphasis include, literature in many genres, strategies in reading and comprehension, the writing process, language conventions, and speech. Within each of the content standards are many skills pointing to the range of expectations for students. The vocabulary in these standards is second nature to most teachers. I believe that in any state, these concepts would be found in a majority of classrooms. The IRA/NCTE standards also make important statements about the future of language arts. For instance, writers of *The Standards for the English Language Arts* recognize the needs of English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and demonstrate awareness of projected increases in the number of ESOL learners. Standard 10 shows respect for the native languages of ESOL students and embraces these native languages as

means by which competency in English may be derived. Another example of innovation includes, the inclusion of a specific standard focusing on technology. Standard Eight focuses on the use of technology in promoting literacy through technological text resources, but it also addresses technology as a new area of literacy. The decision that writers made to devote an entire standard to this idea rather than integrating it into existing areas, signifies the importance placed on technology. *The Standards for the English Language Arts* also includes a standard devoted to research. Standard Seven deals with students generating questions and posing problems at all levels. This standard is also illustrated as a natural vehicle for integrating the curriculum. To support and illustrate the standards, the IRA/NCTE document includes illustrative vignettes at elementary, middle, and high school levels. These vignettes are inspired by actual classrooms. The vignettes describe student-centered classrooms and particularly emphasize interdisciplinary project, research, meaningful writing, and uses of technology.

I first compared the state standards to the IRA/NCTE standards, searching particularly for matches which addressed: ESOL students, technology, and research. None of the states made mention of ESOL learners within their English language arts standards. It can be validly argued that certain states do not include a standard pertaining to ESOL students because their population does not reflect this need. However, even the state that has a large ESOL population, Florida, does not address the unique needs of ESOL students within a specific standard. States did include information on technology and research. While states did not write standards specifically focused on technology, all included components of technology within standards and benchmarks. Usually technological resources considered types text are included. Technology is also mentioned as a means of communication or writing.

The inclusion of research is also found at varying levels. Michigan is the only state which has a standard on research. Its Standard Eleven is called Inquiry and Research (Michigan DOE, 1996). New Hampshire and Colorado have standards (Standard Five for both states) which appear to imply research but do not specifically mention it (Colorado DOE, 1995; New Hampshire DOE, 1996). Florida makes mention of research skills within the writing standards and benchmarks (Florida DOE, 1996).

Essentially, in all of these areas, except ESOL, states include information which matches the innovative ideas of the IRA/NCTE standards. I found it interesting that these four states, which are geographically separated and which reflect varying populations, would have so many areas of content similarity in their standards documents. By and large, the different states value many of the same concepts and skills. In the area of reading, all states emphasized the use of varied strategies in decoding and comprehension. All included information or main idea, fact and opinion, literary terminology, wide reading of classic and contemporary literary genre, and the construction of meaning from text. In the area of communication, all states included the writing process and conventions of language. In addition, states wrote standards in the areas of listening, speaking, and viewing. Generally the information included within standards is very much the same.

Interestingly, differences emerge in the degree of detail included in each area and in the amount of integration. Occasionally, states include unique concepts or treatments of topics. Michigan's standards are the most atypical in that many of the traditional English language arts — reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing are integrated throughout the standards. The Michigan standards focus on broad

goals and incorporate the language arts in reading these goals. Take, for example, Standard Eight, Genre and Craft of Language, "all students will explore and use the characteristics of different types of texts, aesthetic elements, and mechanics — including text structure, figurative and descriptive language, spelling, punctuation, and grammar — to construct and convey meaning (Michigan DOE, 1996, p. 2)." Embedded within this standard are reading and literature goals, language conventions skills, and writing. Michigan's document is less prescriptive and more flexible. An example of this very point, is the manner in which this state address conventions of language. Whereas most states include detailed lists of grammatical skills which students should attain at certain levels. Michigan is more broad. Under Standard 2 Meaning and Communication (Michigan DOE, 1996), students must write grammatically correct sentences, but details of grammatical skills are far less extensive than Colorado's Standard Three which includes correct pronoun case, regular and irregular verbs, and subject-verb agreement in comparisons (Colorado DOE, 1996) Florida and New Hampshire also include more specific lists of grammatical skills. Colorado blends conventional uses in writing with the same in speaking, with Standard Three reading, "Students write and speak using conventional grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling (Colorado DOE, 1996, p. 5)." It is challenging to understand how correct punctuation, capitalization, and spelling can be used in speech.

In other areas, states differ in content. Florida includes a unique standard addressing the more aesthetic elements of language. Language Standards 1 and 2, state, "The student understands the nature of language. The student understands the power of language (Florida DOE, p. 2)." The focus of these standards seems to pertain to patterns in language, word choice, figurative language, etymology, formality, and use of

language in media. Although other states make mention of these elements, they do not address their study in a separate standard. The importance of critical thinking is brought out in the standards of Michigan, Colorado, and Florida. Michigan has composed a critical standard (Standard 12) which relates a student's formation and use of existing criteria for evaluation (Michigan DOE, 1996, p. 3). The standard of Colorado, (Standard 4) centers on using critical thinking skills in the English language arts (Colorado DOE, 1995, p. 6). Florida's literature, Standard 2 focuses on critical response to literature (Florida DOE, 1996, p. 2). Finally, two states, have standards which relate to application. Michigan has a standard called, Ideas in Action, which involves applying knowledge of the English language arts and New Hampshire's Standard 7 involves applying English language arts in a variety of settings.

Conclusion

This exploration of the English language arts standards of these four states and the IRA/NCTE shows that standards reflect only a small part of what is going on in the classroom. No matter how artfully written, or carefully organized, standards are limited in their abilities to impact students.

However, I have found that standards reveal more than they appear to, and involve a delicate balance of several forces. The Standards for the English Language Arts, is a document which cleverly balances such forces and serves as an exemplary model. Its organization, style, and content, match well its audience and purpose.

Each element of a standards document contributes to a unified whole which reveals the values of the writers. The organization of state documents plays an important role in reflecting both uses and audiences. Style tends to indicate

attitudes about teaching and learning, while content and degree of specificity in content reveal a balance between innovation and consensus. Standards are documentation of what we, as teachers, value and are best used as a means to begin meaningful discussions of our practice.

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Teaching Pragmatic Language Awareness as an Integral Aspect of Reading and Language Arts Instruction

Monica Gordon Pershey

The purpose of teaching pragmatic language awareness

Many teachers are continually refining their instructional practices to offer an integrated language arts approach that engages learners in a variety of opportunities to interact with literature and its linguistic components. As Sawyer and Sawyer (1993) suggest, integrative classroom approaches involve lengthy and varied discussion about literature, use readings that are meaningful to learners, and help students overtly examine their own processes of thinking about language.

Engaging students in carefully examining how authors of their favorite books use language to construct text involves teachers facilitating classroom dialogue about the semantic, syntactic and pragmatic components of text. Teachers who are sensitive to how authors choose words to effect the writer's meaning and who share their own perceptions of the magic of words can inspire readers' semantic awareness. When teachers and students examine how an author crafts sentences by,

creatively manipulating word order to enhance the rhythm of the text, this sort of classroom talk about text may build syntactic awareness. In addition, collaborative investigation of pragmatic aspects of text, (i.e., function and purpose of text sentences or passages) can also be used to facilitate thoughtful group interaction about how authors fashion meaningful text messages.

Defining pragmatic language

Pragmatic language theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) explores the dimensions of meaning behind spoken or written messages. The use, purpose, and/or intentions of speech or writing are examined. Pragmatic study rests on the assumption that language is used to interact purposefully with others.

The functions of language are many, including instrumental (stating personal needs by requests, polite hints, or persuasions); regulatory (telling others what to do by controlling behavior, feelings, or attitudes); interactional (helping people get along with others, establishing a bond, setting the tone for a relationship, or negotiating comfort between speakers); personal (expressing individuality in statements that discuss self-concept, air personal feelings and opinions, or describe one's own life and identity); imaginative (relating fantasy, in order to pretend or to create drama, poetry, or stories); heuristic (seeking information, questioning, exploring, investigating, wondering, and figuring); and informative (reporting facts or conclusions, describing or recalling events or information in a non-emotive fashion) (Halliday, 1973).

Three additional categories of function are divertive (promoting enjoyment for the speaker and listener, as in puns, riddles, jokes, and play on words); authoritative/contractual (articulating codes of law, contracts,

ceremonies, and rituals); and perpetuation (recording or memorializing passing events in documents such as diaries, journals, and letters) (Smith, 1977).

Pragmatic ability in oral discourse

Children's use of these message intents is well documented (Cole, 1982; Dore, 1975; Garvey, 1975; Halliday, 1973). Specifically, by kindergarten, children are apt to have a well-established (although seemingly unconscious) productive use of the functions described by Halliday (1973) (Pellegrini, 1984b; Pinnell, 1975; Preece, 1987). For example, regulatory utterances are among the most frequently produced speech acts to be found in samples of language from preschoolers aged three to five. Messages which serve the personal function have been observed in the speech of children nearing age three. Heuristic language has been noted to develop incrementally in the dialogues of children aged 21 to 36 months. Use of the imaginative function is routinely recorded during four-year-olds' pretend play and in the sociodramatic play of kindergartners. In school age children, capable use of all ten message intents is well established. For a number of language sampling studies which substantiate the attainment of these milestones, see Black, 1979; Bloom and Lahey, 1978; Bloom, Rocissano and Hood, 1976; Bruner, 1975; Dore, 1975; Garvey, 1975; Halliday, 1973; Keenan, 1974; Pinnell, 1975; Umiker-Sebeok, 1979.

Pragmatic language in an integrated language arts approach

Tannen (1982) proposes that the language of text can be investigated much as oral language has been explored: as purposeful messages shared by a sender and a receiver. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) and Calkins (1983) note that narrative text has similarities to oral conversation which may be comprehensible to young children. Myers (1982) maintains

that the pragmatic knowledge developed naturally in children's use of oral language can be transferred and applied to enhance comprehension of the function of the language in text. Instruction that teaches young readers to examine the language functions of text passages can provide opportunity for both oral and written response to text. "When teachers help children know what [pragmatic language is], they not only foster comprehension of a particular text but also help readers grow in their abilities to use language appropriately and effectively in different situations... [to] make children more competent language users" (Morgan, 1989, p. 237).

Given the opportunity to explore the pragmatic aspects of oral discourse and texts they read, young language users can begin to reflect on language properties and components (Bialystok, 1988). Metacognitive and metalingusitic monitoring is thus developed when attention is devoted to language structures in their oral and written contexts.

Research has shown that five, six, and seven year-old children use these language functions in their natural speech and upon elicitation testing, can be taught to be metalinguistically aware of how these functions can be found in prose. They then can consciously use these functions to comprehend narrative passages, appreciate author's purpose, and personally respond to text (Pershey, 1994). Instruction that helps students become metalinguistically aware of the message functions of text passages can enhance a young reader's understanding and enjoyment of literary text.

Instructional considerations when introducing pragmatic language awareness

Comparisons between pragmatic message functions used in our daily spoken language and the language of texts can be explicitly brought to the attention of student readers. In some

fairy tales, for example, failure to obey a regulatory statement sets the plot in motion. If Cinderella had not failed to be home by midnight, the entire story would not have taken place.

Morgan (1989) cautions teachers that it cannot be assumed that even those children who appear to have full comprehension of text have any metalinguistic understanding of how to look at a message and analyze its function. Because "certain pragmatic features are exploited by children's writers for different purposes... awareness of these elements can deepen comprehension, extend the reader's communicative repertoire, and heighten aesthetic responses." (Morgan, 1989, p. 228). Students who engage in discussion of the imaginative aspects of a text, for example, or who examine an author's use of humor and their interpretations of it, are applying their awareness of message functions to extend their reactions to text.

Young readers require careful teacher modeling and explicit instruction that guides them in using their own language to respond to underlying pragmatic functions of language in texts. Given the opportunity, students can develop skill in the specific examination of the pragmatic aspects of text language. Students can be encouraged to build awareness of how metalinguistic aspects of reading comprehension are part of an overall appreciation of books and stories they enjoy.

Classroom discussion of the pragmatic aspects of text can support students in coming to view themselves as active and reactive readers. Students who become sensitive to the intention of written messages are learning to self-monitor the way that they think about text and react to it. Students may be guided to self-question while they learn. Some of these questions may well be about the pragmatic intent of text passages,

promoting three abilities to "occur simultaneously... 1) learning language; 2) learning through language; and 3) learning more about language" (Van Dongen, 1986, p. 3).

Exploration of pragmatic language will necessarily involve transfer of learning across language modalities (the oral and written channels). As Tierney (1982, p. 98-99) explains, in "conversation a listener forms a model of what the speaker is trying to say consistent with what the listener perceives the speaker's intentions to be. In reading text, a comprehender tries to form a model of what the author is trying to do." Thus, a classroom approach which teaches children to use conversational knowledge of language functions supports their ability to gather meaning from text and provides students with a practical example of how to transfer knowledge.

Children who experience interpreting message functions of every day oral language and can transfer this ability to examine language of written stories, gain the fundamental cognitive skill of transferring learnings across four language arts. This is key to an integrated approach to literacy acquisition.

Instructional approaches for language schemata

The instructional approaches outlined in this article may facilitate students' awareness of message function and the related concerns of speaker's or author's purpose. Students who are familiar with any or all of the ten functions of language build schemata about message function. The functions become familiar categories into which they sort the language that they are listening to, reading, or using as speakers or writers. Students may come to recognize when language is being used to regulate the opinion of others as contrasted with language being used to emotionally portray personal experiences. This thinking entails inferencing, contributes to

response to text, enhances schema development, and transcends literal comprehension.

Although the approaches described below may suggest an instructional sequence, this does not need to be rigidly adhered to by teachers. Different groups of students, depending upon age and previous experiences, will require varying amounts of exposure to the first three approaches, designed to build background knowledge on pragmatics of language. Certain groups of students may need pragmatics instruction presented very specifically in a variety of ways. For other groups, their past interactions with books and language will have prepared them for incorporating their schemata about learning language and learning through language into new tasks emphasizing pragmatic language.

Approaches numbered four to seven are the essential parts of teaching practices. Here, pragmatics instruction is presented to extend students' range of language purposes. Constructing purposeful messages in Approaches six and seven is important to students who are engaged in producing authentic written products for a known audience, or who are delivering a lively group presentation to share response to text.

Approach 1: Teaching the concept of message function — mini-lesson

Introducing students to the ten message functions may require several teacher-led mini-lessons involving direct explanation of the names of the functions and citing examples. Thompkins and Hoskisson (1995) and Morrow (1989) are sources for designing language arts mini-lessons as well as presenting simplified explanations and examples of Halliday's (1973) seven functions. Smith (1977) clearly explains

Halliday's seven functions as well as three additional functions.

In using suggested approaches, teachers may wish to create labels for the functions that are more similar to students' language. For instance, using "order" or "command" may substitute for the regulatory function and "for fun" may substitute for the divertive function.

Teachers will need to clearly describe the concept of message purpose and may wish to give examples of the ten language functions by using sentences from familiar texts. Or, use messages that have been spoken in class at varying times. A list of messages spoken during various classroom communication events, such as when students are speaking while working in cooperative groups, when teachers are giving directions, when a class member is reporting current events, and at other times will provide a bank of familiar messages whose functions can be analyzed.

Approach 2: Eliciting message function — role play during mini-lessons

Myers and Gray (1983) maintain that pragmatic skill rests with how a speaker structures a message to correspond to the needs of a particular linguistic context or particular listener(s). To elicit use of message functions, teachers may wish to find opportunities for students to reveal their understanding of when to use a certain function in context. Pragmatic skill involves adapting to an interactional environment where a participant must both interpret and originate communicative acts appropriately and functionally.

In role playing students are asked to take on the role of another speaker and produce language functions in that role. This can be done through drawings or photographs showing

persons involved in communicative settings (e.g., accepting a bouquet of flowers from a delivery person, two firefighters conferring at the scene of a fire, a doctor administering an injection to a patient, a parent and child looking at a storybook together, and children gathered around a birthday cake lit with candles. Students are asked to supply what the persons portrayed might be saying. In this approach, the ability to speak for a character using proper function is required. Teachers follow up each scenario by discussing which message functions were used by students as they role played the persons pictured.

Pershey (1994) demonstrated that first graders can role play to elicit the heuristic, regulatory, personal, and imaginative functions. These first graders appeared to reveal complex communicative competence to integrate cognition, linguistic capability, and conventional social behavior thereby demonstrating pragmatic proficiency (Bruner, 1975; Pellegrini, 1985).

Approach 3: Application of pragmatic language awareness in the context of games — language center resources

Students can construct a variety of games to challenge pragmatic language ability. These games will be available for use in a language center or for use at other times. For example, students can draw game boards similar to "Candyland" or "Monopoly" and create a pragmatic language game featuring a path leading from start to finish decorated with directives, such as "Pick a card," and have added interest with spaces that read "Go back 2 spaces," "Go ahead 3 spaces," and the like. Statements are written on cards that students generate from their daily spoken language unconsciously revealing knowledge of a variety of functions. Statements might read, "Can I borrow a pencil?" "If you take my snack, I'll tell Mom." "I like recess." "I think you did a good job sharing your journal

today." Players take turns picking a card from a common pile. A player who can correctly identify the function of the statement written on the card correctly will be able to move a given number of spaces along the path to winning the game by using dice or a spinner.

Alternative formats for games might include sorting many cards with written statements into their functional categories, using category label cards to separate piles, or may involve matching two different ways to convey similar meaning using different functions, as in matching a card that says "Let me see your drawing," with "Would you mind if I look at your artwork?" Similarly, a game wherein the function is supplied and students are asked to give a sample message can be designed. If, for example, a card reads "question" (a more colloquial way of characterizing the heuristic function), the student must offer a question in order to win a point or move ahead on a game board. It is important that students be encouraged to cooperatively create the game cards, so that the statements will reflect their common language use.

Approach 4: Applying pragmatic analysis of language to analysis of environmental print — mini-lessons or games

Students might benefit from the opportunity to learn how environmental print carries message function. Samples of messages serving regulatory (signs giving directions or warnings), perpetuating (commemorative postage stamps), or informative (price tags) functions can be collected and shared in teacher-led or student-led lessons and discussions may be placed in a language center. These will serve as sorting games, described in Approach 3, or turned into a class book on environmental print.

Approach 5: Analysis of message function in narrative text using discussion, retelling, charting and mapping

Britton (1984) considers text to be "verbal object" — an "artifact" to be held up for different types of analysis. Knowledge of message function allows for analysis of elements of certain literary genres. The imaginative language function is used for descriptive purposes in fantasy; tales of adventure may begin with a warning (regulatory function) that is defied; and fables may end with a moral (authoritative function).

Small group discussion allows student readers to share interpretations of text and their awareness of message function. For example, as a component of literature for literature groups to discuss, learners may find certain pragmatic elements of text passages. They may find how a character used personal language to describe himself; detail how a character used heuristic language to puzzle about a conflict within the story; or see where a warning (regulatory) was given but not heeded, and with what results.

Retelling of text read or listened to may reveal how a reader comprehends and processes the material (Strickland et al, 1989). A retelling may reveal how the reader has transformed the text into the reader's own words and ideas. Metalinguistic awareness of message function is revealed through retellings (Pershey, 1994). For example, a student retelling *Solomon the Rusty Nail* (Steig, 1985) may say "The cat said, 'Turn back into a bunny at once!' He was telling Solomon what to do." The teacher may highlight how telling someone what to do functions as a command (regulatory function). Teachers who refer to message functions of text passages that the reteller mentions and discuss message functions in text after students retell text, may enhance metalinguistic awareness of message functions in text.

When students use comprehension strategies such as producing story maps or character charts, it is an additional opportunity for pragmatic language awareness to be integrated. The pragmatic function of key sentences or passages can be documented in a separate column of the chart or as an overlay or delegated portion of the map. This task will increase in its complexity as texts for older readers become more lengthy.

Approach 6: Producing text: Writing purposeful messages across the curriculum

When responding to students' journals, teachers can respond to the message functions within entries. For example, a young writer stated, "I am 7 years old and I got everything I want." This child can be praised for using the personal function. A teacher's reply might ask him to tell about some of the things he has, which could lead to a use of the informative function, and subsequent praise for its use.

Common among some young writers is creating the same journal entries over and over. "I went to play soccer." "I went swimming." "I went out to eat." A potential strategy to vary the topic of their entries is through message functions. A teacher's response might invite the writer to tell something about the directions that a soccer coach gives, or ask if the writer knows swimming pool rules, thus allowing the writer to display knowledge of the regulatory function. Similarly, the correspondence between teacher and writer might be broadened if the teacher's reply asks the writer to identify his favorite restaurants or dishes (informative). This can lead to generalizing by function. The teacher encourages the writer to describe directions for other sports, rules in other places, or to inform the reader of other favorite places to go or other favorite things to do.

Some teachers offer journal prompts to their class in order to help anyone who may need a starter idea or practice in responding to prompts, a skill required by some mandated standardized tests. Functions can be starters, as in "Write an explanation (informative) of how to fix something." "Write your own joke (divertive)." "Write about something that you want and how you plan to get it (instrumental)."

Knowledge of message function provides students and teachers with a common working vocabulary for conferencing about written work. Increasing students' awareness of message function can help enliven their writing. A student who is working to create or revise a piece may need to change a message's wording to enliven the piece. In writing that is imaginative, persuasive, satirical, humorous or personal, message construction is key to the realization of these intents. If the student has written, "The robber snuck up behind Mike and grabbed him by the arm, saying, 'Give me your money,' the teacher may confer with the student so that the student might choose to rephrase the regulatory statement and rewrite the command for more realistic impact: "Hey! Gimme your money fast. Don't look at me!"

Revising to increase effective use of language (e.g., whether a paper needs more descriptive (imaginative), more explanation (informative), more personal tone, etc.) can be the subject of peer or teacher-student conferences. Knowing how messages function can help student writers craft statements that will effectively carry message intents.

Approach 7: Social interaction: Talking and listening in the classroom

When talking and listening as members of a classroom community, students can improve their ability to

communicate with social appropriateness. Students who participate in collaborative work need to learn how to issue statements that are tactful and sensitive to the needs and feelings of other people. Kindness and manners can be reflected by choosing to use certain message functions in their appropriate interactional settings.

Awareness of social register is a pragmatic language skill. Speakers use different forms of address with different people, depending upon degree of familiarity, age, gender, and the social position of the persons participating in the interaction. As many teachers and parents might agree, children should know that they do not necessarily talk to adults in the classroom in the same fashion that children talk to one another outside of school as friends. Using proper message function to enact appropriate social register is a valuable pragmatic skill that teachers may enhance by proposing discussion about this component of language.

Conclusion

Pragmatic language awareness contributes to an integrated language arts curriculum for literacy acquisition. Teaching pragmatic awareness includes encouraging readers to devote conscious attention to metalinguistic aspects of text by thinking and talking about the message functions that the text uses. To promote better student writing, pragmatic awareness teaches young writers that authors may craft their texts to achieve impact by conscious use of message function. Moreover, the value of productive classroom talk in learning all curricular subjects through language emphasizes the need for developing students' purposeful understanding and use of all language functions.

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Developing Basic Mathematics Skills Through the use of African-American Children's Literature

Loraine Moses Stewart

According to Farris (1993), quality children's literature, especially picture books, can be very helpful in teaching social studies concepts to elementary and middle school students. Children's literature can also be instrumental when teaching mathematical concepts.

Several African-American picture books have been discussed in previous issues of *Teaching Children Mathematics* in reference to quilting and recognizing patterns. For example, Smith (1995) explains Courtini Wright's *Jumping the Broom* (1994) and how it was used in a third grade classroom to connect problem-solving and patterns with social studies. In a later issue, Smith (1995) explores patchwork quilts and mathematics through the use of Valerie Flournoy's *The Patchwork Quilt*, (1985) Deborah Hopkinson's *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*, (1993) and Faith Ringgold's *Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky* (1992).

The main emphasis of these articles is solving problems by examining quilt patterns. There are many other mathematical skills that can be taught using African-American literature that need to be addressed. The focus of

this article is to discuss some of those books and how they can be used to teach elementary students. Some of the first mathematical skills elementary students are taught are rote counting, counting to identify how many, and reading and writing numerals and number words 0 to 10. *Feast for 10, Majo Means One: Swahili Counting Book, One Smiling Grandma* and *Ten, Nine, Eight*, are excellent books for enforcing these basic mathematical skills.

Each of these books focus on counting to 10 even though they use different approaches. For example, Cathryn Falwell's *Feast for 10* (1993) is an excellent counting book that tells the story of an African-American family who shop, prepare, and share a meal together. It not only counts from 1 to 10, but also counts backwards from 10 to 1. In addition, it has both the numeral and the number word on each page. The numbers and colors are bright and bold; therefore, likely to be eye catching for young children.

This book also provides an interdisciplinary perspective regarding healthful eating through some of the foods shown such as "five kinds of beans" and "six bunches of the greens." A family's unity and working together is also shown throughout the story as the family grocery shop, cook, set the table, and sit down to eat together.

Molly Bang's *Ten, Nine, Eight* (1983) and Ann Marie Linden's *One Smiling Grandma* (1992) are similar to *Feast for Ten* in that they both count to 10. Yet, unlike *Feast for Ten*, neither of the aforementioned two books count both forward and backwards. *Ten, Nine, Eight* counts backwards from 10 to 1 while *One Smiling Grandma* only counts forward from 1 to 10.

Ten, Nine, Eight is a great bedtime story for teachers to recommend to parents. It is the story of a little girl and her father preparing for bed. It is also a Caldecott Honor book.

One Smiling Grandma is a Caribbean story that not only uses number words to count to 10, but each number word teaches something about life in the Caribbean. For example, "Seven conch shells I find on the beach" shows a little girl lying on the beach listening to the conch shell's ocean sound. This approach is very much like that of *Moja Means One: Swahili Counting Book* by Muriel Feelings (1971). It too teaches about culture through counting, but focuses on the African instead of Caribbean culture. It also presents each number written in the Swahili African language. This enables students to learn about and compare Swahili to English.

Dinner at Aunt Connie's House by Faith Ringgold (1993) can also be used to teach counting. In this story, Cassie and her cousin Lonnie find Aunt Connie's twelve talking pictures of African-American women leaders in her attic. Obviously, it would be very important for the teacher to help early elementary students understand that "No" pictures do not talk, but "Yes" these are real people and real stories. Once that point has been made clear, several mathematical concepts such as addition and subtraction can be explored through problem solving. For example, "If Cassie removed two of Aunt Connie's pictures from the attic and Lonnie removed one, how many would she have left?" Further research could be done on each of the women to integrate a social studies perspective. Upper grade elementary students could complete research projects on the twelve women to enhance their knowledge of contributions African-American women have made to America.

The *Village of Round and Square Houses* by Ann Grifalconi (1987) is an African folktale that can be used to teach likenesses and differences in figures. This folktale of how houses came to be round and square can add mystery and fun to basic mathematical shapes. Students could make their own villages of round and square houses of different sizes then discuss and compare their differences.

Recognizing and telling the value of different coins is another mathematical skill young children are taught that can be reinforced through the use of African-American picture books. *The Hundred Penny Box* by Sharon Bell Mathias (1986) and Angela Shelf Medearis' *Picking Peas for a Penny* (1990) are both ideal books to use to discuss pennies. Emphasis could be placed on concepts such as how many pennies does it take to make a dollar, how many pennies will be left if 10 are removed from the box of 100, and what is the value of a penny. A comparison can also be done of the value of a penny now and the value years ago.

Making reasonable estimates of "how many" is a mathematical skill that can be taught through the use of African-American literature also. Lenny Hort's book *How Many Stars in the Sky?* and Patricia McKissack's *A Million Fish ... More or Less* (1992) are both books that emphasize estimating. Students could be given other items to guess "how many" such as a jar of marbles or peas. They could also have a long term project of collecting one million bottle tops or pennies in one given location in the school to show what one million actually looks like.

Other suggested uses

In addition to suggestions (Smith, 1995) discussed as to how to use *The Patchwork Quilt* to teach patterns, this book can also be used to explore intergenerational ties and family

history. It is a story of a family who learns to appreciate its history by finishing a quilt started by their grandmother, who is too ill to complete it. As the family members look at the completed quilt, they are able to reflect on the previous year because it was made of various cloth pieces from clothing they wore during the year. Additionally, Anne Shelby's *We Keep a Store* (1990) would be appropriate when discussing family businesses and working together. This is the story of a family who owns and operates a community store. Students could be taught about supply and demand, buying and selling, and basic counting through the use of this story.

African-American literature has a great deal to offer as an enhancement to the elementary curriculum. It provides many colorful stories that can be infused into the elementary curriculum and provide meaning and diversity while teaching mathematics and other subjects.

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NCTE Names Orbis Pictus Award Winner

The selection committee for the 1997 Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children has announced its winner. It is *Leonardo da Vinci*, written by Diane Stanley, published in 1996 by William Morrow and Company. The award is presented by the National Council of Teachers of English. Also named were three 1997 Orbis Pictus Honor Books: *Full Steam Ahead: The Race to Build a Transcontinental Railroad*, written by Rhoda Blumberg, published in 1996 by National Geographic Society; *The Life and Death of Crazy Horse*, written by Russell Freedman, drawings by Amos Bad Heart Bull, published in 1996 by Holiday House; and *One World, Many Religions*, written by Mary Pope Osborne, published in 1996 by Alfred A. Knopf.

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Children's Literature: What's on the Horizon

Lauren Freedman
Western Michigan University

Cohen, Barbara. 1997. *Thank You, Jackie Robinson*.
Illustrated by Richard Cuffari, NY: Beech Tree, \$4.95 pb.
ISBN: p-688-15293-7. 128 pp.

This is the very moving and heartwarming story of a relationship which grows between Sam, a 10-year-old Jewish boy and Davy, a 60-year-old African American man. The two become friends when Davy listens intently as Sam recounts the entire play by play of one of the Brooklyn Dodgers baseball games. The time is 1945. Sam's father has died and Sam's mother runs an Inn in New Jersey where Davy has been hired as the cook. Both Sam and Davy love baseball and particularly the Dodgers whose owner has signed Jackie Robinson to play his first season in the Majors. Barbara Cohen deals sensitively with the issues of friendship and death while subtly handling the issues of race and discrimination. Her baseball history is given in enough detail to be enlightening, but never boring.

There are several black and white drawings spread throughout the book which offer a realistic visual representation of the characters and actions.

Flor Ada, Alma. 1997. *Gathering the Sun: An Alphabet in Spanish and English*. Translated by Rosa Zubizarreta. Illustrated by Simon Silva. NY: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books. \$16.00. ISBN: 0-688-13903-5. 40 pp.

This is a book in which the beauty of the illustrations match the beauty of the text to create vivid and powerful images of the lives of migrant farm workers and their strong Mexican heritage. The alphabet is presented in Spanish with the English translation not necessarily following in alphabetical order. For example the letter A is represented by Arboles which in English is Trees. The language is deceptively simple and the gouache paintings are striking. This is a book which will both enchant and enlighten.

Hughes, Shirley. 1997. *Enchantment in the Garden*. NY: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books. \$18.00. ISBN: 0-688-14597-3. 64 pp.

As both author and illustrator, Shirley Hughes tells a magical story in which a lonely young girl whose whisper in the ear of a stone statue of a boy riding a dolphin brings the boy to life. The water color paintings and text work well together to draw the reader into Valerie and Cherubino's play world until Cherubino realizes he must leave and return to the sea to join his father and be a god of the sea.

Mitchell, Barbara. 1997. *Waterman's Child*. Illustrated by Daniel San Souci. NY: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books. \$16.00. ISBN: 0-688-10861-X. 40 pp.

Barbara Mitchell's clearly and simply written text and Daniel San Souci's detailed and realistic watercolor illustrations follow the history of the watermen on the Chesapeake Bay who gather oysters as big as a man's fist. The

story follows one family through several generations in which the boys want to become watermen and the girls want to be watermen's wives like those who have come before them.

Pomerantz, Charlotte. 1997. *Mangaboom*. Illustrated by Anita Lobel. NY: Greenwillow Books. \$16.00. ISBN: 0-688-12956-0. 40 pp.

This is the delightful story of Daniel who while walking in the woods finds a huge pink slipper with a yellow bow and upon stepping inside finds himself lifted into the biggest mango tree he has ever seen. He meets Mangaboom a giant who speaks both English and Spanish. She has hoisted the shoe up to where she lives to find not only Daniel but a letter — the first love letter she has ever received. She invites Daniel to come with her to her Aunt's for tea and the story of the love letter unravels from there. Anita Lobel's watercolor and gouache paintings show the giant Mangaboom to be a playful and loving creature who values Daniel's friendship, but who is not at all interested in her Aunt's matchmaking. This is both a humorous and an enchanting story of friendship.

Porte, Barbara Ann. 1997. *Surprise! Surprise! It's Grandfather's Birthday*. Illustrated by Bo Jia. NY: Greenwillow Books. \$15.00. ISBN: 0-688-14157-9. 32 pp.

This is the humorous and unusual story of seven grandchildren who come together to celebrate their grandfather's birthday. Several of the children are siblings and the others are cousins, but each one is described in a way which offers the reader the child's uniqueness. And while the pet dog and cat can go anywhere in the house, Anna's chicken "...belongs in the living room." The text and the watercolor illustrations work well

BACK ISSUES: While available, back issues may be purchased from *Reading Horizons* at \$5.00 per copy. Microfilm copies are available from University Microfilm International, 300 Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor MI 48108.

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