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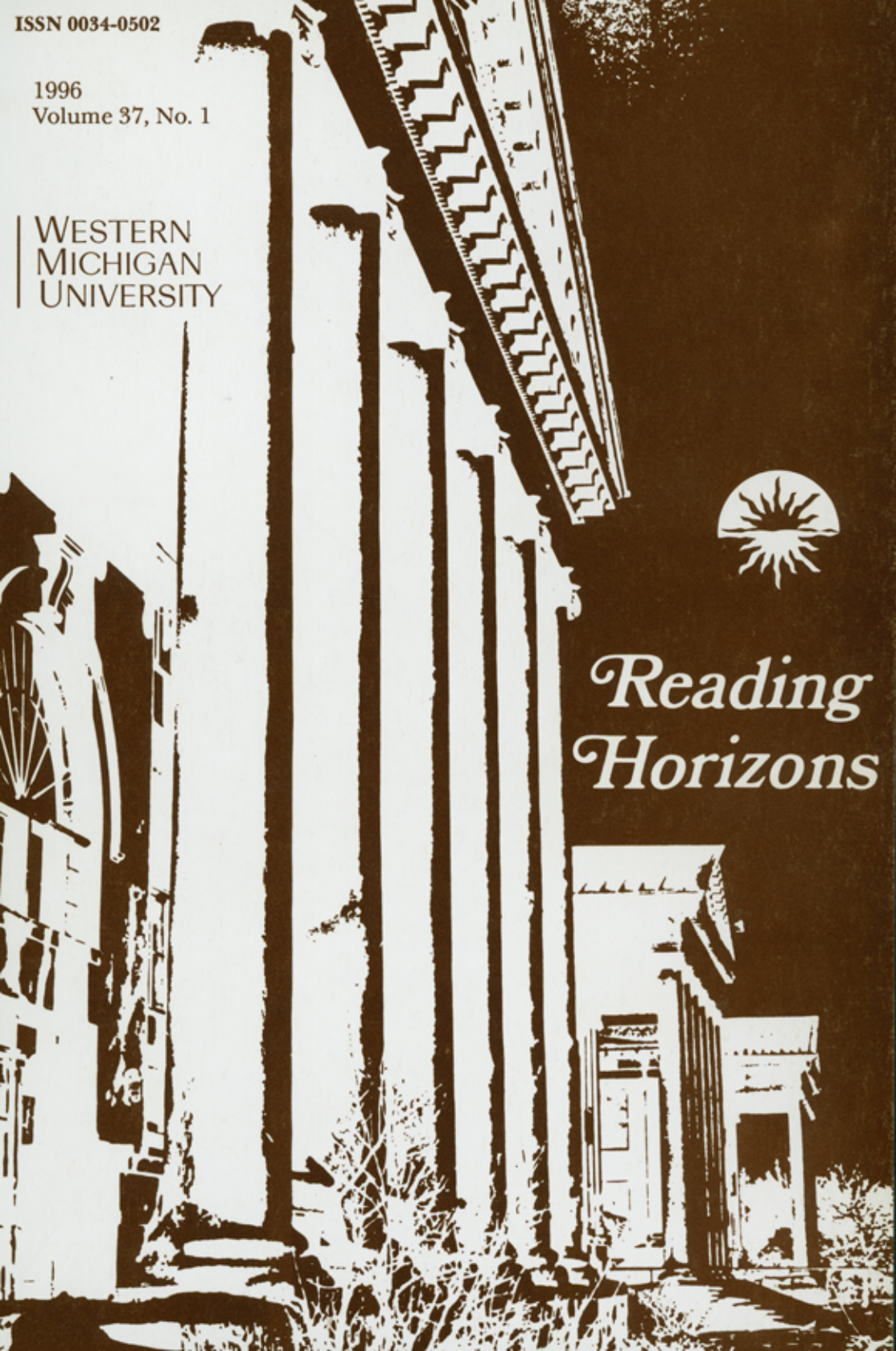
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Reading Horizons





READING HORIZONS

Interim Editors — Joe Chapel, Karen Thomas, & Mary Jo Smith

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Editor Emerita — Dorothy McGinnis

College of Education, Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo Michigan 49008

READING HORIZONS has been published since 1960, on the campus of Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo Michigan. As a journal devoted to teaching reading at all levels it seeks to bring together, through articles and reports of research findings, those concerned and interested professionals working in the ever widening horizons of reading and related areas of language. READING HORIZONS (ISSN 0034-0502) is published by the College of Education at Western Michigan University. Periodicals postage is paid at Kalamazoo. Postmaster: Send address changes to READING HORIZONS, WMU, Kalamazoo MI 49008.

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Founder of *Reading Horizons* has Reading Center and Clinic Named in Her Honor

Western Michigan University's Reading Center and Clinic was renamed to bear the name of its former director, a retired faculty member, who is nationally known for her innovations in the diagnosis and treatment of reading problems.

The Dorothy J. McGinnis Reading Center and Clinic was formally dedicated on June 20, in the extensively refurbished facility, which is located in Sangren Hall. The event included an open house for members of the community.

"Dorothy McGinnis spent her entire professional career devoted to teaching and research that would help people become better readers," said President Diether H. Haenicke. "Having her name grace the center that continues her work is both a fitting tribute to her and a recognition of her contributions to the field."

McGinnis, professor emerita of education and professional development, retired from WMU in 1986. She was director of the center and clinic for 11 years, a WMU faculty member for 41 years, and founder of *Reading Horizons*, an international professional journal, which is published at WMU and which focuses on the teaching of reading.

"She was always an innovator and far ahead of her time," says Joe R. Chapel, associate professor of education and professional development and current director of the center and clinic. "Many of the strategies, terminologies and theories popularized in recent years were already part of her work 30 years ago."

By Cheryl Roland

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From A to Z: Using Alphabet Books as an Instructional Tool with Older Readers

**Gerry A. Coffman
Judy Jackson Spohn**

Alphabet books provide a literature source for teachers to use in the classroom that focuses on a common sequence of textual organization which upper elementary and middle school students have known since they were young children. These students most likely had in their repertoire of beginning to read activities, alphabet books using common symbols to match the letters such as "A is for apple, B is for bear, C is for cat." The objects were selected to match the true sound of the letter with a single or small number of illustrations to demonstrate the concept. The alphabet book addresses the 26 letters in picture book format with typically 24 to 48 pages, illustrations on double pages, and brief text (Kormanski and Stevens, 1993).

Many alphabet books reach a level of sophistication which exceeds the understanding of beginning and primary-age readers. These books provide a rich source of literature to be used in numerous ways with upper elementary and middle school readers. Alphabet books written to be used with older students cover a variety of topics and themes appropriate to use in several different curricular areas. For example,

Gerald Hausman's *Turtle Island: A Gathering of Native American Symbols* (1994) depicts our early civilization through the descriptions of the sacred land expressed from the viewpoint of the people who inhabited North America, and the soft pastel illustrations by Cara and Barry Moser. For example, "d is for drum," a musical instrument that represents the heartbeat of Mother Earth.

Vidor (1994) identified four types of alphabet books appropriate to use with older readers. For theme applications, alphabet books provide a structure for presenting information about a topic through the illustrations and descriptive text. For language focused activities, alphabet books provide a vast resource of writing styles for teachers to use in their classrooms to demonstrate techniques such as humor, rhyming, and word choice. For teaching narrative structure, the authors may incorporate the letter of the alphabet in a narrative storyline. For teaching artistic mediums, the illustrations used in alphabet books cover a variety of approaches to line, color, shape, texture, and design. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate how alphabet books for older readers may be incorporated in instruction. We will share the titles of alphabet books for older readers and activities for applying these books in the areas of reading comprehension, vocabulary, self-interest, research, and poetry.

Reading comprehension

Alphabet books can be used as a source to model reading comprehension strategies. The book can be read in a few minutes providing time for the actual modeling and application of the strategy. The intent of this modeling is that the understanding of the strategy will be transferred by the student to more complex materials.

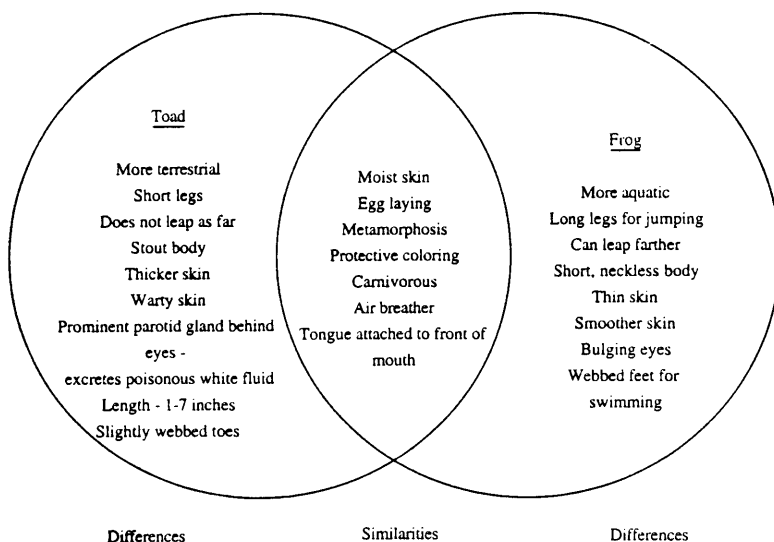
Our first activity suggests the venn diagram be used as a graphic organizer to structure information gained from the text both during and after reading. Jerry Pallotta's alphabet books provide animal topics that can be used to create venn diagrams. For example, *The Extinct Alphabet Book* appeals to older students because of their natural interest in creatures of the past. The books are designed so that students can choose two, three, or four letters of the alphabet, read the corresponding information about the animals, and then compare and contrast the chosen animals using a graphic organizer. The students may need to research other sources to provide additional information. The venn diagram is an appropriate type of graphic organizer for this activity giving students the opportunity to see the comparisons in visual form. Students may work individually, with partners, or in cooperative groups to note both common and unique characteristics of the animals in a visual representation.

To create a venn diagram, the student should select two, three, or four animals for comparison. Using key words students can note physical characteristics, natural habitats, or reasons for extinction. These findings can be discussed in small groups or with the entire class, and students can then make additions or corrections to their diagram. After the students have worked with two animals, the additional animals may be added and compared. The venn diagrams may be displayed in the hallway or on a bulletin board. Also, students could use the diagram as an organizer to prepare a written or oral report. An example venn diagram comparing a frog and toad is shown in Figure 1.

For a second comprehension activity, Jerry Pallota's *The Spice Alphabet Book* (1994) is recommended for modeling context clues in before reading, during reading, and after reading situations. *The Spice Alphabet Book* is full of interesting

facts and information about the foods children eat every day. Students will discover the source of some of their favorite treats such as chocolates, jelly bean flavors, and sodas. The book is designed so that the teacher could provide information about a spice without disclosing the spice's name.

FIGURE 1
Venn diagram for toad and frog comparison



Source: *Encarta*. [CD-ROM]. (1994). Microsoft Corp. Definitions from: Funk & Wagnalls (1994).

In the before reading stage, the teacher should have on display products that contain each of the spices listed in *The Spice Alphabet Book*. Some possibilities include: lavender soap, chocolate drink mix, vanilla extract, and spearmint gum. To activate prior knowledge, the teacher should pose a riddle such as, "I'm thinking of a spice that you find on pretzels. It makes the pretzels taste better, but may make you thirsty." The teacher may continue with further clues until the students guess salt.

For a before reading context clue activity, the teacher provides an alphabet letter and a written description being careful to omit the name of the spice. The students guess a word to go in the blank based on the given letter and context. The book is then read aloud by the teacher and the students check their word choices. The teacher may reread sections and provide an opportunity for students to discuss the words selected for the blanks. Working in small groups or individually, the students can create context activities using other commonly known spices such as cinnamon, garlic, mustard, maple, nutmeg, oregano, and pepper.

For after reading, the teacher may have the students identify and study the more difficult spices mentioned in the book. These may include anise, basil, dill, eucalyptus, ginger, Irish sea moss, java, kola, quinine, and wasabi. The students could work individually, in pairs, or groups to study these spices through the textual information, illustrations, "Artist's Notes," and outside sources. To check understanding, the students could find the spices on the cover and other pages in the book by completing the challenge suggested by the illustrator, Leslie Evans, in the "Artist's Notes." After students have completed the study of spices, a tasting party "adds spice" to the activity as a culminating event.

Other alphabet book suggestions for context clues or prediction activities: *Let's Fly From A to Z* by Doug Magee and Robert Newman; *Cowboy Alphabet* by James Rice; *My Name is Alice* by Jane Bayer; *O is for Orca* by Andrea Helman; *Q is for Duck* by Mary Elting and Michael Folsom; *What's Inside? The Alphabet Book* by Satoshi Kitamura and *The Z Was Zapped* by Chris Van Allsburg.

Vocabulary/word study

Many possibilities are available for using alphabet books to enhance students' word knowledge. In the first strategy, word knowledge comes through understanding individual word meanings and determining words within larger words. In the second strategy, a student's understanding of words is enhanced through alphabet books involving alliteration. To study word meanings, Cathi Hepworth's (1992) *Antics* provides a rich array of vocabulary words all containing the word ant accompanied by intriguing illustrations. Whether seeing a brilliant ant scientist who resembles Einstein or reading the wanted poster of an outlaw ant, students will find this book both entertaining and humorous. The book lends itself to a variety of enriching vocabulary and language arts activities. As the teacher reads *Antics*, the meaning of each vocabulary word and illustration should be discussed. The teacher should then provide students with a list of the following words from the book:

Antique
Brilliant
Chant
Deviant
Enchanter
Flamboyant
Gallant
Hesitant
Immigrants
Jubilant
Kant
Lieutenant
Mutant

Nonchalant
Observant
Pantaloons
Quarantine
Rembrant
Santa Clause
Tantrum
Unpleasant
Vigilantes
Wanted
Xanthophyll
Your Ant Yetta
Antzzzzz

After choosing one new vocabulary word from the list to illustrate, students will compile their individual illustrations into a class ABC vocabulary book. Illustrations may reflect the ant creatures from the book, followed by a comparison to the book illustrations, or by using the word representing

something other than an "ant illustration." Working with partners or individually, students could attempt to find new, shorter words within each *Antics* word. For example, students may find **tie**, **ant**, or **nut** within the word antique. **Liar**, **bran**, **an**, and **rain** can be found in brilliant, **can**, **an**, **ant**, and **tan** are found in chant.

Other alphabet book suggestions for word study activities: *Animalia* by Graeme Base; *Eye Spy: A book of Alphabet Puzzles* by Linda Bourke; and *The Story of Z* by Jeanne Modesitt and Lonni Sue Johnson. To study vocabulary through alliteration, *Animalia* (Base, 1986) provides word choices and colorful illustrations of animals, beasts, and birds appropriate for the study of alliterative language. Each brilliantly illustrated page is described by a group of words in which the author has carefully chosen alliterative language to describe the animals and their actions. Some of the words will be familiar, while other vocabulary may require students to investigate meanings. As students read the alliterative descriptions and study the beautiful illustrations, they will be continually challenged to spot the obvious as well as the hidden creatures throughout the book.

After reading each alliterative description, a growing list of unknown vocabulary words should be written on the chalkboard or chart paper. Students should investigate the meanings of these words and add them to the class word wall or vocabulary word box. A word wall is created by laminating posterboard or paper and posting it on a wall of the classroom. Unfamiliar vocabulary of seasonal words are written on it with non-permanent marker so the words can be changed weekly. The teacher can refer to the word wall or draw a word from the vocabulary box and then discuss the meaning of each word. Students could use a thesaurus to find synonyms

or antonyms of the words on the word wall or in the vocabulary word box.

The illustrations contribute to the information conveyed in *Animalia* and can be used by the students to write their own alliterations. After rereading *Animalia*, the students could select an item included in the illustrations, identify words to describe the item, and write an alliterative description. The students will have many illustrations to select from as the pages are filled with items to represent each letter. Before concluding the activities with this book, the students should search for drawings of Graeme Base as a young boy hidden throughout the illustrations. Other alphabet book suggestions for alliteration activities: *Alligator Arrived with Apples* by Crescent Dragonwagon; *Animal Parade* by Jakki Wood; *Aster Arrdvark's Alphabet Adventures* by Steven Kellogg; and *Away from Home* by Anita Lobel.

Self-interest language activities

Alphabet books can provide an avenue for upper elementary and middle school students to share a special interest. Several alphabet books are available to model how a self-interest alphabet book might be structured.

Annie's abc (Owen, 1987) is a refreshingly different alphabet book that provides words and pictures of unrelated objects beginning with each letter of the alphabet. Students will be reminded of a variety of objects such as astronauts, flamingos, ostriches, and lighthouses. While the book itself and readability level appear to be designed for younger elementary students, older elementary students could develop a self-interest alphabet book patterned after *Annie's abc* titled, *My Favorite Things*.

After reading *Annie's abc*, students would design their My Favorite Things Book with their favorite things listed and illustrated (e.g., B is for the Bulls, C is for chocolate chip cookies, W is for Wichita). Book titles could range from Getting to Know Me to My Favorite Things. The teacher should set aside a time for students to share their books either in a small group or with the entire class. This activity would help students get to know each other and would therefore provide an excellent activity for the beginning of the school year.

Students may write a Getting to Know Me ABC book using one particular theme or subject. After reading such ABC books as *An Alphabet of Angels* by Nancy Willard (1994), *The A to Z Book of Cars* by Angela Roysong and Terry Pastor (1991), or *An Alphabet Book of Dinosaurs* by Peter Dodson (1995), students could create a book to share their favorite hobby, sport, or music. Other alphabet books suggested for self-interest activities: *A Jewish Holiday ABC* by Malka Drucker and Rita Pocock and *Elfabet: An ABC of Elves* by Jane Yolen.

Research activities

From amoebas to zick-zacks, young readers and adults will be fascinated by the host of unusual creatures on the pages of *Tails, Claws, Fangs and Paws* (Small, 1990). Students will read about a jackal and a jackdaw that cackle; about a jabiru, jewelfish, joey and jay; and will watch as a jellyfish joyfully jets away! Colorful artwork includes not only the animals, but also additional objects beginning with each letter.

After reading *Tails, Claws, Fangs and Paws*, students can be asked to choose one animal that they find interesting or unusual. Students will then use this animal as the center of a research project. The school library or classroom resources can be used to find information and facts about the chosen

animal. Research reports or describing paragraphs could be written, depending on student ability.

For an additional research activity, *My First Book of Animals From A to Z: More than 150 Animals Every Child Should Know* by Christopher Egan, Lorraine Hopping Egan, Thomas Campbell Jackson, and Diane Molleson (1994) should be available in the classroom. The students could select an animal to research using this book and other sources of information. A world map should be posted on a bulletin board or wall of the classroom. After locating the animal's natural habitat, students should write the name of the animal on an index card. Using colored pencils, markers, or crayons, students should illustrate their chosen or assigned animal, write a few summary sentences about the animal, and mount their report on construction paper. After attaching yarn to the back of the construction paper, students can fasten the report to the bulletin board and pin the other end of the yarn to the location of the natural habitat on the world map.

Other alphabet book suggestions for research activities: *A is for Africa* by Ifeoma Onyefulu; *Alaska ABC Book* by Charlene Kreeger and Shannon Cartwright; *Book of Black Heroes A to Z* by Wade Hudson and Valerie Wilson Wesley; *Cowboy Alphabet* by James Rice; *The Desert Alphabet Book* by Jerry Pallotta; *The Folks in the Valley: A Pennsylvania Dutch ABC* by Jim Aylesworth; *The Icky Bug Alphabet Book* by Jerry Pallotta; and *The Yucky Reptile Alphabet Book* by Jerry Pallotta.

Poetry activity

To study the use of rhyming words, students can read the rhymed couplets accompanied by a beautiful photograph of a butterfly in Kjell B. Sandved's *The Butterfly Alphabet* (1996). On the opposite page, the students will see an enlarged

magnification of the butterfly that reveals the featured letter in the wing. The photographs were selected from his collection taken in 30 countries over a 25 year period. From this experience, students can find examples of alphabet letters in nature and write rhymed verse to describe their findings.

The Sweet and Sour Animal Book, published in 1994, contains twenty-seven cleverly written poems from a lost manuscript of Langston Hughes. The short, humorous poems about the animal world are accompanied by beautiful artwork from the children of the Harlem School of the Arts. As an integral part of a poetry unit, students will enjoy reading about the animals in this abc book. Students should then compose their own short poems about animals or objects related to a social studies or science unit of study, for example planets or the Civil War. Students should then be encouraged to use a variety of art materials to create artwork that represents their individual poems.

Alphabet book suggestions for poetry activities: *A Caribou Alphabet* by Mary Beth Owens; *Alphabestiary: Animal Poems from A to Z* by Jane Yolen; *Halloween ABC* by Eve Merriam; and *The Birthday ABC* by Eric Metaxas and Tim Raglin.

Conclusion

Alphabet books can be used by the resourceful teacher of upper elementary and middle school students to enhance instruction. In each book, the 26 letters of the alphabet will be addressed in a manner created by the author and illustrator. Alphabet books can be easily-decoded to meet the needs of those with varying reading and writing abilities. Even with easy decodability, the concepts and ideas presented in the book will challenge a reader at any level. Therefore, the alphabet book can become an integral part of instruction as models for

demonstrating strategies. Our recommendation is for teachers to select an alphabet book with an appropriate level of sophistication for the readers and use this book to introduce a classroom strategy. The brevity of text, creative illustrations, and conceptual complexity of alphabet books can provide the foundation for teaching in various curricular areas. The alphabet book may emerge as an instructional tool with numerous applications in the upper elementary and middle school classroom.

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Gerry A. Coffman is a faculty member in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Wichita State University, in Wichita Kansas. Judy Jackson Spohn is a graduate student at Wichita State University, in Wichita Kansas.



When an ESL Adult Becomes a Reader

Lucy Tse

Despite the well-documented benefits of reading, few second language (L2) learners' do any reading in their L2 in or out of the classroom (Huber, 1993; McQuillan, 1994). As Krashen points out, language learning requires large amounts of input (1993), and although extensive reading has been shown to be highly effective in languages acquisition, L2 learners are reluctant to pursue this method. Learners may feel that reading in the L2 is difficult, laborious, and unpleasant, contributing to what Krashen (1985) calls an "Affective Filter." This filter includes one's negative feelings and perceptions and may in turn prevent new language input from reaching the brain's language acquisition device (LAD), thereby slowing language acquisition.

This case study focuses on the effects of an extensive reading program for an adult English language learner. The subject participated in a course designed to introduce and promote pleasure reading among English as a second language (ESL) students by encouraging them to read both assigned and self-selected books in English. Over a period of approximately six months, the subject was presented with a variety of genres of English language books and given the opportunity to discuss those read in low anxiety environments. This article will first give a brief review of the literature on the role of reading in language learning and the research on

L2 reading attitudes. Then, it will describe the subjects' reactions to the extensive reading approach using a qualitative framework drawn from Patton (1987), and finally, discuss implications for the teaching of adult literacy.

Reading and language development

Language acquisition occurs when a learner is exposed to language that is comprehensible and slightly above current levels of proficiency (Krashen, 1985). Acquisition can occur through oral or written input, but as Hayes and Ahrens (1988) demonstrated, learners are exposed to new input far more often while reading than while listening in conversation or watching television. These researchers examined the vocabulary in children's books and found that they included 50 percent more rare words than the conversations of college graduates or that found in adult television programs. Other research (reviewed in Krashen, 1993) shows that reading benefits language learning in several ways: increased vocabulary, writing, grammar usage, and reading comprehension.

The more words one encounters, the more opportunities there are for acquisition. Nagy, Anderson, and Herman (1987) and Nagy and Herman (1987) showed that the more frequent the contact with a word, the faster that word is acquired. When a reader encounters unfamiliar words, "a small but statistically reliable increase of word knowledge" typically occurs, giving the reader between a 5 to 20 percent chance of acquiring the word (p. 26). If a reader encountered "about 1 million words per year, just a 5 percent chance of acquiring a word's meaning from context with each exposure will result in vocabulary growth of 1,000 words per year" (Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding, 1988, p. 262).

Aside from vocabulary building, there is substantial research in and out of school that shows that learners who

participate in free reading in schools or report doing more free reading perform better on general language proficiency tests than those who do not. Elley's (1991) studies, involving a total of approximately 3,000 ESL students ages six through nine, found that school reading programs improved students performance on tests of reading, comprehension, vocabulary, oral language, grammar, listening comprehension, and writing as compared to the traditionally taught students.

Light reading is a good way to acquire a second language for two reasons; it is highly enjoyable in nature and the texts possess high levels of vocabulary (Krashen, 1993). In addition, Schoonover's (1938) and LaBrant's (1958) results suggest that light reading is a conduit to more difficult and sophisticated texts.

Second language reading attitudes

Little research has been done on second language students' attitudes toward reading. McQuillan (1994) found that 80% of the 49 LS students surveyed, who had participated in both grammar and reading-based courses, believed reading was more beneficial for language learning than grammar study. However, McQuillan and Rodrigo (in press) also found that none of his Spanish language students had ever read a book in Spanish even though they believed reading was an important part of language learning. Kaminsky (1992), an ESL teacher, discovered through observations, interviews, and questionnaires that her 12 ESL students did not elect to read in school when they could choose between reading and drill work, and they did not read recreationally at home. She set out to change her ESL students' attitudes toward pleasure reading by reading to them during class time, allotting time for self-selected sustained silent reading, allowing students to take books home, and encouraging parents to read with them. As a result, Kaminsky reported, student attitudes dramatically

improved by the end of the school year, as evidenced by the fact that a majority of the students said they would choose reading over television watching in their free time.

To motivate university-level ESL students to get into the habit of reading English language books, Cook, Dupuy, and Tse (1994) designed an extensive reading program that introduced students to novels of different levels and genres. The students in the class read 13 books, nearly a book a week, from six genres of popular literature. Results of a semester-end survey revealed that students found the course enjoyable and worthwhile, though no affective measure was used to determine changes in reading attitudes. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of an extensive reading course on an L2 non-reader in terms of attitudes toward reading and reading habits.

Subject

The subject of this case study is a 36-year-old Indonesian woman studying in an intensive English language program at a major American university. Joyce came to the United States with her husband, Tom, and her two children one month before the course began. Her purpose for studying in the program was to improve her English so that she could gain admittance into an American university and be able to successfully complete a master's degree.

Her English language learning began in junior high school at about age 12. She recalled drill study of grammar and vocabulary two hours each week until she completed high school. When she entered college, she was required to read health-related textbooks in English, though she explained she seldom read these texts with much attention because the professors' lectures would cover nearly all of the textbook material, assuming that students had limited

comprehension of the texts. She recalled feeling that English language study was stressful, difficult, and uninteresting.

Before coming to the United States, she had never read a book in English, other than the textbooks in college. In her first language, she read only for information, primarily in newspapers, and said she didn't view reading as a leisure time activity, adding that "If I had time, I didn't want to spend it reading."

The course

The 15-week course was a general intermediate-level English course, considered the foundation course of the intensive language program. The students attended the foundation class daily, Monday through Friday, for one and a half hours. It was supplemented by vocabulary, grammar, oral skills, and test preparation (TOEFEL, GRE, etc.) courses for an average of four hours of coursework per day.

The purpose of the course was to introduce students to pleasure reading materials and to have students read from several genres, beginning with lower level books and graduating onto more advanced ones. The students in the course began by reading short stories selected by the instructor and were taught some simple reading strategies to help them read faster and with more ease. They were encouraged to read quickly and to guess the meaning of new words, rather than to interrupt their reading to consult a dictionary. If they could not guess the meaning of the unknown word, they were encouraged to skip it altogether and continue reading. Since students needed to get the maximum amount of comprehensible input possible, it was believed that frequent interruptions for dictionary use would slow reading and reduce the amount of input.

The students read four books: the political satire *Animal Farm* by George Orwell (sixth grade reading level), the teenage romance *Forever* by Judy Blume (third grade reading level), the autobiography of a World War II Japanese internee *Farewell to Manzanar* by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston (sixth grade reading level), and Sue Grafton's modern detective novel '*B*' is for *Burglar* (sixth grade reading level), in that order (see Table). The first two books were selected by the instructor and the last two books were chosen by the class as a whole from a selected number of available books.

Grade Level of Books Read by Subject¹

<u>Book</u>	<u>Grade Level</u>
<i>Animal Farm</i>	6
<i>Forever</i>	3
<i>Farewell to Manzanar</i>	6
<i>'B' is for Burglar</i>	6
<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	7
<i>You Just Don't Understand: Men and Women in Conversation</i>	10

¹Fry readability formula used

The majority of class time was spent discussing the reading — an average of 45 minutes per day. Students were asked to read about 15 to 25 pages per night and to come to class with questions about language or content. The teacher emphasized that their questions and comments would guide the class discussions and no subject was barred from conversation unless any of the participants objected. Approximately 25% of the

discussion time was spent on language questions and 75% spent on content questions. The instructor normally had guide questions ready to stimulate conversation but found that they were often not needed. Students were not pressured to speak in class and participated when they felt comfortable and inspired to do so. The discussions followed student interests, and often departed from talk about the book *per se*. For example, *Forever*, a candid book about a teenager's first romance and sexual experience, prompted a two-day discussion about teenagers' views of love and sex in the students' own countries and intergenerational relationships.

Data collection and results

Data were collected through the teacher-researcher's participant observations and student interviews over six months, four months in the classroom and two months in private tutorials. The teacher took notes of student reactions and responses throughout the four-month semester. During the first week, the instructor orally asked the students about their L1 and L2 reading habits and their attitudes toward reading. Joyce continued to be tutored about twice a week by the instructor for two months after the end of the course.

During four of the tutorial sessions, Joyce spoke about her attitudes toward reading and her reading habits. Joyce's comments and reflections were recorded in notes taken by the teacher. Due to Joyce's reluctance, no tape recordings were made during those meetings. When a draft of this paper was completed, a member check was conducted where Joyce received a copy of the draft and was asked to confirm the accuracy of the information and interpretations of the researcher.

Teacher-researcher observations

The students generally completed the assigned reading and attended class with questions and comments for

discussion. Based on student suggestions, some adjustment of the reading schedule was made to provide students with more reading time. The class discussions were often lively and student run, with the instructor answering cultural questions or providing other kinds of background information.

The students, including Joyce, expressed apprehension about reading novels in the early part of the course. None of the students had ever read a book in English and doubted that they had sufficient language proficiency to do so. The discussions in the first two to three weeks primarily centered around language questions, reflecting students' reliance on form. However, by the time the students had finished the first book, the talk had largely shifted to the content and issues from the text. When Joyce began the course, she remained fairly quiet during discussions, though occasionally asking language questions. Very quickly, however, she began to carry much of the discussions by expressing her opinions about the various issues raised by the book and the other students. She appeared to have crossed a juncture near the completion of the second book. She talked about her reading and her reflections on the books with confidence and appeared to enjoy the reading.

Joyce's observations and responses

Joyce's comments and responses to questions were collected in four meetings after the completion of the course. Data was gathered and analyzed according to three of Patton's (1987) categories of inquiry: 1) opinion and value; 2) feeling; and 3) knowledge.

Opinion and value

During one of the sessions, Joyce was asked to recall her belief about the role of reading in language learning before

she arrived in the U.S. She said she had believed reading was an important component of language learning that had been excluded from her education, though she believed grammar and vocabulary study were equally important. When asked about her view of reading after taking the course, she said that she believed reading was the most efficient way to learn English and to improve her vocabulary, spelling, and writing. As evidence of this, she had expected her husband to enroll in the same course the following semester as he was in the academic level below hers at the time. When it was suggested that possibly a different teacher and another curriculum, presumably a traditional textbook-based course be substituted, she expressed extreme concern. She remarked that she wanted her husband to know about books and to learn through them. She believed that her language had improved significantly from reading novels and she wanted her husband to have similar experiences.

Joyce believed that her view of reading had changed dramatically since she began reading in English. Although she still viewed it as a way to access information, she now realized that books, namely fiction, provided vast and numerous possibilities to gain information and insight.

Feeling

The majority of the questions and collected data fall under the category of feeling, which refers to how subjects respond emotionally to their experiences. Joyce said that she had been afraid to read books, being a non-reader of fiction in her first language. She said that the first book, *Animal Farm*, was particularly difficult because she concentrated on form rather than meaning. She consulted the dictionary often and reread each page several times. She found this strategy to be frustrating and tiring, and she was tempted to give up many times. However, she persisted because she was determined to

give reading a chance. In addition to her inefficient strategies, reading was difficult because she found the vocabulary to be above her level of proficiency and had difficulty following the plot.

By the end of the semester, Joyce said she felt confident about reading. She recalled an incident in which she realized her progress. Her husband, Tom, enrolled in the extensive reading course the following semester. When Tom brought home the first assigned book, this time the adult romance *Love Story* by Erich Segal, she examined the book and realized that she could read it with facility and considered it an "easy book." At the time, she was reading Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a book on the seventh grade reading level, that has fairly difficult vocabulary and a race relations in the American South theme with which she was not at all familiar. She found *To Kill a Mockingbird* to be at a comfortable level for her and its engrossing plot kept her reading late into the night.

Knowledge

Joyce also felt that reading yielded more than simply language development; she gained knowledge about American culture and about herself. She said,

The extensive reading course was a different method to learn English, about reading ... not only reading — how to get the main idea, to understand, to guess the new vocabulary — but I learned more than that; (I learned) about American culture. After I finished these books, I feel that I'm not learning, I can finish this book. That makes me feel excited. I'm not a student.

Joyce also stated that she realizes that reading about other people's experiences gives her power to widen her

outlook on life, philosophy, and beliefs. In one of the tutoring sessions, while discussing *To Kill a Mockingbird*, she said that reading about the African-American experience in the U.S. made her aware of power relationships between majority and minority peoples. As a result, she reflected on the situation in Indonesia where the number of minorities from other Asian countries was steadily increasing. Before reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*, she had never thought about these types of issues.

Joyce's view of reading and of her own reading competence changed dramatically during the extensive reading course, and it can be argued that her reading proficiency also improved drastically. Joyce began by reading books on the third grade reading level as determined by the Fry (1977) formula with fairly familiar themes and moved onto books on the seventh grade reading level with fairly unfamiliar themes. Admittedly, the Fry formula is flawed; it does not take into account background knowledge, which is an essential component of reading comprehension (Dubin, Eskey and Grabe, 1986). However, it provides some rough indication of a book's difficulty level.

Discussion and Implications

Overcoming affective barriers is one of the most difficult barriers faced by second language learners on the road to fluency. The case study presented above shows that an introduction to extensive reading in a low anxiety environment can produce positive affective changes. Joyce reports the increase in the difficulty of the books she read provides evidence that an extensive reading course can improve students' reading ability. There are two likely explanations for Joyce's improvement. First, she may have learned better reading strategies, and while her proficiency did not improve per se, her overall reading ability improved. Second, the large

amount of written input caused a dramatic improvement in her English reading proficiency. Regardless of which explanation accounts for change in Joyce, at the conclusion of the course, she was able to read higher levels of English books with facility and confidence, replacing previous apprehensions, fear, and stress when reading simpler texts. This study suggests that the introduction of reading in a low anxiety environment and providing students with assistance according to their expressed needs fosters positive effects on their reading attitudes and proficiency.

What is especially encouraging is that Joyce has continued to read independently six months after the end of the course. This result is consistent with McQuillan's and Rodrigo's (in press) study that found 75% of the Spanish language learners who had gone through a 10-week extensive reading course continued to read seven months after the completion of the course. If this is an indication of Joyce's long-term reading habits, then her learning through books has only begun with her formal introduction to extensive reading. She now has the strategies and confidence to tackle adult English language books and to acquire the language and knowledge she desires.

In light of the research that shows reading is the most effective and efficient way to learn a second language, a reading orientation should be taken in developing L2 curriculum. To encourage reading in ESL adults who may have serious apprehensions about their ability, the introduction of pleasure reading in low anxiety environments is a viable and effective method. Once L2 learners begin reading, their language levels increase, leading to more complex texts, resulting in higher levels of efficacy. This upward spiral of language development leads students to the proficiency they desire and access to the knowledge and information they need.

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Lucy Tse is a faculty member in the American Language Institute at the University of Southern California, in Los Angeles California.

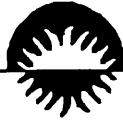
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Interacting with Authors and Poets as "Wordcrafters"

Announcing: *Books That Invite Talk, Wonder, and Play*, edited by Amy A. McClure and Janice V. Kristo. Publication date: September 4, 1996. National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana Illinois 61801-1096. Phone: (217) 328-3870; Fax: (217) 328-0977.

How do such notable children's authors as Avi, Eve Bunting, Katherine Paterson, and Gary Paulsen choose the words they hope will convey their own intent in writing a story, yet free the imaginations of their young readers? How do they shape language to bring characters and plots alive? These and other celebrated writers discuss the craft of writing in *Books That Invite Talk, Wonder, and Play*, published by the National Council of Teachers of English.

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Self-Questioning — An Aid to Metacognition

Ruth Ann Williamson

Teachers ask questions for a variety of purposes. It is through questioning that teachers initiate, elaborate, and direct the course of talk in a discussion; additionally they are able to determine whether or not students have read the text and how well they have understood it. Questions are important because they promote thinking, productive learning, and content retention. However, questions can prove to be counter-productive if they are used by teachers simply as a habitual routine, have not been given adequate thought in preparation for class presentations, and do not transfer to self-questioning by students. Since teacher questioning tends to dominate instructional classroom time it is vitally important that quality questioning strategies be employed in order to ensure successful text discussions that ultimately lead students to effectively self-question as they read (Vacca and Vacca, 1993). Questions are tools of teachers' trade, but they are only as effective as the context in which they are used. Effective questions set the course for problem solving, stir the thought process, and stimulate the imagination (Vacca and Vacca, 1993).

The attempt of this article is to present the distinction between teacher questioning that characterizes students' textual understanding (product) and questioning that actively engages students in the meaning-making process (process). It is the author's contention that there must be a proper balance

between product and process questions in classrooms that support students in their efforts to learn from text as they actively interact with text, the teacher, and each other. Said differently, our aim as educators should be to teach students to think. One method we can use is effective questioning, which piques interest, curiosity, and involvement, and ultimately leads to appropriate self-questioning by students as they internalize the strategy through teacher modeling, instruction, and support in a risk-taking environment composed of a community of learners.

Research on questioning

Research points to the enhancement of the comprehension process by having teachers model questions at critical points during reading, then phasing out teacher questioning and phasing in students' self-questioning (Nolte and Swinger, 1985). Self-questioning then is a metacognitive process of reading which enables students to become independent in their understanding of text, because they are actively engaged through goal-directed, organized thinking.

Dolores Durkin's research (1979) found that in classroom observations of reading instruction, teacher-posed questions dominated with the major concern being whether students' answers were right or wrong. Little attention was given to direct instruction of comprehension and the promotion of questioning strategies that leads to the metacognitive development of self-interrogation for the purpose of comprehension.

Upon examination of Benjamin Bloom's cognitive domain contained in his *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, teachers are reminded that the classification levels of the cognitive domain, namely knowledge, comprehension, and application, are skills of recall and recognition, whereas analysis, synthesis, and evaluation comprise higher energy intellectual

skills. The definitions of the domains and classification levels within Bloom's Taxonomy are sufficiently logical and precise to label the classification of the content load of teacher questions (Bloom, 1978). If teacher questions are content loaded at the knowledge level of the cognitive domain, then the content load of questions is inadequate. In such instances students' full range of cognitive processing opportunities are not made available to them. Because teachers' questions are used to solicit learner participation, their questions should serve as quality demonstrations that lead to the enhancement of students' ability to self-interrogate at all levels of Bloom's taxonomy. Such opportunities to lead students to become metacognitive readers need to be fostered in all classrooms regardless of the content area.

According to Guszak's (1967) scheme of classifying questions, six question categories were identified. Recognition questions require students to use literal comprehension skills to locate textual information. Questions requiring students to recall factual material are labeled recall questions. When students paraphrase textual information they are required to use translation questions. The answers to conjecture questions require skill in prediction. Inferential ability that requires students to generate main ideas or offer a rationale for their reading are classified as explanation questions. Finally, evaluation questions require students to judge the worthy, acceptability, or probability of text. Guszak's (1967) research revealed an emphasis of teacher-asked literal question types, e.g., recognition and recall. In fact, they accounted for 70% of questions asked by teachers in grades two, four, and six.

O'Flahavan (1988) attempted to replicate Guszak's (1967) research; he found that recognition and recall questions have decreased dramatically, apparently having been replaced to a great extent by explanation and translation types. Conjectural

and evaluative questions have experienced only slight increases. These findings have thus resulted in the adoption by classroom teachers of strategies such as prediction and summarization. For example, before reading a passage, students may ask themselves questions such as the following: 1) Based on what I have previously read, what I already knew about this topic and the heading, what would a plausible prediction be of this section of text I will read? 2) Now I have read the section of text, was my prediction correct or do I need to make modifications? 3) What is my summary of this section of text that includes a main idea statement and three or four supporting details? Additionally students may learn to change a heading to a question they ask themselves prior to reading a section of text. and following their reading, they attempt to answer their self-imposed question. The emphasis, hence, needs to be focused on active involvement with text while reading. The kinds of questions that teachers ask students greatly influence the kinds of questions students internalize and ask themselves (Valencia and Pearson, 1988). The following discussion relates self-questioning to metacognitive, teaching strategies.

Metacognitive teaching strategies

Research in the area of metacognition suggests that variability is an attribute of skilled reading, composed of among other attributes, engaging in self-questioning. When students are asked to select or generate questions that would be helpful in understanding and remembering important information in a selection, they are adding to the repertoire of strategies at their disposal. Knowing how to use these strategies leads to strategic, skilled reading (Paris, 1987).

Metacognition refers to one's ability to understand and control the cognitive processes. It involves thinking about thinking and making necessary changes in how we think during cognitive processing (Brown, 1981). When teachers

engage their students in metacognitive processing they become more productive learners who are more capable of assuming responsibility for their own learning. Even though there are a number of self-help strategies available to students, such as self-planning, self-regulating, self-reflecting, and self-questioning, it is the last of these that will be discussed. Teachers who instruct students to self-question will begin their instruction through modeling of the strategy. Initially teachers provide examples, explanations, support, and suggestions. With practice students become more capable of assuming this responsibility on their own. As an illustration the following article will be used:

There's a Reason Why Your Prescriptions Cost So Much

Drug manufacturers charge American consumers 60 percent more than they charge customers in the United Kingdom for many common prescription drugs, according to a General Accounting Office study released Wednesday. The contraceptive pill Nordette had the biggest differential among the 77 drugs studied, costing 17 times more here than in Britain and Northern Ireland. Valium costs 10 times as much and Inderal, a heart drug, nearly nine times as much. Americans are paying high prices to subsidize "low drug prices in the rest of the world," charged Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., who asked the GAO for the comparison of wholesale prices. With health-care reform the priority issue in Congress, he said, "Congress must find a way to balance profits and price in a way (that is) fairer to the American consumer."

Waxman said President Clinton's health-care reform plan makes a "very modest" start at controlling drug prices by asking to give Medicare officials authority to refuse to pay for high priced drugs, and to set up a panel to review the cost of new drugs. Waxman said his subcommittee on health and the environment would consider other measures at a hearing on drug pricing next week. The pharmaceutical industry challenged the study, saying it failed to include generic drugs. Also, it said the study was based on list price, while about three-fourths of all drugs in the United States are sold at a discounted price. But an official of the GAO, the watchdog agency for Congress, said discounts were considered. Also, she said, when generic drugs were included the price differential dropped from 60 percent to 50 percent.

Robert Allnutt, executive vice president of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, said prescription drugs and health care in general are regulated much more heavily in Britain than here. "They're paying a lot less for their health care and they're getting a lot less health care," he said, adding that "the British system is not paying its share of the worldwide cost" on research and development. However, the GAO report said British drug manufacturers have been competitive internationally in marketing new drugs.

Allnutt and other industry officials also argued that the market here has become much more competitive in recent years — and the GAO study reflected that. The price difference was greatest for drugs that went on the market before 1980 — 12 percent — compared with 17 percent for those brought to market since 1986, according to the government study. The GAO worked from the 200 drugs most frequently sold in the United States, selecting the 77 that are sold both here and in the United Kingdom in the same dosage and form. (N. Brewer, Houston Post, April 4, 1994. Reprinted with permission of the Associated Press).

Teacher questions could be stated as:

1. Our title is, "There's a reason why your prescriptions cost so much." What do you think this article will be about, based on the title? Why do you think so? (Prediction and activation of prior knowledge)
2. Now that you've read the article, were your predictions correct? If so, what do you think will happen to resolve the problem? (Prediction) If not, how did your predictions differ? (Self-reflection)
3. What would a summary of this article be? Include the main idea and three supporting details. (Summarization)
4. Did you read anything that you found unclear? If so, perhaps we can clarify so that you will understand before you read further. (Scaffolded support and clarification)

The above dialogue presents the modeling that is necessary for students to internalize the self-questioning strategy. The intent is that through direct instruction in questioning, students will actively use the strategy when they are independently studying.

Elements of a study strategy known as reciprocal teaching are evident in the above discussion, designed by Palinscar (1984), to encourage comprehension monitoring. It consists of four activities: prediction, summarization, questioning, and clarification. The activities are aimed at teaching students to self-monitor their comprehension, and one way to do this is through appropriate self-questioning. For example: What is my summary of important information from the passage, information important enough for the teacher to ask me on a test? This ability evolves as the teacher models, praises efforts, asks probing questions, and provides constructive feedback. It requires a great deal of class time before students feel comfortable with the strategy, but it is well worth the effort because by asking themselves appropriate questions of text, students get at the core of the active reading-thinking process.

Pearson and Johnson (1978) proposed a taxonomy of question-answer relations as a means of presenting questions within the context of both learners and the text. They identified three types of questions based on the source of information used by readers to answer questions. Textually explicit questions (TE) are those in which needed information is explicitly stated in the text. The answers to textually implicit (TI) questions are implied rather than explicitly stated in the text. These answers require inferencing. When students infer they read between the lines, consolidating textual information across more than one section of text in order to condense it into their own words. Finally scriptally implicit (SI) questions must be answered using students' store of prior knowledge,

for the answers to such questions are neither explicitly stated nor even implied in the text. Answering scriptally implicit questions implies schema or knowledge structure reliance for responses. We can use the preceding passage to illustrate the three above mentioned question types.

- TE 1. Which drug listed had the biggest differential among those drugs that were studied?

- TE 2. Why are drugs in Britain more expensive than drugs purchased in the United States?

- SI 3. How can Congress balance profits and price in a way that is fairer to the American consumer?

When less inferential processing is required, such as following directions, text explicit questions may be most appropriate. Textually implicit questions may be most helpful when the integration of ideas within the text is required. When reading comprehension questions require activation of learners' existing knowledge, scriptally implicit questions are likely to be the most effective as shown in the previous discussion, as a metacognitive strategy modeled by the teacher through think-alouds, for later independent student use as a self-questioning technique.

Questions that require students to respond to: "What will happen, what do you think, why do you think so, and can you prove it?" are examples of questions that "agitate" thought (Pearson, 1985). Such teacher-posed questions, evident in the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity or DR-TA (Stauffer, 1975), are aimed at aiding students in transferring same to their independent reading in both narrative and expository texts. The DR-TA leads students to activate prior knowledge, to predict prior to reading, read to check their

predictions, and finally to confirm the correctness of their predictions by using the text for verification. Sometimes students will find it necessary to revise or elaborate their predictions based on the reading.

For example, if students were to read an expository passage about caverns, they would be asked to make predictions about the content, based on their prior knowledge and the title, pictures, headings, etc. Following the prediction stage, students would read, their purpose being to check the accuracy of their predictions. After reading a section of text, they would be able to either confirm their predictions, alter them, or realize that their predictions were inaccurate, therefore making new ones. The cycle of predict, read, prove or disprove continues throughout the reading of the entire selection.

Stopping periodically to consciously perform these tasks forces students to become actively involved in the thinking process that accompanies effective reading for comprehension. As students begin to internalize the strategy the teacher is able to gradually withdraw from involvement, the intent being that students will use this metacognitive knowledge in other similar situations.

The K-W-L (Know—Want to Know—Learned) Plus strategy, (Carr and Ogle, 1987) is an additional self-questioning strategy first modeled by the teacher and later internalized by students in independent study. It consists of asking three questions: "What do I already know about this topic, what do I want to learn as a result of this study, and what did I learn?" This information is appropriately labeled in chart form and easily replaces the age-old typical worksheet or study guide which often stressed only literal questions and required no reflection. In the first phase of a KW-L lesson, students

brainstorm and discuss the ideas they have on a topic they will be reading about in their text. They can jot down their own ideas on worksheets or in their learning logs. With teacher guidance and modeling, they categorize the information they have discussed and anticipate other categories of information that they may find as they read.

The accompanying figure shows a K-W-L worksheet filled out by a ninth-grade reader with learning difficulties during a lesson on killer whales (Carr and Ogle, 1987). After discussing and listing things already known about killer whales, the student settled on the categories Description, Food, and Location. Based on questions that arose during the discussion and the predicted categories, the student moved to the next phase by jotting down questions that s/he wanted to have answered. These went into the W (want to know) column of the worksheet. Next, the student read the pertinent text, looking for answers to questions.

Depending on the difficulty of the text and the ability of the students, reading may be done in class or as a homework assignment. When text is particularly challenging teachers may wish to break it into smaller segments and stop to discuss answers to the questions in the W column. As students read, they use the L (learned) column of their worksheets to jot down those answers and new information that they find. Teachers lead them to review their questions and answers, with reference to the text and additional explanations as needed.

The semantic map following the K-W-L worksheet extends the basic K-W-L activities by adding group mapping and summarizing activities. Carr and Ogle (1987) refer to this as K-W-L Plus. The first step in mapping is to categorize the information in the L column. The ninth grader decided that

her original three categories in the K-W-L worksheet were not sufficient to cover all the information she learned, so a fourth category, abilities, was added.

KWL Worksheet

<u>K</u> <u>(Know)</u>	<u>W</u> <u>(Want to know)</u>	<u>L</u> <u>(Learned)</u>
They live in oceans.	Why they attack people?	They are the biggest member of the dolphin family.
They are vicious	How fast can they swim?	
They eat each other.	What kind of fish do they eat?	They weigh 10,000 pounds and get 30 feet long.
They are mammals.	What is their description?	
	How long do they live?	They eat squids, seals, and other dolphins.
	How do they breathe?	They have good vision underwater.
		They are carnivorous (meat eaters).
		They are the second smartest animal on earth.
		They breathe through blow holes.
Categories:		They do not attack unless they are hungry.
Description		Warm-blooded.
Food		They have echo-location (sonar).
Location		They are found in the oceans.

A K-W-L worksheet for a ninth-grade lesson on killer whales (Carr and Ogle, 1987).

From this point on, creating a semantic map was relatively simple. The lesson topic became the center of the map, with lines radiating out to the main categories from the K-W-L worksheet. The items from the L column were then listed under the appropriate categories on the map. If teachers

wish to involve students in writing, such a map can become an outline. Students number the categories on the map in the order that makes the most sense to them, as shown. As they write their summaries, they use each category as the basis for a paragraph. The important details for each paragraph are listed on the map.

When teachers think aloud the process of question generation they are making overt their thought processes to their students. This modeling process enables students to realize that at times all readers, including teachers, find reading difficult. Think alouds lead to greater comprehensibility of text, for students learn various methods of dealing with comprehension breakdowns. One of these methods is to stop and ask themselves questions as they reflect both on textual information and background knowledge. The following example exemplifies a think-aloud (Williamson, 1995) that is appropriate for primary grade students.

Summer House

It was a cold winter day. The north wind was blowing and snowflakes were falling. Soon everything was covered with snow, except one little house. There was not a snowflake on the little house or even in the yard around the house. This made the little house very sad. It has happened every year since the little house was built. The little house wanted to be covered with snow so it could be like the other houses in town, and besides, houses covered with snow were very pretty.

All through the winter as often as it snowed, none ever fell on the little house. With the arrival of spring, the snow started melting, and flowers started growing, and the little house was happy now because it was just like all of the others. Soon there were flowers blooming in the flower beds around the house, and there was a vegetable garden growing in the back yard. How happy the little house would be if it would just stay spring and summer all year. But the little house knew it would be autumn soon and that the leaves on the trees would be changing colors and falling to the ground. The

little house knew when this happened, the north wind would soon be blowing and the snow would soon be falling.

When the snow began falling again it never fell on the little house. The little house became so sad, it just wished it could run away and go some place where it never got cold and snowed. The oldest house in town was just across the street from the little house. It noticed how sad the little house looked without any snow on it. The oldest house thought it would be best to explain to the little house why it never snowed on it.

The little house was surprised to learn it was just a summer house and no one lived there during the winter time. Now the little house knew why the snow never fell on it.

One day, someone came and put a sign in front of the little house. Soon the sign was gone and some strange people came to the little house. These were not the people who came every spring. When winter came the people stayed, and when the weather turned cold, snow fell on the little house for the very first time. Children were in and out the door, building the biggest snowman the little house had ever seen. The little house was very happy now for it was no longer just a summer house.

As I read the title, "Summer House," I asked myself, "Could this passage be about a house that is occupied only in the summer? I'll read to see if I'm correct. Yes, the sixth paragraph tells me that this house is occupied only in the summer."

"The first paragraph tells me that the little house was not covered with snow as all the other houses were; I don't know why this was happening. Is this a fact or fiction story? I think it is a fiction story, because if it is snowing, snow will fall on all the houses, and in this case, it isn't. Will I find out why it doesn't snow on the summer house? I'll continue to read, and I think this is the problem that will be resolved."

"Does anyone know why seasons change? All the seasons are mentioned in the third paragraph. How could I find

out? I don't think I'll learn the answer to that question here, but when I finish reading I'll look up seasons in my science book."

"In paragraph six, I think the little house was relieved to find out why it was different, but the problem has not yet been solved. Will it be solved in the last paragraph? I'll read it to see. Yes, it was solved. When people moved into the house and stayed in it year round, it was covered with snow in the winter!"

"What kind of sign was put in the yard of the little house? The story doesn't say, but it must have been a real estate sign, because after it was placed there, people moved in." The preceding explication of the think-aloud process leads to a brief discussion of its complementary term, scaffolding. The major characteristic of scaffolding is dialogue. The purpose of this dialogue is to enable students to complete a task that they could not complete without adult/teacher guidance. In scaffolding teachers first think-aloud the questions they are asking themselves as they read a passage. Later they invite the students to participate with them in question-generation. Finally, they assume the role of "coaches," ready to provide assistance as needed, for example, if students begin to ask an overabundance of literal recall questions. Scaffolding then is a form of assistance to students when they cannot independently employ a strategy (Irwin, 1991). A great amount of teacher support and guidance is gradually withdrawn.

Vygotsky (1978), a Soviet psychologist, uses the term zone of proximal development to describe this aid in the development of students as they reach for levels of literacy development through teacher support that they could not otherwise attain. This developmental theory is grounded in the belief that the scaffold needs to be temporary so that it may

become internalized and carried on through similar tasks without assistance. Said differently, teachers model, think-aloud, and demonstrate the self-questioning that is necessary for their students to replicate in their quest toward independent self-interrogation of the various levels of Bloom's taxonomy.

Multiple levels of interpretation

Teachers must also be aware of multiple levels of interpretation inherent in texts, depending on students' schemata. Schemata are organizational frameworks that allow us to assign (slots) roles and entities (values) to events that occur in our lives or are perceived in our reading (Anderson, 1994). Because of the distinct and varying backgrounds and prior knowledge of students, teachers must expect and make allowances for various interpretations and their resulting influence on the questions they ask. As an example, the author's son, a fourth grader, served as a subject for someone working toward school counselor certification. One of the requirements for certification was to administer a specified number of IQ tests. One of the questions was, "Where is Chile?" to which the reply was, "Alaska!" Because the person was marking responses in full view of my son, he came home quite upset that his response had been marked incorrect. It seems that Alaska was the chilliest place he could think of! The assigned (slot) to Alaska was a cold one and the value he assigned to Chile (chilly) was cold — a perfect match!

Because of the foregoing discussion, the one right answer to teacher-posed questions seems rather antiquated if we perceive reading to be a constructive process consisting of the interaction among reader, text, and context (situation). Most definitely then, according to current research, the background knowledge and previous experience the reader brings to the

reading act are equally as important as the other two components.

The implications of multiple interpretations focuses on teachers modeling this process as they think aloud the questioning strategy process. Following teacher modeling, students should be encouraged to share their interpretations of text following their self-questioning as they read passages of text. This sharing can take place in whole group discussions, small cooperative/collaborative groups, triads, or peers. Additionally, it can take place in student/teacher conferences where it may serve the dual purpose of assessing background knowledge and text comprehension.

Summary

Because poor readers and young readers tend not to reflect on text after reading (Guetz, Palmer, and Haensley, 1983), appropriate self-questioning following reading is important in order to review text and check comprehension. Questions such as, "Did I meet my goal? What did I learn? Did I predict accurately? Did my reading make sense? Can I summarize the major points of my reading?" can be directly taught and modeled.

When students are directly taught appropriate self-questioning techniques through modeling, followed by scaffolded instruction, and metacognitive strategy employment, students' interaction with text is enhanced, maintained, and transferred to new and novel situations. Self-questioning then, is a process of reading intended to aid students in the process leading towards independence in understanding, the goal of reading. This active comprehension focuses on continuous attention to self-generated questions aimed at relevant aspects of text, shifting from question to answer.

Goal-directed and organized, it places the locus of control on students (Nolte and Swinger, 1985).

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Ruth Ann Williamson is a faculty member in the Department of Education at Houston Baptist University, in Houston Texas.

Announcing Spelling in Use

Written by Lester L. Laminack and Katie Wood. Publication Date: September 4, 1996. Audience: elementary and middle school classroom teachers. Available from NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801-1096. Price: \$11.95; NCTE members, \$8.95. ISBN: 0-8141-4663-5.

One of the primary targets for critics of whole language methodologies and the writing process has been the place of spelling instruction in such pedagogies. Practitioners of holistic methods have been long accused, largely inaccurately, of failing to teach children how to spell. In an important new book from the National Council of Teachers of English, Lester L. Laminack and Katie Wood explain in clear and lively prose that learning to spell is part of the overall development of competent writers, one of many resources that will help children to become powerful communicators in writing. They make a clear and compelling case for the teaching of spelling in use rather than as an isolated skill.

Spelling in Use ends with a thoughtful consideration of common questions that teachers have regarding their own spelling instruction. These include, "When do you stop letting children use invented spelling?" and "Should I give grades in spelling?" Laminack and Wood believe questions "keep us growing, keep us thinking." Ultimately, they hope their book will help readers to think and to talk about children as writers, "writers who have many tools at their disposal, spelling being one of them, to write with power in the world."



Listening and Literacy: Audiobooks in the Reading Program

Renee Michelet Casbergue
Karen Harris

Parents and educators have long been encouraged to read aloud to children. Trelease's (1985) *Read Aloud Handbook* and *New Read Aloud Handbook* (1989) have found receptive audiences in both parents and professional educators, most of whom acknowledge that children derive a wide variety of benefits from listening to good literature.

In fact, being read to is unquestionably the best preparation for learning to read independently. Studies consistently demonstrate that when children are frequently read to during their preschool years, they make exceptional progress in literacy and language development (Chomsky, 1981; Durkin, 1966; Teale, 1982; Wells, 1986). Furthermore, reports of children in elementary grades indicate that the positive effects of reading aloud are not restricted to the primary years (Elley, 1989; Elley and Mangubhai, 1983).

Perhaps in response to heightened awareness of the pleasure people of all ages take in listening to good literature read aloud, publishers of both children's and adult literature have begun to produce audio versions of their most popular titles. The new availability of a broad range of literature in

audiobook form is in sharp contrast to an earlier focus on audio tapes accompanying simple picture books for beginning readers. Audio versions of treasured classics and contemporary young adult fiction by such authors as J.R.R. Tolkien and Ursula LeGuin are now readily available.

The accessibility of these relatively new materials raises some interesting questions for teachers. Are there really enough benefits derived from listening to literature to justify the use of audiobooks in the classroom? Do the benefits continue once children are fairly independent readers? What types of students might benefit from using audiobooks? How should one go about selecting quality audiobooks? How might a teacher use audiobooks once they are acquired? Each of these questions is addressed in the following pages to assist teachers who are weighing whether or not to invest in audio-tape libraries for their classrooms.

Benefits of listening to literature

When youngsters hear stories, they unconsciously internalize the typical structures that narratives take in their society (Stein and Glenn, 1979). American children learn that stories in western cultures usually have an introduction that establishes setting and characters, followed by a formulation of the problem, attempts to solve the problem, and a climactic resolution. Knowledge of story grammar, often learned in early childhood from tales as simple and varied as *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* (Roberts, 1989) and *The Snowy Day* (Keats, 1987), enables children to predict and follow events in literature they will ultimately read on their own as they gain mastery over print (Mandler and DeForest, 1979; Ferreiro and Teberosky, 1982; Taylor, 1986).

In addition to internalizing basic structures, hearing stories read aloud helps children recognize the underlying

construction of written language which can be markedly different from oral usage. Formulations such as "... said the cat," or "... the mom answered," rarely heard in normal conversations, are ubiquitous in stories. Understanding these structures is critical to comprehension (Perera, 1986). In fact, inclusion of such structures in their own retellings or emergent readings of storybooks has been used as an indicator of literacy development in young children (Sulzby, 1985; Morrow, 1990). Clearly, the more they are exposed to literature, the more this development is likely to occur.

Reading aloud to children has the further benefit of increasing vocabularies (Elley, 1989). Good writing familiarizes youngsters with words and constructions unheard in their daily oral environment, thus allowing them to expand beyond the bounds of experiential limitations in mastery of language. In literary works, unfamiliar vocabulary is embedded in the context of an interesting narrative, making it possible to infer meanings of new words relatively effortlessly. Few preschoolers, hearing Sendak's (1963) *Where the Wild Things Are*, will miss the meaning of "gnashed their terrible teeth," and while not understanding each individual word, will surely deduce something raucous is implied when it is time to let "the wild rumpus start."

Long before they are able to read independently, children's general knowledge of the world can also be enhanced by the literature that is read to them. While enjoying the repetition and rhyme of Aardema's (1981) *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain*, children will absorb images of African plains, herdsmen, migration and drought. They will begin to understand the ways of ancient Japanese imperial palaces, and roles of lords and servants alike as they listen to Paterson's (1990) *The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks*. *Working Cotton* (Williams, 1992) provides hints of the arduous life of people who

continued to work cotton plantations long after slavery had been abolished. Later, when they encounter *The Boy and the Samurai* (Haugaard, 1993), they will have some experience of Oriental culture on which to build. Similarly, when they hear *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (Taylor, 1994) some images will resonate from earlier experience. Thus, the more children hear books read aloud, the more general world knowledge they will have. In fact, the relationship between listening to literature and increasing knowledge is symbiotic; the more youngsters know about a subject, the easier it is to make sense out of new information, as increasingly complex and detailed texts become more accessible.

As they listen to a variety of books read aloud, youngsters' understanding of story structure, written language conventions, vocabulary, and aspects of their own and exotic cultures increases. As this knowledge base grows, more challenging stories become comprehensible to them, leading in turn to higher levels of understanding of structure, conventions, vocabulary and general information.

Perhaps the most important insight children gain from listening to literature, however, is that reading is an intensely pleasurable pursuit. Listening to books read by competent, enthusiastic readers begins the process of becoming a lifelong reader. Fortunate toddlers associate books with the warmth and security of snuggling comfortably close to a caring adult who shares the mutually enjoyable experience of hearing a favored story. In this environment, books are soon associated with affection, comfort, entertainment and stimulation. When children move into school settings, shared book experiences provide useful social interactions centered around literature, as listening stations stocked with appealing audiotapes can become popular gathering spots. The correlation is perfect; the more books that are read to them, the greater

children's interest in reading will be. In school settings, particularly, reading can be an enjoyable shared social experience, not just another isolated academic chore (Weaver, 1994).

Continuing the practice of reading aloud

The benefits of listening to literature extend beyond the primary years. Well into the middle grades, students' ability to understand written language outstrips their ability to translate print into meaning (Chomsky, 1981). Even after they have developed adequate skills to enable them to read on their own, children still enjoy the challenge of hearing more complex stories than they could manage themselves. Relieved of the burden of decoding material exceeding their ability, they can concentrate instead on the substantive content of texts. Hearing such stories, they are confronted with greater intellectual demands than they would encounter in narratives within their deciphering skills. Kipling's stories from *Mowgli's Brothers* (Kipling, 1993), *A Cricket in Times Square* (Selden, 1994), and *A Charmed Life* (Jones, 1992) can be experienced at an age when the stories would have most appeal, but when many youngsters are unlikely to have achieved the necessary competence to translate print into meaning. Attending to increasingly complex stories encourages youngsters to construct more sophisticated knowledge of story grammar, decontextualized language of written texts, new vocabulary, and interesting concepts just as they did for the simpler stories of their early years.

Given the benefits children derive from being read to, it is hard to justify abandoning the practice. Yet time devoted to this activity typically declines over the years. By the time children reach the upper elementary grades, reading aloud is almost entirely eliminated at both school and home. As youngsters become increasingly competent readers, teachers

set aside less time during the school day for reading aloud. Parents, too, reduce the amount of time spent reading to their children, apparently assuming that once a child is skilled in decoding, providing time, opportunity, and encouragement is sufficient. For both avid and reluctant readers, however, there are compelling reasons to continue the practice of listening to literature. As adults lessen the time they spend reading aloud to youngsters, it is essential to replace that experience with a comparable activity.

Fortunately, recent dramatic increases in the availability of audiotapes featuring juvenile literature can, at least in part, fill the gap. Companies such as Recorded Books, Listening Library, and Chivers, the early leaders in the field, are being joined by others. Together they offer a sufficient variety of taped works of fiction to appeal to a wide variety of tastes.

Potential audiences for audiobooks

Although audiotapes can be beneficial to all students, those with special needs may find them indispensable. Youngsters with low vision, with visual perceptual problems, or those who simply prefer auditory learning will find this format particularly useful. Children recovering from surgery or illness during which time they are bedridden, have low energy or other conditions which make the physical handling of print difficult to manage, may prefer the spoken to the written word.

Students who are not fluent in English will find listening to stories easier than decoding print. Their comprehension is aided by all the verbal techniques which provide clues to meaning that professional narrators use in interpreting text. ESL children can readily employ audiotapes to improve both reading and speech. As they follow the printed text while listening to an identical taped version, they are helped

not only in the decoding process, but also in emulating phrasing, pronunciation, accent, emphasis, tone, and other attributes which characterize standard English speech patterns.

Poor readers will find recorded narratives a means of keeping up with the literature demands of the classroom. Since their skills are limited, to be successful print readers they must be restricted to simplistic material. Otherwise, their excessive focus on the challenge of decoding leaves them unable to attend to content. If grouped by ability and subjected to listening to peers flounder through text, the models they confront mirror their own performance. Hearing literature read expertly not only enables them to absorb the story line, but offers examples of fluency. If the text is of sufficient interest, it may even be useful in transforming hostility to appreciation. Similarly, youth who exhibit print aversive behavior, may be more amenable to experiencing fiction in a format that is free of negative associations.

Readily distractable children can use headphones to shut out auditory stimuli which would interrupt or interfere with concentration. Children troubled by attention deficit disorders, who find the physical act of sitting still long enough to absorb a narrative, can be freed from such restraints through the use of a headset and portable tape player. Behaviors which would otherwise impede learning can, at least in part, be neutralized through the medium of audiobooks.

If youngsters duplicate adult usage patterns, the most avid readers of printed text will also be the most enthusiastic listeners (Aron, 1992). Book lovers are most apt to find audiotapes a means of extending what for them is a compelling activity. Through tapes they need not limit their literary encounters to those times when they can physically hold a book in their hands. Interestingly, youngsters, again if following

adult patterns, may listen to works they would not choose to read. Hearing the first few chapters of *The Egypt Game* (Snyder, 1994) or *The Book of Three* (Alexander, 1991) has the power to capture the interest of children who would otherwise ignore these titles. Or those put off by the complexity of Rosemary Sutcliff's language in *The Shining Company* (1994) could find themselves entranced by the captivating storytelling techniques of narrator Ron Keith.

There are important benefits even for gifted readers. These children can experience an expansion of their literary horizons to include more sophisticated narratives. Even competent students can benefit from hearing British novels, for example, read with the appropriate accent and cadence. In *The Secret Garden* (Burnett, 1992), when Mary asks who will dress her, Martha responds "Canna" tha' dress thesen?" Later, Mary asks Dickon to identify a bird. He responds, "Doesn't that know? He's a robin redbreast an' they're th' friendliest, curiousist birds alive." Although some youth will be able to decode the words and infer meaning, they will not be able to reproduce the Yorkshire accent and will inevitably lose some of the richness of the story.

Selection considerations

Single narrator, unabridged audiotapes offer the most desirable format for classroom usage. In addition to best simulating traditional literary experiences, they can be employed to parallel print reading where that is desirable. Since authors and editors have already eliminated extraneous elements, further reductions inevitably reduce the potency of the original. The point of a narrative is the insight and pleasure derived from the reading experience, not the completion of it. While abridgements may be of use to older library patrons, they have minimal validity in elementary classrooms. Abridgements are apt to be resented by book lovers; since a major goal of

listening is to encourage involvement with literature, it is important to provide a complete, authentic experience, rather than a condensed, adapted one.

Dramatized recordings, however, have particular classroom utility. *Tales of Narnia* (1980) by C.S. Lewis and Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (1989) have appeared in this form. Typically they begin with a highly engaging scene in which the most appealing or interesting characters are introduced. In this manner, they are able to immediately capture the attention of potential audiences. They provide a means for engaging youngsters who are not habituated to print, exhibiting the same fascination that early radio had. Additionally, this format can be a vehicle for introducing readers theater or fully realized plays. It is also an excellent device for initiating discussion and for comparing original and dramatized versions of the same story.

Technical quality and editorial decisions are other considerations that impact on choice. A recording should entice, not alienate. Recordings should be free of errors and readers should not only speak with clarity, but must be able to employ different voices for the various characters, generating images of different ages, backgrounds, and personalities. Some recordings use musical bridges of varying quality and relationship to the narrative. Those that serve only as filler may be more annoying than appealing.

Of most importance is literary quality. To offer work of little or no distinction is to waste opportunity. The rationale often used with print that no matter how worthless the text, "at least children are reading," does not apply here. Because of the nature of the medium, it is as easy to tempt listeners with quality works as with trash and one does not have the

excuse of picking up decoding skills to justify encouraging encounters with lesser novels.

Utilization of audiotapes

This newly expanded medium enables teachers to enhance literary experiences in several ways. Individual youngsters can use audiobooks as just another format for expanding encounters with books. That is, audiobooks can be employed interchangeably with print volumes, substituting or supplementing as a matter of individual preference or convenience. Tapes can be used in the classroom or at home as a remedial device, allowing youngsters to hear the text as they follow along in the printed version. Children can improve decoding, comprehension, or speaking skills in this manner. Audiobooks can be used in small group or full class situations allowing a commonality of experience for discussion purposes or they can be borrowed from libraries or classrooms for recreational literary listening.

Parents can be encouraged to borrow and use audiobooks when taking extended family car trips. Just as watching their parents read is a prime encouragement to youngsters to read themselves, observing the adults in the family listen to recorded books presents them with a listening model. Tapes have the additional advantage of distracting youngsters from the inevitable disputes that erupt on long trips while making the miles seem to fly by.

The anxiety that so many educators express at the contemplation of an illiterate generation that they see developing can only be alleviated through increasing numbers of youngsters finding in literature enlightenment and pleasure. Audiobooks have a role to play in that discovery.

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Renee Michelet Casbergue is a faculty member in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Karen Harris is professor emeritus of education at the University of New Orleans, in New Orleans, Louisiana.



Limited English Proficient Children's Literacy Acquisition and Parental Involvement: A Tutoring/Family Literacy Model

Ping Liu

Students' academic performance at school is closely related to the family literacy environment and their parents' educational levels. Home is the place where children spend most of their time while growing up, parents being their primary "teachers" (Three R's Plus, 1978). Unfortunately, not all children enjoy a literacy-rich home environment that strongly supports their academic growth. Many parents missed the opportunity to receive a good education, and are, therefore, unable to provide the academic help their children need in completing their school work. This is an especially severe issue with many parents whose English proficiency, educational level, and cultural differences prevent them from getting actively involved in their children's education (Olsen, 1988; Scarcella, 1990; Shanahan, Mulhern, and Rodriguez-Brown, 1995; Spindler and Spindler, 1987).

Active parental involvement has been considered as a positive contributing factor to students' school success

(Crawford, 1995; Rich, 1985; Scarcella, 1990; Unwin, 1995). However, a great deal of work needs to be done before those parents who lack literacy skills become helpful partners of educators. A step that may lead to the solution of the problem is for parents to understand the educational process by themselves becoming acquirers of knowledge. This experience will empower them to assist their children in learning. Programs such as community literacy programs, Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED), and various adult learning activities create a second chance for parents to learn, which, in the long run, will no doubt improve home literacy environment and positively affect students' learning. Family literacy programs and workshops in which parents and children read and learn together have been reported to be very effective in increasing the literacy level in families (Ada, 1988; Allen and Freitag, 1988; Tizard, Schofield, and Hewison, 1982; Shanahan, et al., 1995).

However, parents' engagement in learning does not guarantee that they can supervise children by providing proper home support. Knowing how school functions and operates and how to work cooperatively with teachers requires extra efforts. The task can only be accomplished through effective communication and cooperation between teachers and parents. Parents are expected to approach teachers about their children's performance at school, and teachers need to enthusiastically involve parents by holding parent orientations and regular meetings, and making individual contacts whenever necessary. Nevertheless, things do not often work out well this way; the communication channel may be blocked either due to parents' intimidation or, to teachers' insensitivity or exclusion (Cummins, 1986; Olsen, 1988; Phenice, Martinez, and Grant, 1986). Therefore, effective parental involvement happens when: 1) parents are equipped with the ability to learn with their children; and 2) a

cooperative and supportive relationship is established between school teachers and students' parents.

Recently a federally supported family literacy program, conducted in an urban community in central Texas, was an attempt to make the two conditions meet. The program was a collaboration between a large university (with an enrollment of over 40,000 students) and an independent school district in one of the twin cities where the university is located. This article, a study of the family literacy project, intends to provide some suggestive input for educational institutions as well as educators that are interested in planning and conducting family literacy activities in their communities.

The College of Education is one of the ten colleges of the university, whose major clients are undergraduate students preparing to be future school teachers. One of the required courses of the undergraduate program deals with teaching literacy to culturally diverse learners. Students taking the course are expected to increase awareness of cultural diversity in the classroom, be acquainted with theoretical approaches and teaching methods in the bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) field, and be able to design appropriate lesson plans for students with different cultural and language backgrounds. The majority (about 90-95%) of students attending the course were from white middle class American families, who generally grew up in a majority neighborhood with limited close interaction with language minority people; few of them reported having a friend who is from a different ethnic background and speaks a language other than English. As a result, students often feel it's hard to gain a good understanding of the content related to teaching culturally diverse learners.

The Center for Alternative Programs, a subdivision of the school district, bore the responsibility of training adults in the acquisition of literacy. As a major community resource for social services, the center provided GED assistance and other adult literacy assistance to the community. Most of its programs were operated in evenings because most participants worked during daytime. Clientele of the center were 100% below the federal poverty line, and the majority of them were ethnic minority. Adult learners with children usually found it difficult to attend classes because they could hardly afford baby-sitting. On the other hand, the center, with limited staff, was not able to offer child care for the parent learners.

Thus, the family literacy program was created to meet the needs of both the university and the community. It solved the problem of both parties by providing an excellent opportunity for college students to work with Limited English Proficient (LEP) students and parents, while relieving the tension caused by a lack of personnel in child care at the center. In fact, participants from the university and the community all benefited from the program, including LEP students, parents, undergraduate and graduate students. The program operated on Tuesday and Thursday evenings each week from 6:00 to 9:00, when adults could attend the literacy program. Parents brought their school-age and preschool-age children and dropped them at the children learning center headed by a doctoral student coordinator. Undergraduates enrolled in the Literacy Acquisition and Culturally Diverse Learners class served as volunteer tutors for these children. The ratio of tutor and children was about 1:2-3. School-age and preschool-age children were separated into two rooms for the convenience of instructional activities. Each meeting was supposed to accomplish specific tasks. The time table ran as follows:

- 6:00-6:30 — Reading and writing tests;
- 6:30-7:30 — Homework and reading activities;
- 7:30-8:00 — Interaction among parents, children, tutors and coordinators;
- 8:00-9:00 — Lesson plans and very important kid activities.

Having given a general introduction of the program, I will shift the focus of discussion to the roles participants from each group played and the benefit they received for being a part of the program.

Parents

Parents were informed of the program from classroom announcement, radio broadcasting, and public school announcement. Applications were accepted from all interested families. Most adult applicants, however, were interested in obtaining GED certificates, and, interestingly, the characteristics of these adult students nicely fit the goals of the family literacy project.

Parents, preparing for GED tests, worked with the staff of the Center for Alternative Programs in their own classroom while their children were being taken care of by undergraduate tutors. Parents enjoyed the advantage of participating in the program in several respects. First, they saved the worry of hiring a baby-sitter, which was a particular relief for the economically disadvantaged parents. Second, tutors did much more than merely baby-sit the children; they actually provided them with academic help and support, supervising them on their homework, and teaching them reading and writing skills. Third, during a 30-minute period parents were kept posted about their children's learning through interacting with tutors and the coordinator of the program. The

interaction provided a communicative channel through which parents achieved a better understanding of their children's educational process, and gradually they were able to identify the role of parental involvers. Most important of all, parents learned to approach and interact with their children's school teachers through working with these preservice teachers.

Preschool and school children

Children enrolled in the program were 2-11 year-old preschool and elementary school attendees. Most of them apparently needed academic help with their school work, which was usually not provided by their parents because of low literacy skills or tight work schedules. Moreover, with low school achievement, these children could not establish high self-esteem and self-confidence. Very Important Kid Activity, aimed at assuring students that they had high potential to succeed in the classroom, was therefore set as the keynote of the program. The activity emphasized positive attitudes and high expectations from the tutors, and "self-fulfilling prophecy" (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968) was expected to take place among these children in the classroom. Meanwhile, tutors worked hard in teaching the children literacy skills that would enable them to stand firm on their own feet in performing academic tasks.

Preschool children were still in the stage of acquiring oral language proficiency and were just starting on literacy. It was time to introduce them to the close relationship between oral language and literacy, and literacy and their life. The purpose of making the connection was to draw back on their prior knowledge so that a meaningful context would be created for natural learning (Abramson, Seda, and Johnson, 1990; Boyle and Peregoy, 1990; Freeman and Freeman, 1992; Lim and Watson, 1993). In the program, the children had ample

time to orally interact with tutors and become exposed to children's books, manipulatives, and games. They were read books, taught alphabetic letters and numbers, and shown how to write their own names. They were also instructed to draw their own pictures and talk about them. Since children of this age group have short attention spans and like to move around, outdoor activities were arranged for them to play with balls and games outside of the building. These outdoor activities were meant to facilitate their physical growth.

For school-age children, on the other hand, completing school homework was their priority as participants. Keeping up with their peers was set as the legitimate primary task of the program, for their performance at school was directly related to the establishment of self-confidence. Through helping with their homework and administering literacy assessment, tutors were able to diagnose children's strengths and weaknesses in the literacy and content areas. Literacy learning activities were, therefore, designed for each child based on the first-hand information of their learning process, and the reading activities were divided into two types: oral reading and reading for pleasure. On every Tuesday, students were administered an informal reading inventory on an individual basis. The inventory was designed to measure students' oral reading rate (number of words per minute) and their comprehension of the text. There was no test-taking pressure — they were informed that it was just a reading exercise. The threat-free environment enabled students to demonstrate their actual reading ability. The progress they made in oral reading was then recorded on an evaluation graph.

The children enjoyed picking up books from a small collection of children's books at the center, reading with their tutors and discussing them. The way of reading and discussing a book was negotiable between the child and the tutor.

Each child was allowed to select and keep a book they liked as a reward for attending each meeting. The free books served as a motivation for them to learn and participate in the program. In addition, they were required to read the books to their parents and siblings at home so that a stronger literacy bond would be established in the family.

The school children were also involved in two writing activities in the program. One of them was prompt story writing. Each Thursday night students were required to write a story with a prescribed beginning. A total of 15 minutes was allowed for the whole writing process. A tutor read the story starter to a student (for example: "I went up to the old, deserted house. The door was open so I walked in. Suddenly ..."), then gave one minute for the student to think about it before starting to write. Discussion between the student and the tutor about the story was generally permitted, but the student should not write during the thinking time. Ten minutes were allotted for the actual writing. Three minutes after they started writing, students were required to put a star mark on the paper and use the remaining seven minutes to finish the story. The students were encouraged to write for the whole ten minutes. In this type of writing children need to follow the story starter, but they can also use their own imagination and rely on personal experiences to complete the writing. Therefore, it was structured writing with room for students to contribute as individuals.

Another writing activity was photo story writing ("Photo Story Book," Parker, 1993). Students and their parents were loaned a Polaroid camera to take home along with a pack of ten instant films. They were required to take pictures that featured family members, friends, and pets engaged in typical domestic activities in casual poses. The photos could also include familiar tools, toys, cooking utensils, and furniture, etc.;

they may also be of indoor or outdoor activities such as washing the car, fixing the roof, skating on the sidewalk, and so on. In short, students had entire freedom to choose whatever situation they were familiar with and would like to include in their photos.

Six out of ten pictures were selected by both students and tutors in order for the former to write stories on. Students then discussed each photo with their tutors before sitting down to write about it. The tutor would ask questions such as "What would you like to say about this picture?" or, "What is going on here?" or, "Can you tell me something interesting about this?" From the conversation, students were expected to generate, organize, and finally verbalize ideas. The time allotted for the actual writing of the story was around ten minutes, the same amount used for the story starter writing.

In normal school settings, cameras are usually not available for students to check out and take pictures at home. However, nowadays they are so common in people's lives that even economically disadvantaged families can afford one or more of them. (When asked to check out a Polaroid instant camera for their children to take photos at home, some parents said they already had such cameras.) Therefore, photo story writing should be a feasible and affordable method in improving students' writing ability in normal classroom applications.

Apparently, all teachers need to make photo story writing happen is to first discuss with parents about how to take pictures appropriate for picture writing. According to Scarcella, it is not uncommon that "teachers have not known how to encourage parents to become involved"; "many minority parents," in particular, "feel that they have been excluded from participating in our schools" (Scarcella, 1990, p.

161). In a sense, this activity provides an opportunity to elicit parental involvement which should be another advantage in implementing the strategy in addition to improving students' writing skills. Furthermore, parents' engagement in these activities enabled them to know about their children's literacy achievements in a consistent manner. For families with parents who have little literacy education, this activity may turn out to be an all beneficial event. Through discussing, describing, writing, and reading these picture stories, parents can acquire writing skills and literacy along with their children; so photo story writing can be applied as a means to encourage family literacy acquisition.

Photo story writing can be categorized as an "authentic" (Edelsky, 1989) assignment meaningful to students, who then use language naturally to fulfill real-life purposes. Participants in the program were very excited and highly motivated to write about their pictures. For example, one of the boys was highly stimulated by motivation. When earlier asked to work on the routine writing prompt tests, the boy tended to bargain with the tutor before reluctantly starting to write. However, he was so enthusiastic and eager to write about his photos that upon finishing with one picture, he asked permission to work on another. The student may not demonstrate an immediate better performance in his photo description than in his routine writing products, but the high motivation will pay off in the long run.

Undergraduates as tutors

When a large university is located in a small town, it is not always easy for an education major, during regular school hours, to get maximum exposure to classroom teaching as a pre-service teacher. With little access to elementary and high school classrooms, college students' comprehension of theories learned from textbooks may be inaccurate, because

connections between theory and practice can be lacking. For students enrolled in Literacy and Culturally Diverse Learners, class observation is not an official component of the course, and none of them had experience teaching LEP students. By participating in this literacy program, they were able to approach the children and parents, understand LEP children's learning process, involve parents in children's education, and finally, discover for themselves the connection between theories and actual teaching practices.

These tutors were assigned to work with two or three children throughout the program. They kept records of every child's progress and performance by filling out an evaluation form for each meeting as a collection for a portfolio. Continuous observation provided them with a clear picture of children's strengths and weaknesses in the development of literacy and content areas, and they were able to adapt their tutoring to facilitate the learning of every child. Each tutor was also required to conduct a thirty minute mini-class teaching in addition to tutoring. There was a group instruction and discussion topic for each evening, and two tutors were responsible for preparing and conducting the lesson. Tutors had usually conducted research to collect various sources of information for their lesson plans, and then organized the topic in an enjoyable manner to pique children's interest. They emphasized children's participation in the lesson, making connections between what they already knew and the new information. Real objects, manipulatives, and models were selected to make the lesson more vivid and comprehensible.

As participants of the program, tutors not only learned how to apply what was learned to teaching practices, they also learned to accept and respect diversity. Through close and frequent contacts with the parents, tutors became aware that these parents cared very much about their children's

education and eagerly wanted them to succeed in school. However, many factors, such as working schedules, ignorance of school systems, and language barriers, had earlier hindered them from getting involved. The supportive, risk-free, and friendly environment made children and parents feel comfortable, and positively affected family learning. Tutors' hugs, encouragement, hard work, and patience were returned with smiles, self-confidence, academic achievement, and thank-you cards from the children, and appreciation and cooperation from the parents. The experience, as program tutors, no doubt prepared these university students for more effective work with minority students and their parents in the future.

Graduates as program coordinators

The coordinators of the program were responsible for training undergraduate tutors, providing on-site monitoring and assistance to them, facilitating the interaction among children, parents, and tutors, ensuring sufficient material supply on-site, and so on. Several doctoral students were recruited as the coordinators of the two-year program, who happened to be instructors of Literacy Acquisition and Culturally Diverse Learners at the university. The double role enabled them to monitor college students' performance both as learners and tutors. They were able to gain an in-depth understanding of what students most needed to learn from the class about teaching LEP students.

In managing the program, the coordinators discussed with tutors, both on the university campus and on the program site, such issues as how to teach LEP children, how to communicate with parents, and how to apply theory to practice. They also had the opportunity to listen to student tutors' concerns and the difficulties they encountered in their learning and tutoring, so that the coordinators/instructors could

make appropriate adjustments in their teaching. Without the program, communication between instructors and students would very likely be limited to the classroom.

Moreover, the coordinators participated in the evaluation and assessment of the program by assisting the evaluation specialist in preparing the instrument and procedures and monitoring the implementation of the evaluation. The program was also an ideal site for educational research, which generated valuable data. Based on the research, papers were completed on LEP students' literacy acquisition process and on the family literacy program. Presentations related to the program were given at national and state conferences and were warmly received. Therefore, being centrally involved in the literacy program as coordinators provided the graduates with an excellent opportunity for educational research that is not only a vital part of a doctoral program but also benefits the university and the community.

In conclusion, the family literacy program was designed to actively involve both LEP children with their parents in literacy acquisition and preservice teachers as learners. An efficiently planned and conducted program should not only attend to children and their parents' learning development but also maximize the gains for all program participants. This program highlighted the two-way responsive learning/teaching interaction between families and (pre-) education professionals by breaking the "we teach, you learn" family literacy program dichotomy (Shockley, 1994). The parents and children taught the tutors many valuable lessons about the complexity of the learning process, human relations, and family involvement. The benefits that (pre-) educators gained from participating in the program were evident. Their understanding of the function of family literacy may hopefully result in a commitment to involving families for the purpose

of facilitating the learning process of children, when the future teachers are assigned to teach in the public schools. Without any doubt, our children will develop more potentials in learning when a better understanding and a strong collaboration are achieved among parents, educators, and communities.

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Ping Liu is a faculty member in the Department of Educational Curriculum and Instruction at Texas A & M University, in College Station Texas.

1997 Kellogg Institute — June 27 - July 25

The Kellogg Institute for the Training and Certification of Developmental Educators has announced dates and application procedures for its 1997 training program. The 1997 Institute will be held from June 27 through July 25 on the campus of Appalachian State University in Boone, NC.

The 1997 Kellogg Institute will train faculty, counselors, and administrators from developmental and learning assistance programs in the most current techniques for promoting learning improvement. The Institute program consists of a summer session followed by a fall term practicum project on the home campus of each participant. The 1997 summer program will focus on the use of learning styles and their implications for instruction, the process of designing and implementing developmental evaluation activities, developmental instruction techniques, classroom assessment, research in developmental education, advising and counseling the developmental student, as well as the use of computers for management, data collection, and instructional purposes.

Institute fees are \$795 plus \$550 for room and board. A graduate credit fee for the three-hour practicum will also be charged. Up to six (6) hours of graduate credit may also be obtained for participation in the summer program. Applications and additional information about the Institute may be obtained by contacting Elaine Bingham, Director of the Kellogg Institute, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC 28608; (704) 262-3057. Early application is encouraged to ensure a space in the Institute. The application deadline is March 14, 1997.



Creating Metacognitive Experiences During Written Communication: Positive Self-Talk Using the Thinking Mirror

Jane A. Haugh
Jan Pawtowski

An excerpt from a case study:

After journal writing in kindergarten, Nathaniel looked into the thinking mirror (see Figure 1) and privately engaged in positive self-talk saying:

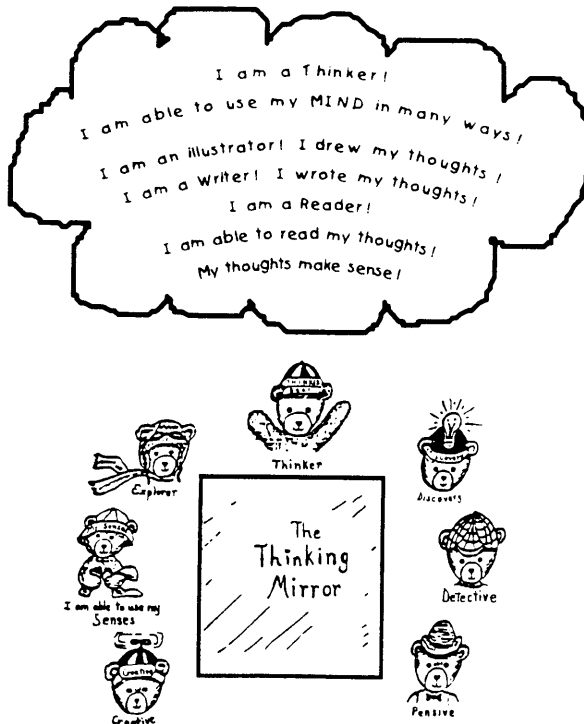
*I am a Thinker! I am able to use my MIND in many ways!
I am an Illustrator! I drew my thoughts!
I am a Writer! I wrote my thoughts!
I am a Reader! I am able to read my thoughts!
My thoughts make sense!*

A proud smile appeared upon his face and his eyes sparkled with delight. With confidence he looked closely at himself in the mirror, raised his hands, and gave himself two "thumbs up." Nathaniel seemed quite proud of himself.

This anecdote illustrates how Nathaniel took a few moments during the school day to look into the thinking mirror and say positive thoughts to himself about how he used his MIND during journal writing. The thinking mirror is an ordinary mirror in the classroom used to initiate

reflective moments for children. In this example, Nathaniel looks into the thinking mirror to see himself as a thinker, an illustrator, a writer, and a reader of thoughts that make sense. The thinking mirror provides Nathaniel with an opportunity to engage in positive self-talk where he attributes the cause of his thinking and communicating behaviors to his own efforts and competence.

Figure 1
The Thinking Mirror



Theoretically, when children see themselves in the thinking mirror and say positive thoughts to themselves about their communicative behaviors, they may activate a

variety of cognitive events. Positive self-talk using the thinking mirror may act as a metacognitive experience triggering positive thoughts, feelings, and sensations that may contribute to children's permanent metacognitive knowledge, clarify their cognitive goals, and initiate cognitive actions during written communication. Such positive experiences may strengthen children's intrinsic motivation to communicate thoughts during subsequent writing and reading endeavors.

Positive self-talk using the thinking mirror is founded upon cognitive monitoring of communication. Flavell (1981), a cognitive and developmental psychologist, describes the multitude of cognitive interactions that may occur during monitoring of communication (see Figure 2). In this article, cognitive monitoring will be succinctly summarized, and then used to analyze positive self-talk using the thinking mirror as a classroom strategy. Lastly, guidelines for implementing positive self-talk using the thinking mirror will be shared.

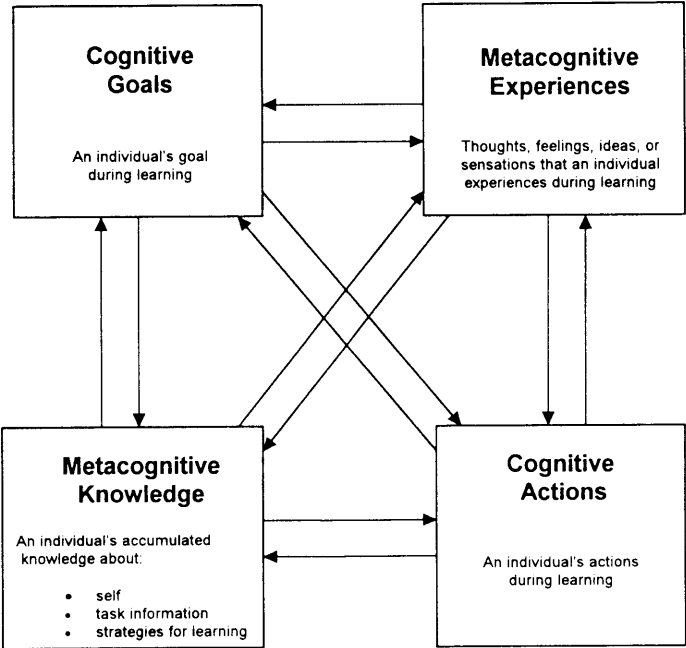
Cognitive monitoring: A theoretical framework

According to Flavell (1981), an individual's cognitive goals, metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive experiences, and cognitive actions may influence their efficiency and effectiveness during communicative endeavors. These four cognitive components interact with each other and influence how individuals monitor their communications. The arrows in Figure 2 illustrate the dynamic interactions that may occur among these cognitive components during communication.

Cognitive goals refer to "tacit or explicit objectives that instigate or maintain the cognitive enterprise" of writing or reading (Flavell, 1981, p. 40). Figure 2 shows arrows going from cognitive goals to the other three cognitive components. During writing or reading tasks, the goals children have direct

the stored-knowledge they use (metacognitive knowledge), initiate thoughts and feelings they encounter (metacognitive experiences), and activate the actions they implement to complete the tasks (cognitive actions). The cognitive goals children have as they engage in writing or reading tasks, influence how they monitor their communications (Bruner, 1971; Downing, 1979; Fitts and Posner, 1967; Flavell, 1981; Gelb, 1963, Gillete and Temple, 1994; Halliday, 1973; Jensen, 1970).

Figure 2
A Theoretical Model of Cognitive Monitoring



Metacognitive knowledge refers to children's awareness and use of accumulated world knowledge of: 1) one's self as a written communicator (person variables); 2) the purpose of the written communication tasks and related information (task variables); and 3) strategies needed to communicate effectively during writing or reading (strategy variables). Children's stored knowledge about reading and writing in these three categories influences how they monitor these communicative endeavors (Brown, 1980; Flavell, 1981; Flower and Hayes, 1981; Goodman, 1976; Hall and Lindzey, 1957; Henk and Melnick, 1995; Jewell and Zintz, 1986; Meichenbaum, 1977; Smith, 1978). Relevant portions of these three categories of stored knowledge may be retrieved and used "automatically or deliberately either with or without entering consciousness" during writing and reading endeavors (Flavell, 1981, p. 46). Figure 2 shows arrows going from metacognitive knowledge to the other three components. This means that children's stored knowledge about written communication may influence their goals for written communication (cognitive goals), the thoughts and feelings they encounter (metacognitive experiences), and the actions they take during writing or reading (cognitive actions).

Metacognitive experiences are "conscious experiences (ideas, thoughts, feelings, or 'sensations')" that may occur during writing or reading (Flavell, 1981, p. 46). According to Flavell (1981) sudden thoughts, feelings, ideas, and sensations represent a family of feelings that influence children's strategic behaviors and performance during written communication. Thoughts, ideas, feelings, or sensations occurring during writing or reading endeavors may influence how individuals monitor their communications (Flavell, 1981; Hayes and Flower, 1980). Figure 2 shows arrows going from metacognitive experiences to the other three cognitive components. Metacognitive experiences (sudden thoughts, feelings, ideas,

or sensations) that occur during reading or writing endeavors may influence children's goals (cognitive goals), accumulated knowledge (metacognitive knowledge), and actions (cognitive actions). Metacognitive experiences may occur whenever children "do a lot of conscious cognition, thereby providing many cognitive events" (Flavell, 1981, p. 49).

Cognitive actions refers to the actual actions implemented by children as they read or write. Reading and writing can be positively or negatively influenced by the actions of an individual (Bereiter, 1980; Brown, 1980). Figure 2 shows arrows going from cognitive actions to the other cognitive components. Children's cognitive actions during writing or reading may influence their goals (cognitive goals), their accumulated knowledge (metacognitive knowledge), and the family of feelings they encounter during these communicative endeavors (metacognitive experiences).

In summary, cognitive goals, metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive experiences, and cognitive actions represent a variety of cognitive events that may arise as children engage in writing or reading endeavors. The arrows in Figure 2 illustrate the complex, simultaneous, and reciprocal interactions that may occur at lightening speed among these cognitive components. As children engage in writing and reading endeavors these four cognitive components influence how they monitor their communications.

Theory into practice

Within this cognitive framework, Flavell (1981) implicates that schools should set about fostering metacognitive experiences during communicative events that produce specific thoughts, ideas, feelings and sensations. During writing or reading endeavors, teachers should try to get children to attend to the family of feelings that may occur as they write or

read thoughts. This means encouraging children to notice any conscious thoughts, ideas, feelings, or sensations that provide feedback about the task. For example, metacognitive experiences can be activated by simply encouraging children to ask themselves "Does this make sense?" as they write or read. This self-imposed metacognitive experience focuses children's awareness on whether or not what they just wrote or read makes sense.

Encouraging children to ask themselves, "Does this make sense?" as they write or read, creates a metacognitive experience that may prompt them to rewrite or reread (cognitive actions), clarify their goals for writing or reading (cognitive goals), and may contribute to their accumulated knowledge of strategies for writing and reading (metacognitive knowledge). Flavell (1981) explains that, "concrete metacognitive experiences and associated actions can provide input to permanent metacognitive knowledge, which in turn will influence future experiences and actions" (p. 57). Metacognitive experiences occurring during writing and reading activities may influence how children go about monitoring these communicative endeavors.

Metacognitive experiences may also be activated in the classroom by encouraging children to engage in positive self-talk using the thinking mirror during journal writing endeavors. This instructional activity is designed to trigger metacognitive experiences that generate positive input into children's metacognitive knowledge of written communication, clarify their communicative goals, and initiate future cognitive actions.

Positive self-talk using the thinking mirror during journal writing involves three important procedures. First, teachers observe children using their minds to draw and write

their thoughts in their journals. Next, teachers share their observations with individual children. Teachers provide positive feedback using specific words and phrases that describe how children are using their minds during this communicative activity. And lastly, teachers encourage children to reflect upon their writing behaviors using positive self-talk and the thinking mirror. The goal is to help children attribute their communicative behaviors to their own efforts.

The following anecdotal record describes how a classroom teacher implements self-talk using the thinking mirror to activate positive metacognitive experiences for a child during kindergarten journal writing:

Observe:

Nathaniel sat at a table attempting to write in his journal. I stopped to observe this 5 year-old child using his mind to draw and write his thoughts.

Share:

I took a few moments to share my observations with Nathaniel using specific words and phrases in my conversation:

Nathaniel, you are only five years old and you are using your mind to think, draw, and write your thoughts on paper. You are a thinker and a writer!

Your thoughts are special! Your thoughts make sense!

Nathaniel listened intently to every word I said. Then he smiled to himself and continued writing his thoughts in his journal.

Reflect: Self-talk using the thinking mirror:

At the conclusion of journal writing, Nathaniel read his journal thoughts to me. He invented the spelling of many words and his thoughts made sense. I complimented his efforts to use his mind to think, draw, write, and read his thoughts. I encouraged him to say positive thoughts to himself using the thinking mirror:

Nathaniel, it's time for you to look into the thinking mirror and say these happy thoughts to yourself:

I am a Thinker! I am able to use my mind in many ways!

I am an Illustrator! I drew my thoughts!

*I am a Writer! I wrote my thoughts!
I am a Reader! I am able to read my thoughts!
My thoughts make sense!*

After Nathaniel looked into the Thinking Mirror and said these thoughts to himself, a proud smile appeared upon his face and his eyes sparkled with delight. With confidence he looked closely at himself in the mirror, raised his hand, and gave himself a "thumbs up" sign. Nathaniel seemed quite proud of himself.

The interactions that occurred between the teacher and the child were very meaningful. These interactions may trigger cognitive events that could influence how Nathaniel monitors future experiences with written communication. First, the teacher uses her professional expertise to observe Nathaniel's communicative behaviors. She stops and thinks to herself, "this child is only five years old and is using his mind to think, draw, write, and read his thoughts in his journal."

Next, the teacher takes time to share her observations with the child by employing specific words and phrases in her conversation to provide Nathaniel with positive feedback. This personal feedback may help Nathaniel take notice of how he is using his mind to think, draw, write, and read his special thoughts. Such feedback is important for all learners, but it is especially important for those children who have vague notions about their abilities as thinkers, writers, and readers. They may benefit from this positive feedback by making important discoveries about themselves. The words and phrases the teacher uses during her interactions, may prompt Nathaniel to experience the moment, and become aware of positive thoughts, feelings, and sensations about his abilities to use his mind in many ways.

This scenario can be analyzed in terms of cognitive monitoring. Theoretically, the teacher may activate a variety of thoughts, feelings, and sensations for Nathaniel as he listens

to her describe how he is using his mind. The words and phrases the teacher uses during her conversation with Nathaniel may contribute to his permanent metacognitive knowledge of self as a thinker and a communicator of thoughts.

Authorities note that metacognitive knowledge of the self is formed by internalizing attitudes, values, and norms of one's peers, parents, teachers, and all others in society. The myriad of experiences children encounter constitutes their personal history, and represents their stored knowledge of self (Hall and Lindzey, 1957). How children feel about themselves is a product of what they sense parents, teachers, and others feel about them. Parents and teachers have a powerful influence upon how children come to view themselves. Their interactions contribute to whether or not children view themselves as confident productive learners.

Jewell and Zintz (1986) indicate that children's positive interactions with parents and teachers generates feelings of pride, delight, and confidence that enhance positive awareness and knowledge of self. Conversely, children's negative interactions with parents and teachers generates feelings of humiliation, disillusionment, and apprehension that influence negative awareness and knowledge of self. Teachers can create positive metacognitive experiences that contribute to children's metacognitive knowledge of self just by describing their communicative behaviors using specific words and phrases during their interactions with children.

In the anecdote previously described, the teacher continues to trigger positive thoughts for Nathaniel by encouraging him to produce his own metacognitive experience. After having Nathaniel read his journal thoughts, the teacher encourages Nathaniel to reflect upon his communicative

behaviors. Specifically, she encourages Nathaniel to engage in positive self-talk using the thinking mirror in the following way:

Nathaniel, it's time for you to look into the thinking mirror and say happy thoughts to yourself:

I am a Thinker! I am able to use my mind in many ways!

I am an Illustrator! I drew my thoughts!

I am a Writer! I wrote my thoughts!

I am a Reader! I can read my thoughts!

My thoughts make sense!

It is important to note in this scenario, that the child is responsible for providing his own metacognitive experience. The teacher acts as mentor guiding Nathaniel to reflect into the thinking mirror about his communicative efforts. Now, Nathaniel has a personal opportunity to see a positive visual image of himself and to say positive thoughts to himself. The teacher helps Nathaniel become aware of his abilities, and then encourages him to attribute his communicative behaviors to his own efforts and competence.

Positive self-talk using the thinking mirror contributes to Nathaniel's metacognitive knowledge of self and may in turn strengthen his efficiency and effectiveness during communication tasks (Flavell, 1981; Nicholls, 1979; Purkey, 1984; Ryan, Ledger, Short, and Weed, 1982; Quandt and Selznick, 1984). Specifically, theorists and researchers note that attributing the cause of one's behavior to one's effort and competence may enhance intrinsic motivation (Henk and Melnick, 1995). Gottfried (1983) states that "when children attribute the cause of their behavior to their own efforts, competence, or self-selection of goals, intrinsic motivation is likely to be enhanced" (p. 65). Conversely, "when children attribute the cause of their behavior to external influences

such as rewards or parental and teacher demands, rather than their own efforts, then intrinsic motivation is likely to be diminished" (Gottfried, 1983, p. 65).

How children perceive the cause of their behavior may influence their perceptions of self, their motivations, and their subsequent efficiency and effectiveness during tasks. Positive self-talk using the thinking mirror provides children with a personal opportunity to attribute the cause of their communicative behavior to their own efforts and competence. Such metacognitive experiences may enhance their intrinsic motivation to communicate thoughts in future writing endeavors.

Another factor explored by researchers and theorists, is the notion that self-awareness acts as a cue for producing an internal dialogue. An internal dialogue refers to statements individuals say to themselves as they engage in a task. Bruch, Meyer, and Chesser (1987), Meichenbaum, (1977), Uhlemann and Plater (1990), acknowledge that positive self-statements and images have positive effects on stored knowledge of self and influence subsequent positive behaviors. Conversely, negative self-statements and images have deleterious effects on stored knowledge of self and influence subsequent negative behaviors.

In terms of cognitive monitoring of communication, it can be noted that positive self-talk using the thinking mirror represents a metacognitive experience that may directly influence children's communicative goals (cognitive goals), their communicate behaviors (cognitive actions) as well as contribute to their stored knowledge (metacognitive knowledge). Authorities suggest that increased positive self-talk helps individuals gain a sense of control of their emotions and thoughts (metacognitive experiences), helps guide their

pursuit of goals (cognitive goals) and helps activate positive behaviors (cognitive actions) (Bruch, Meyer, and Chesser, 1987; Meichenbaum, 1977; Uhlemann and Plater, 1990). How individuals view themselves (stored metacognitive knowledge of self) and what they say to themselves during internal dialogues (metacognitive experiences), subsequently influences their goals (cognitive goals) and their behaviors (cognitive actions).

As children look into the thinking mirror, they are encouraged to see positive visual images of themselves as thinkers and communicators, and they are encouraged to attribute the cause of their communicative behaviors to their own efforts and competence. Such experiences may arouse their intrinsic motivation to communicate thoughts in future writing endeavors. As children deliberately engage in positive dialogues with themselves, they may experience positive thoughts that may guide their communicative goals and behaviors.

Guidelines: Positive self-talk using the thinking mirror

Teachers have many opportunities to encourage children to engage in positive self-talk using the thinking mirror during written communication endeavors. The following guidelines have been developed to help children attribute the cause of their communicative behaviors to their own abilities and efforts:

Observe

Observe children using their minds during any communicative endeavor.

Share

Share personal observations with individual children using specific words and phrases that describe how they are using their minds to communicate thoughts.

Reflect: Using positive self-talk and the thinking mirror

Encourage the children to take a few moments to reflect upon their behaviors. Encourage them to look into the thinking mirror and say positive thoughts to themselves about how they are using their minds to communicate thoughts.

These guidelines may be implemented with children at any grade level especially emergent readers and writers. It is a matter of catching children using their minds during the school day, and employing specific words and phrases in our conversations to help children become aware of their abilities. The following examples illustrate the words and phrases teachers or parents may say to children as they help them become aware of the different ways they are using their minds. These statements may help children attribute the cause of their thinking behaviors to their own efforts and competence.

Observe and share using words and phrases during literacy activitiesA young child scribbling thoughts on paper.

Ethan, you are a Thinker! You are using your mind, your eyes, and your hands to communicate your thoughts on paper. Your thoughts are special! Please look into the thinking mirror and say, "I am a Thinker! I am using my mind to communicate my thoughts on paper!"

A child examining the illustrations in a book in the classroom library.

Heather, you are a Thinker and a Communicator. You are using your mind and your eyes to make sense of the picture thoughts the illustrator drew in this book. Good thinking! Please look into the thinking mirror and say, "I am a Thinker! I am using my mind to make sense of this book. I am reading the picture thoughts in this book."

A child painting thoughts on paper.

Jonathan, you are a Thinker! You are using your mind, your eyes, and your hands to paint your thoughts on paper. You are creating thoughts. Good thinking! Please look into the thinking mirror and say, "I am a Thinker! I am using my mind, my eyes, and my hands to paint my thoughts on paper. I am creating thoughts!"

Observe and share using words and phrases during other curriculum activities

A group of children problem solving in social studies.

Stevie, Tyler and Matt, you are using your minds to solve this social studies problem. You are using your minds to listen to each other and discuss a variety of ways to solve this problem. Good thinking! Please look into the thinking mirror and say, "I am a Thinker! I am using my mind to help solve this social studies problem with my group!"

A child looking at an object through a magnifying lens.

Holly, you are using your mind, your eyes, your hands, and the magnifying lens to examine the parts of that flower! You are a Thinker! You are using your mind to analyze the flower! Please look into the thinking mirror and say, "I am a Thinker! I am using my mind and this magnifying lens to take a closer look at the parts of this flower!"

A child climbing on the monkey bars on the playground.

Peter! Good climbing! You are using your mind, your eyes, your hands, and your body to climb these monkey bars! You are using your mind to control your body as you climb. Good thinking! Please talk to yourself and say, "I am a Thinker! I am using my mind and my body to climb these monkey bars carefully!"

Observing children's behaviors and sharing our observations by employing specific words and phrases that describe how they are using their minds, provides them with positive personal feedback. Children experience the moment and listen intently to positive comments with eager anticipation of finding out some important information about themselves. Children take notice of how they are using their minds to communicate, and they continue their communicative efforts with gusto and confidence.

A time to reflect: Positive self-talk and the thinking mirror

No matter what kind of communicative experience children have participated in, encourage them to reflect upon their efforts using positive self-talk and the thinking mirror. Prompt children to look into the thinking mirror and say positive statements to themselves. As children reflect using the thinking mirror, they see instant positive visual images of themselves as thinkers and communicators. The thinking mirror provides children with a personal opportunity to reflect upon their abilities and engage in positive self-talk that attributes the cause of their behaviors to their own efforts and competence.

Summary

Positive self-talk using the thinking mirror is a classroom strategy that involves taking time during the school day to observe children using their minds. It means sharing our observations with children employing specific words and phrases in our conversations to describe how children are using their minds to communicate thoughts. Most importantly, this classroom strategy encourages children to reflect upon their communicative behaviors. This means prompting children to see positive visual images of themselves as they engage in positive self-talk using the thinking mirror.

Cognitive monitoring of communication provides a theoretical framework to describe the variety of cognitive events that may occur as children engage in reading and writing endeavors. It can also be used to describe the cognitive events that occur as children engage in positive self-talk using the thinking mirror. When children see positive visual images of themselves as thinkers and writers, and say positive thoughts to themselves about their communicative efforts, they may stimulate positive feelings, and sensations (metacognitive experiences) that contribute to their permanent knowledge about written communication (metacognitive knowledge), clarify their communicative goals (cognitive goals), and initiate future communicative behaviors (cognitive actions).

Positive self-talk using the thinking mirror provides children with an opportunity to attribute the cause of their communicative behaviors to their own efforts and competence which in turn may stimulate their intrinsic motivation to engage in future communicative endeavors. When emergent readers and writers are placed in the driver's seat, they may become aware of their role as navigators and may eagerly embark upon the road of lifelong adventures in learning and literacy.

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Jane A. Haugh is a faculty member in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Maryland, in College Park Maryland. Jan C. Pawtowski is a Kindergarten Teacher at Montgomery County Public Schools in Silver Spring Maryland.

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Professional Materials

Through Writing to Reading, Classroom Strategies for Supporting Literacy. Written by Brigid Smith. Routledge, New York, NY 10001. 1994. US\$55.00 Hardback, \$17.95 Paperback.

Susan Cress
Indiana University at South Bend

Brigid Smith describes the Language Experience Approach which most teachers have learned about and used in their classrooms for years. As children dictate a story to adults and subsequently read their narrative they view themselves as readers, which is a big step towards achieving literacy. However, the author quickly moves beyond the traditional ways of using language experience by describing many practical methods of extending this approach.

Smith suggests a variety of strategies for individuals, small groups, large groups, and students with special needs. One of the strengths of the dictating process Smith describes is its versatility. For a student experiencing many academic difficulties including severe perceptual motor problems, Smith suggests having the child dictate a story. The adult then types it on the computer using a book style font. The student is given a printed copy accompanied by a tape of the story for shared reading. When the student is comfortable with reading the story, he reads it independently. For another child with emotional problems which include passivity and a lack of observed motivation to read, the first step is to encourage

talking about events which are meaningful. The student draws pictures about the events, and is encouraged to make statements about the pictures. The dictation is written by the adult to accompany the illustrations. The student then reads the dictation back to the adult. Both of the strategies involve dictation to an adult at some point, but the process is individualized to meet the student's needs. Throughout the book, numerous case studies and example illustrate how to use dictated writing in the classroom.

Smith outlines a program to train the use of volunteer helpers as scribes and listeners, and this is perhaps the most helpful part of the book. Two sessions are outlined for teachers who wish to train adult volunteers. Smith describes an initial meeting to give background and provide interest, and a training session which includes details about the role of the adult in the dictating/scribe process.

At a time when educators are rightly concerned about providing the best possible practices to meet the needs of a diverse population of students, the author describes the implementation of an approach which fulfills this need. The practical strategies and the examples provide new and experienced teachers with the tools necessary to implement language experience in the classroom.

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Children's Books

A Flamingo Who Can Rap

Fiona Raps It Up. Written by Frank Remkiewicz. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019. 1995. ISBN: 0-688-13146-8. 32 pp. US\$15.00.

This story features a relaxed pink flamingo who gets herself in trouble by flying with her eyes closed. She crashed into a banana boat and accidentally lays an egg in a pile of bananas. Rappin' Cap'n Otter helps Fiona, the flamingo, by dressing her egg to look like a mean sea captain to help keep it safe. He also teaches Fiona how to sing rap songs as she travels to find her flock of birds. This is an amusing enjoyable story with rhyming words children will appreciate. (SAS)

A Special Gift

Badger's Bring Something Party. Written by Hiawyn Oram. Illustrated by Susan Varley. Lothrop, Lee, and Shepard, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019. ISBN: 0-688-14082-3. 1995. US\$15.00.

All of Badger's friends wanted to come to his Bring Something Party except Mole, who feels grumpy and believed he didn't have anything to bring, so he told Badger he couldn't come to the party. Badger suggests he can come without bringing anything at all. So that's what Mole does. He feels worse and worse at the party until his friends make him

realize what a great thing he did bring to the party — HIMSELF. This story can increase children's self-esteem, and they will also take pleasure in the impressive illustrations. (SAS)

Versatile Joanna Cole

Yours Till Banana Splits, The Gator Girls, and My New Kitten. Written by Joanna Cole. William Morrow and Company, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10019.

Author Joanna Cole is sufficiently prolific that it takes a crew of colleagues to keep up with her. In *Yours Till Banana Splits*, the newest in her series of collections with Stephanie Calmenson, spiced by Alan Tiegreen's witty sketches (following earlier books on riddles, tongue twisters and card games), she gives us 201 autograph rhymes with suggestions for pink pages, blue pages, bottom-of-the-page, secret messages, puzzles, insults, friendly words, upside down rhymes, and golden oldies (always renewably new to a new generation): *Yours till butter flies, ginger snaps, and ice screams.* Cole and Calmenson have also teamed to produce the junior book, *The Gator Girls*, with eight chapters on the adventures of Allie and Amy, best friend alligators who have to make every minute count before Allie leaves for a summer vacation at Camp Wogga-Bog — adventures which fairly cry out for a sequel. In *My New Kitten*, Margaret Miller's gorgeous photographs illustrate Cole's account of a kitten's life from pre-birth till he's big and strong enough to come home with the child who has been eagerly waiting to love him. Fulfilling all our expectations, the book is a treasure from dedication page featuring an inset kitten photograph, to the joyous conclusion, showing narrator, a crew of teddy bears, and wide-eyes kitten, cuddling together. (JM)

Spring Gardens

Counting Wildflowers. Written and illustrated by Bruce McMillan. William Morrow and Company, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019. ISBN: 0-688-14027-0. Paper 32 pp. US\$4.95.

Seeds sprout; spring is here. In beautiful large print story and bright pictures Miela Ford and Sally Noll tell the story of a sunflower, from a tiny seed in a child's hand, to the overflowing hatful of seeds for treats and for planting — a metaphor of nature's richness.

Bruce McMillan's lovely, thoughtfully-designed counting book uses wildflower photographs to show One through Too Many to Count. For the numbers 1-10, ten dots, shown in a row below each picture, are colored with the wildflower's color to match the number of flowers shown in the picture with the remaining dots in green — always the background color in the flower pictures. Thus for the number three, below the picture of three True Forget-Me-Not blossoms, three dots are blue and seven are green. A similar pattern, with two rows of dots, is followed for the numbers 11-20. At the end of the book the author provides a list of the flowers with their scientific names and natural location.

Children can't build a house, but they can plant a garden. In his gentle but dazzlingly rich book, following the pattern of "this is the house that Jack built," Henry Cole traces Jack's garden from planting to flowering. Each two-page illustration is accompanied by smaller, labeled drawings — of garden tools, insects, bird's and flowers. The final page gives directions, "To Start Your Own Garden." (JMJ)

A Bronco Riding Armadillo

Armadillo Rodeo. Written and illustrated by Jan Brett. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 200 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016. ISBN: 0-399-22803-9. 32 pp. 1995. US\$15.95.

Julie A. Foss, Mount Morris, IL

Bo is the adventuresome armadillo in Jan Brett's book *Armadillo Rodeo*. He is one of Ma Armadillo's four sons. Being an armadillo means Bo cannot see very well. He mistakes Harmony Jean's new "pointy-toed, high heeled, hand-tooled, chili-pepper red" cowboy boots for an armadillo he wants to befriend. While trying to catch up with his new friend, Bo rides a bronc, eats a red hot chili-pepper, and tries to two-step. When Bo finally catches up with his new friend, he is disappointed to find it is a cowboy boot and not an armadillo.

Jan Brett's illustrations in *Armadillo Rodeo* are fantastic. She once again uses meaningful borders to add to her illustrations. When Bo and Harmony Jean wearing Bo's "friend" are in the main illustration, Ma Armadillo and her sons are shown in the borders searching for Bo. When Ma Armadillo is in the main illustration, Bo and Harmony Jean are in the border heading to their next adventure.

This is delightful book to read to children in grades 1, 2, and 3. Children will find this book funny. They will also enjoy picking out the animals Ma Armadillo talks to in her search for Bo. *Armadillo Rodeo* has become a favorite of books by Jan Brett.

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