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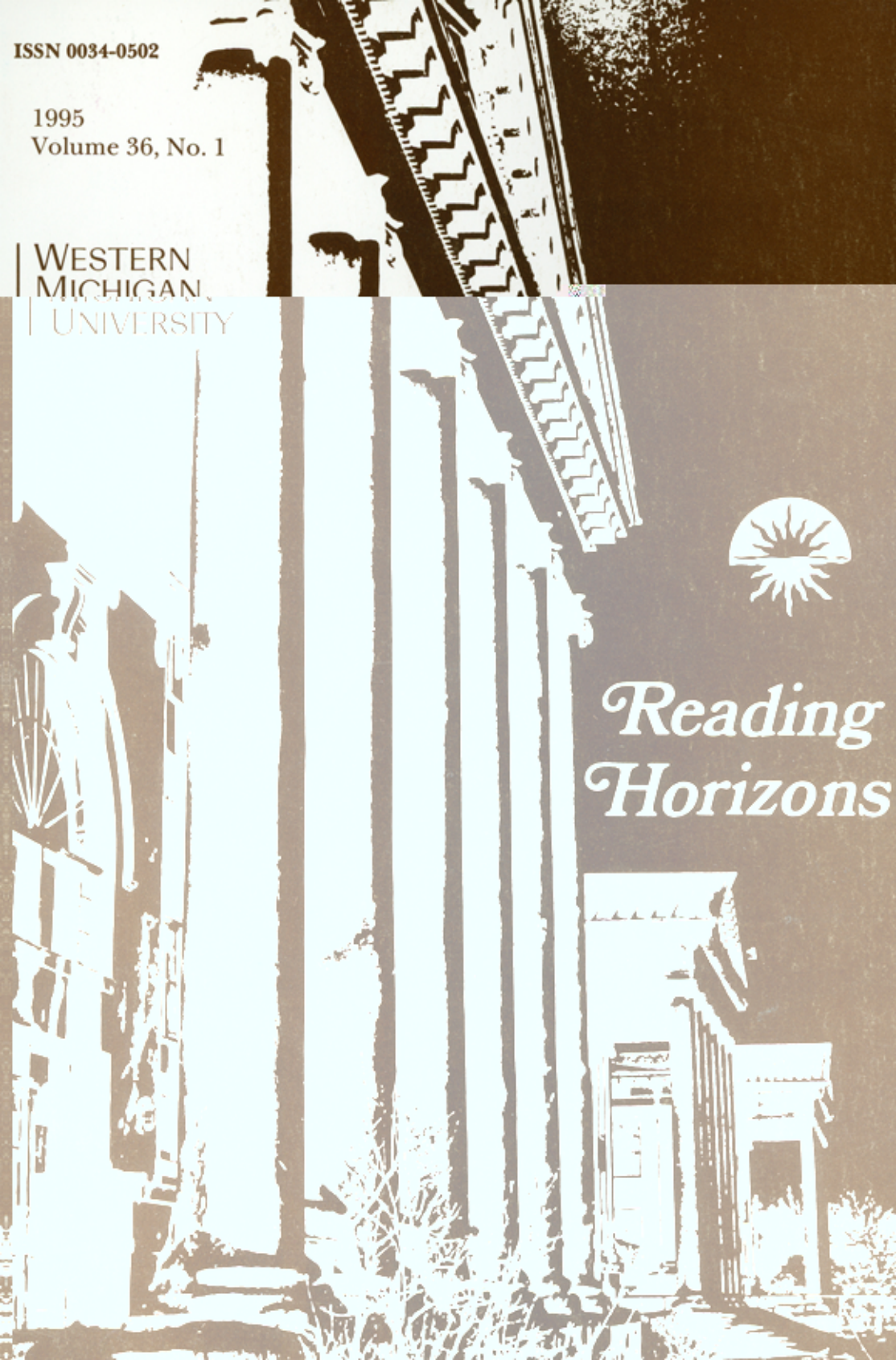
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Reading Horizons





READING HORIZONS

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Learning About Language Arts Instruction Through Collaboration

Ellen McIntyre
Diane W. Kyle

You know when people ask you, 'What do you do?' I used to just say, 'I'm a teacher.' And they just look at you, and you know they're thinking, 'Oh, you just play all day.' But now, I want to say, 'I'M A TEACHER!'

Donna's voice shows the confidence she feels today; however, her metamorphosis did not happen overnight, nor did that of the six other teachers with whom she worked on a research project during the past three years. In this article, we describe how Donna and her colleagues learned more about language arts teaching through collaborative team work — research, and writing. We also discuss what this means for teachers who are trying to change their practices and the teacher educators trying to help.

In the United States, educational reform is taking many forms, many of which are state-wide. The passage of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990 mandated systemic changes in the governance, finance, organization, and curriculum of K-12 schooling. One of these changes required the creation of K-3 nongraded primary programs characterized by seven "critical attributes," presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Critical Attributes of Kentucky's Primary Program

1. Developmentally appropriate practices
2. Multi-age, multi-ability groups
3. Continuous progress model
4. Authentic assessment
5. Qualitative reporting
6. Professional teamwork
7. Parent involvement

One of the mandated critical attributes is developmentally-appropriate instruction which includes meaning-centered language arts instruction that focuses on children's needs and interests. Another critical attribute is professional teamwork. The seven teachers described in this article first formed teams in the fall of 1991, the year we began to study them.

For the three years of the study, we observed and interviewed the teachers in an attempt to understand how they made decisions and changed their instructional practices in light of reform that mandates both developmentally appropriate instruction and teamwork. All seven viewed themselves as whole language teachers who were refining their understanding of children and attempting to provide developmentally appropriate literacy instruction within a non-graded primary program. In this article, we show what the teachers learned about language arts teaching, and more importantly, how they learned. Over the course of the three

years, we saw dramatic changes in the teachers' views of themselves, their teammates, their instructional practices, and their profession. Their gradual change occurred simultaneously with their collaborative teamwork, participation in research, and professional writing.

The context

The seven teachers involved in our three-year study teach in two schools and implement different types of primary program models. At LaGrange Elementary, Anna, Gayle, Kris, and Vickie teach low-SES, rural children ages 5-7. To these teachers, teaming means meeting often informally and at least once a week formally to share ideas and coordinate plans. The teachers then implement these plans in their individual classrooms.

At Atkinson Elementary, Donna, Joy, and Tina team teach low-SES urban children ages 5-9. They work together in one large room, planning and implementing instruction for 40 children, 12 to 15 of whom are designated as children with learning disabilities. Joy is the certified special educator on the team. As university researchers, each of us was responsible for one of the research sites (Diane at LaGrange and Ellen at Atkinson). We interviewed the teachers regularly about changes in their teaching. About once a week we observed and recorded the teachers' planning sessions or classroom practices. We also held several all-day, and two evening, cross-site meetings over the course of the study, in which all seven teachers came together to reflect on their understandings of developmentally appropriate instruction. The teachers discussed their dilemmas and challenges (from dealing with a wide range of learners to whether or not to teach phonics). They also reflected on the processes of the changes. During these meetings, the teachers wrote explanations of what they taught and why, and they elaborated on these

written reports during discussions. These questions and topics were generated primarily by us through examination of field notes. However, the meetings were flexible; we also dealt with issues the teachers wanted discussed. A research assistant recorded all talk in the form of field notes, and all teachers read and commented on this manuscript.

Collaboration as key to growth

In recent decades, we have come to understand the social nature of learning (Bloome, 1985; Bloome and Green, 1982; Bruner, 1960; Cazden, 1987; Vygotsky, 1978). While educators are moving toward applying social learning theory to research and to teaching of young children, the field has been slower to apply it to the learning of adults, particularly teachers. Historically, teaching has been an isolated profession. Teachers rarely get to speak to one another more than thirty minutes a day. They do not often consult with each other and even become competitive in some circumstances (Pace, 1990). But, educators are beginning to understand the need to collaborate in order to learn and grow professionally (Hollingsworth, 1989, 1992; Hunsacker & Johnson, 1992; Nespor & Barlyske, 1991; Pace, 1991; Richardson, 1990). The teachers in this study confirm the need for, and benefits of, collaboration.

Learning through team collaboration

The teachers in this study learned invaluable lessons about themselves and each other through teaming. They studied themselves through interacting with others. Through sharing, the teachers were challenged in their ideas and practices of teaching and each affirmed that they were indeed on the right track. The interaction helped them feel less isolated. Kris, from LaGrange, expressed how she had felt as if she was floundering around on her own before the teaming mandate. A year later she said,

Working together made us all realize we were more on the right track than we thought we were. We learned that we were each doing some neat things, and that we needed to get into each others' classrooms and into each others' heads more.

Eventually, each teacher expressed how affirming it was to be listened to, and how encouraging it was to see and hear other teachers facing the same issues. Some of the instructional issues the teachers struggled with during informal discussions and planning time included how much to control the writing topics and genre which the children wrote, how and when to focus on skills of literacy while maintaining a meaning-focus, and how much time and attention to give individual children with special needs. Above all, the teachers wrestled with authentic literacy assessment — how to do it, when to do it, and how to use assessment to make instructional decisions.

At LaGrange, teaming involved setting goals, planning instruction together, sharing ideas and resources, discussing issues and problems, and supporting each other. For these four teachers, it was the first time they had really exposed themselves and their teaching to each other. They initially shared only certain aspects of their classrooms, because they cared so much that their teammates saw them as good. In addition, because these teachers were a new team, they had to justify spending so much time together. Vickie characterized some of their initial meetings.

We went over the information from team leader meetings, or we just talked, hit or miss, about things. We really were kind of anxious, I think, to get back to our own rooms and get busy planning for our own kids.

Gradually though, the teachers began to set goals and plan thematic units together. They agreed that having Diane there observing and recording what they said and did served as an impetus to get them to be productive. Eventually, all teachers could see a change in what was occurring at the team meetings (whether Diane was there or not). The teachers learned important things about each other as well. They learned what each others' strengths and weaknesses were, what kind of strategies and resources each had. They also learned about the personal lives of their colleagues that so affected their work. For example, Anna recalled:

We didn't even know each other that well. But now we've gone to each others' homes and seen that we have obligations there. Like Kris has two little children, and sometimes she couldn't do certain things we were doing. Last year I didn't always understand that.

In time, the four learned to trust each other — critical to collaboration. The key to a support group seems to be in the commitment to the relationship and to an acceptance of varying viewpoints (Hollingsworth, 1992). The teaming mandate also encouraged teachers to share information on the children they taught. "Kid talk" during planning time became a critical part of literacy assessment and instruction. At Atkinson, the teachers all knew the same children and learned more about them through their conversations. Donna explained:

You never get away in the afternoon without one of us saying, 'Guess what so and so did today?' or, 'Look at his story!' So, you don't always know where every kid is, but you do, if you share.

Sometimes one teacher had an insight about a child another teacher needed. At LaGrange, Gayle characterized how their discussions of children also helped their teaching.

(We) do a lot of 'kid talk'. We talk about the needs of the children, specific children in our rooms, and we know each others' children well enough to talk about their particular problems, and that's helped. Just having someone to bounce things off of is such a help.

As Kilbourne (1991) shows us, teachers self-monitor through conversations or stories about children and teaching. The teaming enabled the teachers in this study to tell each other stories about children, which became a regular part of their planning time. They became more metacognitively aware (Peterson, 1988) of good teaching and the benefits of collaboration. At Atkinson, Donna, Joy and Tina taught the same children in the same room together every day. They had more issues to struggle with initially, but teaching together became more and more important to them over the course of the study. At the beginning of the study, Joy explained:

It was difficult at first, and sometimes it's still difficult to give up having control of my own classroom, making my own decisions all the time without consulting two other people, but I'm working on that.

Later that fall, Joy discussed the same issue, demonstrating a change in her thinking:

The biggest difference for me is the way I plan. Before it was such a solitary thing. Now there are other people who have great ideas; it's not such a chore. It's more, 'I can't wait to see what they say about this.' And that's been so exciting. I just hope lots of other teachers get to do this too.

Finally, at the end of the year, when asked what had affected the changes most across the year, Joy said:

I guess I would have to say Donna and Tina. I can't imagine what it would have been like with people who weren't interested or didn't want to learn. Or that weren't able to share what they knew. I knew some things, Tina knew some things, Donna knew some things, and we were able to blend that and make it even better.

Clearly, the teachers not only learned about children and teaching, but also about themselves and their colleagues.

Learning through reflection

During the cross-site meetings in which all seven teachers gathered together for a full day of sharing and reflection, the teachers had the opportunity to share stories of teaching, of children, and of teaming with teachers from another school. The Atkinson and LaGrange teams asked each other questions and shared resources (from professional books to great songs for young children). These were days they all looked forward to.

These regular conversations with other professionals challenged the teachers' thinking. The time together gave them the opportunity to exchange instructional and programmatic ideas, to reflect on instructional decisions and practices, and to consider appropriate changes. They also resulted in changes in their language arts teaching. Because the focus of KERA's instructional changes is toward more authentic and purposeful activity, much discussion focused on what this means. All teachers agreed that, over the course of the three years, their classroom instruction has become more authentic, and they all agreed that they now emphasize the process more than the product. They have more student choice and more time for student-directed learning. Joy shared what she had learned about the teaching of writing,

I learned during the writing workshop that I have to back off, not having to be the spouter of knowledge and them soaking it in like sponges. I have learned so much about how kids discover things all on their own by looking at books or talking to each other. It is exciting to see that. Every day we say something to each other like, 'Oh, did you hear Brandon say that to Joey,' or, 'Can you believe he figured that all by himself?' Well, we should be saying by now, I think, 'Yeah, I believe it,' because kids have so many insights.

Joy's teammates, Donna and Tina, agreed that their practices now honor children's development more. Donna said,

Last year we just kept presenting them stuff to write about, even though we gave choices. But now it's a classroom of people working on their own time line.

Vickie, from LaGrange, also described how she had previously directed most of the classroom activities. Now her teaching better honors the children's ideas and what they know. She said,

There really is a big difference this year in how much I let my kids go off on things that they're interested in. The neatest things we've done this year are the things the kids decide to do. I'll have a theme... books I bring in to read... activities set up for them to do. But then they go off on a tangent. They may get excited about something or bring in a book from home or two or three of them want to go off and make a little play or write a book or make some thing. So this year, rather than saying, 'OK, let's do that tomorrow,' or just pushing it off, I'll let them do it. It creates such excitement, and then they usually write about it.

Kris put it succinctly, "We've taken the limits off the tops for ourselves and for the kids, and I think that's the best thing."

In addition to learning to honor the children's work and ideas and "backing off" from direct teaching, the teachers used these opportunities to explore other issues as well. For example, during one meeting a discussion about how to teach skills in whole language classrooms became a topic of conversation. The teachers shared their beliefs and strategies, and they all left thinking about what to do with children who were struggling. Later, Donna said,

Just getting together with other people who do something similar to what you do ... it's just so helpful to talk about it. You know all that sight word stuff we talked about — it was just such a good discussion — food for thought.

Vickie's class also benefited by being part of the project. When asked to collect reading samples of children, Vickie learned her students could not decode as well as she had thought. She made a commitment to spend more time on this skill for some of her students.

As collaborators on the research project, the teachers had an opportunity to discuss and clarify what they learned through careful observations of children. Discussing children helped them learn more about children's development. Joy said,

I know a lot more about the development of emergent writers and readers. I think I've learned some from Donna and Tina, but mostly from our kids. Now I say, 'Oh, yeah, it's OK if you do that' to what I didn't think was really writing at the beginning. This year we are just accepting a lot more. I understand more about the stages kids go through and I can guess the next thing they will be doing.

While all these teachers viewed themselves as knowledgeable about teaching language arts, they became more

metacognitively aware (Peterson, 1988) of what they knew after they began interacting regularly with their teammates as an outcome of the research project. Gayle, from LaGrange, explained:

The project has forced the four of us to be together, the team to be together, and talk about what we're doing and why. It makes you verbalize for one thing. And when you verbalize to each other — whether it's to the team, to you all (professors), or whether it's to another group of teachers — it really helps you to crystallize your reasoning, your thinking about why you're doing what you're doing and about your children. One of the things I learned last year was that if you can't say it, you don't know it. And I keep thinking about that and letting my children talk a little more.

Our findings parallel those of Hunsacker and Johnson (1992) who also found that participation in a research project led teachers to reflect on their practice. However, it was conversations with others, and long-term support from them that were critical to the teachers' instructional changes. In this study, the teachers had the opportunity to converse repeatedly with other teachers, and over time, these conversations led to trust. Like Hollingsworth (1989; 1992), we also suggest it is commitment to the relationship and trust among those giving and receiving support that sustains change. Like the teachers in other studies (Hollingsworth, 1989, 1992; Pace, 1991), these teachers came to see themselves as knowledgeable, and they began to value their experiences, emotions and knowledge. They become stronger advocates of ways to create communities of learners for both teachers and children.

Learning through collaborative writing

In recent years, educators have encouraged the practice of having children write about what they are learning. For example, through writing children can explain complex

mathematical concepts, describe what they know about rain forests, or share their feelings about characters from a piece of literature. Teachers have incorporated the use of learning logs in all subject areas. What these teachers know is that writing can be an avenue for discovery; it can be a way of thinking, of knowing (Barnes, 1991; Elbow, 1973; Marzano, 1991; Murnane, 1990; Murray, 1986). Writing can be a form of thought, a mediator of thought, and can be used to enhance thinking (Marzano, 1991). Children can internalize what they know about math, the rain forest, or themselves as they use the language necessary for expressing what they are learning.

Just as children often learn content through the act of writing, so too did these teachers. Each team prepared a chapter for inclusion in a book about the development and implementation of nongraded primary programs and, in that process, discovered a great deal about themselves, their colleagues, and instruction.

Learning about selves and others. Through their writing, the teachers seemed to learn as much about themselves and each other, and how to work as a team, as they did about their chosen topic. Unlike many co-authors, the four teachers at LaGrange negotiated every idea, every line, even every word as they wrote. Although the process was sometimes painful, all four agreed the experience was immensely helpful to them as a team. Vickie said,

Writing that chapter made us feel more of a team, more headed in the same direction ... As we hammered it out, we began to talk the same language.

Even though the teachers were doing similar things, they were able to understand their instruction more fully by clarifying the language they used to describe their practices. The teachers also agreed that through the writing they came to

respect each other more, which in turn, enabled the team to function better. Both Anna and Gayle used almost the exact same words when they said, "We became closer. We probably respect each other more as teachers, as individuals." Even though their chapter was primarily about strategies for authentic assessment, the LaGrange teachers wrote about their journey toward better teaching as well. They wrote:

Though our range of experiences has helped us on our journey, we often feel like first year teachers. We are changing, growing, and learning ... (Gregory, Moore, Wheatley, and Yancey).

Learning about teaching. Both teams of teachers met regularly when writing their chapters for the nongraded primary book. They first talked about what they wanted to include in the chapter. At Atkinson, the teachers discussed their instructional strategies and the benefits and pitfalls of each. They evaluated their teaching as they wrote, sometimes claiming they wanted to change things. But writing about what they did was also affirming in many ways. When asked what she had learned from writing, Tina exclaimed:

I learned so much about the special education inclusion model. We started putting in examples about the self-esteem of Jackson, and how Dwayne became such a leader, and how Martin changed when he came to our classroom from the pull-out program.

Through writing the chapter the three teachers also learned new teaching ideas from each other. Even though they teach in the same room, they often break up into small groups or with individuals and teach separately. They do not always get the opportunity to discuss these individual lessons, but writing gave them this chance. Tina said,

I also learned some things that Donna and Joy are doing in small group lessons. I would ask, 'You did that lesson? Tell me about it.' Gosh, it made me realize we don't have time to share what we do in small group lessons.

And finally, the teachers learned more about the writing process itself from doing it themselves. Donna said, "I learned how hard writing is, and that I like to write. I think I'm a good writer. But, I thought, no wonder it takes our kids just forever." The Atkinson teachers' writing experiences changed how they approached teaching young children to write. They began to pay closer attention to individual differences in what and how children write. In their chapter, they wrote,

Having such a wide age range from the onset forces us to provide a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate for six, seven, eight, and nine year-olds as well as children with learning disabilities. We now try to make provisions for all learning abilities, which helps our students find their niche and feel good about themselves in a regular classroom (Cron, Spears, and Stottman).

The teachers at LaGrange reached similar conclusions based on their experiences in writing their chapter on authentic assessment. First they had to decide what would go in the chapter and then they had to share examples of the strategies they use to authentically assess the children in their classrooms. They shared children's work and their interpretations of each example. They also shared their difficulties and concerns. Through the writing process, they each came away with new and better ideas about what and how to assess young children. Anna claimed she was going to "totally reorganize her system after learning so much." Kris said,

Because of the chapter we wrote on assessment, I saw the ways they (her teammates) were doing it, and they saw how I was doing it. And we also saw the gaps. So, now I want to do more.

Gayle recognized the power of writing when she said, "We learned from getting together and getting it down on paper. We learned better ways." And Vickie added, "When I look back at what we've written, it gives me insight into the kids and how they're thinking and who's done what. I just think it's invaluable." The teachers agreed that all teachers would benefit from collaboration — to be connected to a network — as Vickie put it. It is not necessary to write together or even participate in research. What seems most useful for change is working as part of a collaborative team on some kind of professional development project that gives teachers the opportunity to talk and think about children, teaching, and the profession. Gayle explains why,

It forces you to think about what you are doing and why you are doing it, and if it's working, and why it's not or why it is. And it's an experience I have not had before. And it's made me feel better about myself. It has made me much more conscious of why I'm doing what I'm doing.

Again, interacting with others not only challenged the teachers' thinking about their practices, but it was also affirming. The teachers also realized that learning was up to them — they had to seek answers for themselves. They all agreed that having others to talk with helps the process.

Implications, concerns, and future directions

This study confirms the importance of collaborative experiences in the learning and continued professional development of teachers. Whether collaborating for teaching, researching, or writing, the shared experience provides the con-

text for growth. However, for such growth to occur, we must consider what helps to make collaboration successful.

Time. All of the teachers agreed that they need time in order to make changes effectively and efficiently. First, teachers need time to talk about their work. They need time to try out ideas verbally with others. They need time to discuss the children they share in order to gain multiple perspectives on the progress of particular children. Implicit in this need however, is that the time provided should be legitimate time. It should be provided during the school day when teachers can focus their attention on reflections, discussions, and problem-solving. Vickie claimed,

I think the only time that is valued for teachers is time on task — when we are moving around the classroom. I think for every hour we spend in the classroom we need an hour to plan, think about it, reflect, talk to another person or to refine the activity ... Time, it's got to come somehow, if you're going to know how kids learn, provide those opportunities for them to learn, provide all those materials, provide trips out in the community and have people come in. All of this sounds wonderful and I want to do every single bit of it, but there's a limit to what I can do. Yet, if you're saying this is what I must do to make sure I have the right program for my kids, and I can't do it, that's bad. That's not good for me. Somehow the time's got to be there — the time has to be built into the school calendar.

Furthermore, the teachers all expressed that they wanted to be farther along in what they know about teaching and learning. Anna said she wants time to read about assessment. Vickie and Tina want time to understand how children develop into readers and writers. Tina also wants to continue to observe other teachers and is worried about losing the opportunity. She said, "There are so many teachers within our

building that are doing things that I'd love to go see. We need more time and resources." Joy describes the kind of time that is needed. She said,

(Teachers) don't need an in-service day at the end of the school year, they need many days, they need substitutes for them so that they can see other programs at work. They need days to conference with other teams about what they do. I don't want to be out of my classroom, but at the beginning you need to.

Donna's frustration at not having the time needed is apparent here.

There's so much research I want to read and you just can't be current on everything. I don't know, sometimes I feel like I'm just treading water. I'm there, I'm doing some stuff, but I could be swimming laps. I always feel like I'm playing catch-up. I learned that there is always room to grow; that there are still so many things I need to know.

Purpose. In reflecting on what they learned through collaborative teaming, research, and writing, the teachers acknowledged that having an expected outcome (e.g., a book chapter) required them to work together in ways they might not have explored otherwise. Although they ultimately recognized the value of what they learned from the experience, they all used the phrase "forced to" when describing what influenced their work. They expressed such comments as: "We shared strategies because we were forced to," "We know how to work together now because we were forced to," "It's so good to write about what you do. I wouldn't make time for it if I didn't have to," and "Unless people are forced to do something, it generally doesn't get done. So, we were really glad that we did have this impetus to get us going."

Because the notion of being forced seemed incongruent with collaboration, we asked the teachers about their use of this language. All seven teachers said that the forcing was self-imposed — internal. They all agreed that they had bought in to the philosophical changes and wanted to make them work. They had agreed to be part of a school-based team, the research team, and to write the chapters. In the process of accomplishing their goals they had to force themselves to get the work done, but they owned the work. The teachers from LaGrange wrote to us:

We were motivated and challenged, and we "forced" ourselves because we were excited about the opportunity to learn more and have the chance to study our teaching ... Along the way, we seemed to bring out the best in each other and as a result, became better teachers, writers, researchers, and team members. If we hadn't had (these) opportunities we wouldn't have spent so much time reflecting on our teaching and we wouldn't have grown as much as we have.

In their reflections on this manuscript, these teachers began to wonder about other teachers who do not have opportunities to become involved in projects that lead them to reflect on their teaching. The analogy they used was that they all have children in their classrooms who, given the choice, would never choose to contribute or reflect on their work. Yet, as teachers, they do not allow these students to sit back. They said that if these children are not self-motivated or risk-takers, then it is their job to guide them. They asked, "Shouldn't teachers be guided in this way, too?"

Their ponderings and questions gave us pause. As teacher educators, we have come to understand that truly good teaching — the kind that brings about change — comes only with the same kind of interactions we know are good for children. As other educators (Richardson, 1990; Ross, Bondy,

and Kyle, 1993) have suggested, teacher education must focus on helping teachers clarify a coherent belief system about teaching and learning, reflect on those beliefs, and develop the capacity to implement those beliefs into practice. Teachers need to collaborate in ways that invite them to accomplish their goals and reflect on their work.

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Call for Manuscripts for the 1996 Themed Issue: Integrating Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum

The 1996 themed issue of *Reading Horizons* will be devoted to articles linking reading and writing with all areas of the school curriculum. Articles relating excellent practice, theory, and research, to integrating reading, writing, speaking and listening across the curriculum should be sent to Dr. Jeanne M. Jacobson, Editor, Reading Horizons, WMU, Kalamazoo, MI 49008. Manuscripts should be submitted following *Reading Horizons* guidelines: send four copies and two stamped, self-addressed business-size envelopes; include a cover sheet with author name and affiliation; using a running head (without author identity) on subsequent pages; follow APA guidelines for references and use of gender-free language. Manuscripts intended for the themed issue should be postmarked by **March 1, 1996**.



Are You A Reader? Are You A Writer?: Answers From Kindergarten Students

Deborah Diffily

This study was based on interviews with kindergarten students and their teachers from two classrooms in a large, urban elementary school. Classroom observations by the researcher were also used to describe the physical environment created by each teacher and the organization of each teacher's instruction. The purpose of the study was to compare students' perceptions of themselves as readers and writers and to determine if there were significant differences between the two classes. These particular classrooms were selected because of the differences in classroom teacher philosophy and actual teaching practice. One classroom could be described as traditionally academic and the other as developmentally appropriate. For the purpose of this study, a traditionally academic kindergarten classroom focuses on formal instruction in academic skills to all students while a developmentally appropriate classroom emphasizes attention to the different needs, interests, and developmental levels of the students (Bredekamp, 1987).

Developmentally appropriate practice is generally regarded by early childhood experts as the best approach for

teaching young children. Specific to language and literacy development, appropriate practice:

provides many opportunities to see how reading and writing are useful before they are instructed in letter names, sounds, and word identification. Basic skills develop when they are meaningful to children. An abundance of these types of activities is provided to develop language and literacy through meaningful experience: listening to and reading stories and poems; taking field trips; dictating stories; seeing classroom charts and other print in use; participating in dramatic play and other experiences requiring communication; talking informally with other children and adults; and experimenting with writing by drawing, copying, and inventing their own spelling (Bredekamp, 1987, p. 55).

This view of literacy reflects an evolving perspective on reading and writing which began to appear in professional literature in the mid-1970's. Reading readiness concepts gave way to new ideas and new terminology. Experts began to understand how young children developed concepts about reading and writing long before the beginning of formal instruction. To describe how young children developed literacy concepts, new terms were coined. Phrases such as *concepts about print, literacy before schooling, print awareness, and concept of author* began to appear in the professional literature. Since the time of that paradigm shift, a general term, *emergent literacy*, has been accepted as the term to describe the view of how young children develop as readers and writers (Sulzby and Teale, 1991).

Within the emergent literacy philosophy, reading and writing are viewed as interrelated skills which are supportive of each other, rather than as separate skills which develop sequentially. Experts now believe that children are learning to

read and write from birth. Prior to this paradigm shift, educators believed that students learned reading and writing by moving through workbooks and other commercial materials designed to "get them ready" to read. The theory of emergent literacy asserts that children actively construct their understanding of reading and writing through independent exploration and through informal interactions with parents, child-care givers, and other literate people (Teale, 1986).

The teacher plays an active and important role in helping children become conventional readers and writers (Routman, 1988; Hyde, 1990). Teachers must provide the physical environment to support young children's literacy-related explorations. They must also provide the psychological environment in which children's early attempts at reading and writing are honored and supported. Teachers must model the behaviors of a literate individual. Children learn from activities that are meaningful to them and from those which they are allowed to initiate. Thus, the responsibility of early childhood teachers is evident: to meet the needs of the young learner and to provide a variety of opportunities for literacy development (Black, Puckett & Bell, 1991). Many of the activities teachers should provide are listed in the earlier definition of appropriate practice for literacy development.

Additional classroom activities for facilitating emergent literacy behaviors in young children are those which help them develop a concept of author (Rowe and Harste, 1986). In studies of how children develop as writers, the need for children to view themselves as authors within a community of authors has been documented (Graves and Hansen, 1983; Calkins, 1986). When students' attempts at writing are honored by adults, they become more willing to risk writing at their own level. When they are able to share their writing orally with classmates and hear others question and respond

to their writing, they begin to view themselves as authors who want to write and share their writings. When children are able to take self-produced books home to share with friends and family, they are motivated to create even more. Two primary ways to help children view themselves as authors are the Author's Chair (Graves and Hansen, 1983) and an active publishing program (Harste and Burke, 1985; Morrow, 1993).

Despite the availability of research on developmentally appropriate practice, emergent literacy, and how teachers can best help young children develop literacy behaviors, not all early childhood teachers believe in or use these methods. A comparison of two classrooms follows. In the first class, the teacher does not yet accept the concepts of emergent literacy. In the second classroom, the teacher does.

The classrooms

Much can be learned about a teacher's educational philosophies by observing the classroom environment itself. Both classrooms in this study were colorful and had child-sized furniture and math manipulatives, but were otherwise dissimilar.

The first classroom contained many examples of commercially prepared materials. Alphabet cards and charts, months of the year, days of the week, and pictures with descriptions of African-American leaders covered all available wall space. Student work in the form of spelling tests which had grades of 85% or better were displayed on cabinet doors. On the wall outside the classroom were 22 identical shapes of the state of Texas which had been outlined in glitter. A large computer-generated sign and die-cut shapes of Texas were included in the display. Math manipulatives and toys were in baskets on one shelf in the room. A home living center was

in one corner of the room and a listening center with a variety of musical tapes was in another corner. Four tables were spaced throughout the room. Six child-sized chairs were pushed under each table.

The second classroom was organized by labelled centers. A double-deck reading/listening center was in one corner of the room with both levels filled with pillows. This center was located adjacent to the writing center which had a typewriter, a variety of paper and markers, pencils, and crayons. A book center was filled with a variety of books. A dramatic play center depicting a grocery store was set up nearby. Student-made signs provided labels for this center and a collection of empty boxes and canned food served as props. There was a math center with a variety of manipulatives; a science center with gerbils, plants, magnets, smelling jars, science specimens borrowed from a local museum and several books about spiders; an art center with tempera paints, watercolors, and clay; a block center with unit blocks, and a games/puzzles center which included puzzles, pattern blocks, cards, and teacher-made games. Class-made books, group experience charts, word banks, student-made signs, individual students' stories, drawings, and paintings were displayed throughout the classroom.

The teachers

The first teacher described her philosophy as traditional. She believes in large group instruction, daily phonics lessons, and workbooks. The other teacher described her teaching practice as "striving toward developmentally appropriate practice." She believes in providing a print-rich environment for children, in reading to her students several times each day with numerous opportunities for extending literature, in modeling writing, and in encouraging students to write daily.

The first teacher stressed academics and group recitation. Every morning the children began their day sitting in straight rows on the floor, reciting the alphabet, letters, sounds, and words that began with all the letters, e.g., "A, ah, apple, B, buh, ball ..." Their morning work was organized by "rotating centers." Groups of five to six children worked at tables and changed tables at 25- to 30-minute intervals when directed by the teacher. Daily activities usually involved worksheets relating to the letter of the week, numerals, or addition problems. Children copied capital and lower case letters, assigned spelling words, and sentences related to their unit topic. Art work usually involved coloring, cutting, and gluing an assigned pattern onto construction paper. Work was assigned to students by the teacher, except on Fridays when the students were allowed to have "game day," meaning they could choose their activities. The teacher spent her time at one of the rotating centers, called the teacher table. During her half-hour with each group of children who rotated to her table, the teacher worked on specific skills, typically phonics or computation.

Children in this classroom sat in chairs at the four tables to complete their assigned work. Worksheets were arranged in the center of each table for children at these tables. During the researcher observation, students worked consistently and very quietly, only occasionally whispering to other children seated near them.

The second teacher stressed emergent literacy behaviors and the understanding of number concepts. Mornings began with shared reading and planning morning work. After a group meeting, students were allowed to complete the two or three assignments in any order they wished. The first part of the morning, children came to the teacher to get their "word for the day," a practice the teacher explained as being based on

Sylvia Ashton Warner's key word vocabulary approach. She spent a few moments with each child, talking about their day, and working on letter recognition, phonemic awareness, or conventions of writing depending on each child's needs. During that activity, other children worked in centers and on morning assignments. All centers in the classroom were open to the children as they chose their work. After the "word for the day" activity, the teacher moved through different centers, sometimes observing, sometimes assisting students with their work. At times, she called small groups of children to a particular place in the room to work together. Children worked in small groups, in pairs, or individually as they chose. As they chose, students gathered at tables or on the floor. Children talked among themselves most of the time.

The students

The sample of subjects for this study was 38 children from two kindergarten classes in the same elementary school located in a large southwestern city. In the first classroom, there were 19 students, 11 girls and 8 boys; 18 African-Americans and one Hispanic. In the second classroom, there were also 19 children, 9 girls and 10 boys; 18 African-Americans and one Hispanic. In the first class, 10 students could be described as coming from low socioeconomic (SES) homes, defined by qualifying for the school district's free lunch program. Fifteen children in the second classroom could be considered low SES by the same definition. School district policy mandated that children entering kindergarten must be five years of age on or before September 1. Thus, in April of their kindergarten year when students were interviewed, their ages ranged from five years, eight months, to six years, six months.

Student interviews

Each child was interviewed individually, using a semi-structured interview instrument developed by Dr. Robert Nistler (1989). He developed this questionnaire as part of his dissertation research and used it to determine what concepts of authorship were revealed in the oral and written language of children engaged in bookmaking tasks. Nistler examined how these concepts differed for good readers in first, third, and fifth grade. The interview of each kindergarten student in this study was audio-taped and transcribed for easier analysis of data.

Interview results and discussion

Virtually all students were eager to be interviewed. Students in the second classroom had been interviewed on audio tape several times throughout the year. Only two students in the first classroom appeared reluctant to answer questions while being taped. Both of these interviews were postponed until another day when the students asked to be interviewed. At the conclusion of each interview, the researcher replayed the tape so the students could hear themselves. If for no other reason, this aspect of the interview process motivated the students to participate in the interviews. Typical of children who are five- and six-year-olds, many of the questions were answered with few words and little elaboration.

Following the question, "Are you an author?," there were follow-up questions. If the child responded positively, the researcher asked, "What makes an author?" In the first classroom, one student did not know; another student said, "when I be happy." In the second classroom 14 said that they were authors because they wrote stories or books or drew pictures. Two children answered that reading books made them authors and one child said that he would be an author when he grew up. The nineteen interview questions and student answers are shown on Table 1.

Table 1
Interview Questions and Answers

Interview Questions	Answers from Classroom One	Answers from Classroom Two
1. Does anyone at home read to you?	14 yes; 9 no	16 yes; 3 no
2. Some days or every day?	5 everyday; 9 some days	4 everyday; 11 some days
3. Does anyone at school read to you?	14 yes, their teacher 5 no	19 yes, their teacher
4. Some days or everyday?	9 some days; 6 everyday	1 some days; 18 everyday
5. Are you a reader?	12 yes; 7 no	19 yes
6. Do you have some favorite books?	18 yes; 1 no	19 yes
7. Can you name some of them?	10 mentioned title or authors; 8 mentioned subject areas like horse, tree, Ninja Turtles	18 name specific titles or authors; 1 no answer
8. Do you know what an author is?	18 no; 1 yes	15 yes, 4 no
9. What does an author do?	The one child responded positively to question 8 said that authors swim. The other students said, "I don't know." 2 believed they were; 17 did not	15 answered that authors wrote stories. Of the four who said no to the previous question, three said authors wrote stories. 17 believed they were; 2 did not
10. Are you an author?	16 yes; 3 no	All 19 said they could write.
11. Can you write?	Answers varied.**	Answers varied.**
12. Why do you write?	Answers varied.**	Answers varied.**
13. Where do you write?	Answers varied.**	Answers varied.**
14. When do you write?	Answers varied.**	Answers varied.**
15. What is your writing like at home?	Answers varied.**	Answers varied.**
16. What is your writing like at school?	Answers varied.**	Answers varied.**
17. Who reads what you write?	Most students said their teacher read what they wrote. Some mentioned family members.	All students said their teacher read their writing. 3 said they read what they wrote.
18. Who makes decisions about your writing?	This question confused most children. Those who did answer tended to say, "momma" or "my teacher."	This question also confused students. Those who did answer said, "my teacher."
19. Can you give me some examples of those decisions?	Again, this question was beyond their level. Almost all who did answer said, "I don't know."***	Almost all students shrugged their shoulders or said, "I don't know."***

** See Interview Results and Discussion for further comments from students.

Answers to the why, where, and when questions varied significantly among students in both classrooms. Children in the first classroom tended to say that they wrote to learn or to get good grades. One child answered that she wrote because she liked to and "because reading and writing are educational!" This student had transferred from a different school less than two weeks before the interviews. On investigation, it was learned that her previous teacher described her own classroom as developmentally appropriate. More than two-thirds of the students in the second classroom said they wrote because they liked to or they wanted to write stories. One child answered, "'cause I write like my friends," which indicates the social nature of writing in this classroom. Another child answered, "'cause we be having (sic) to write a story every day."

In answer to where they wrote, several students in both classrooms said that they wrote at home and at school. The most popular answer in the second classroom was "at the writing center."

In both classrooms, some children said they wrote when the teacher told them to or "when it's time to write." In the second classroom, children tended to give more extensive answers, e.g., "today and tomorrow and ever (sic) single day," "after I illustrate the paper," or "Saturday, Friday, Thursday ..."

Answers to the questions about writing at home and at school varied from student to student; however, students in the first classroom tended to give answers that related to handwriting. Only two children in this class indicated they wrote stories at home. Three mentioned writing stories at school. Seven children said they did "homework," wrote spelling words, or ABC's at home; ten mentioned this type of writing at school. Almost all children in the second classroom mentioned writing stories and/or sounding out words at home and at school.

Conclusions

The views these children have of themselves as readers and writers are very different. Children in the first classroom generally defined writing as the handwriting skill of forming letters or as copying teacher-given words and sentences. Virtually all the children in the second classroom saw themselves as authors, writing stories, despite the fact that some students were still in the early writing stage of using random letters to represent text.

These self-views may contribute significantly to the children's later learning experiences in language arts and, in fact, in other content areas. As Lilian Katz and Sylvia Chard discuss in their book *Engaging Young Minds: The Project Approach* (1989), there is more learning than knowledge and skills. Katz and Chard discuss the importance of the disposition to learn and feelings about learning. The children who view themselves as readers and authors are much more likely to pursue these activities, and therefore become more accomplished with each literacy-related experience. The children who view writing as teacher-directed word- and sentence-copying are much less likely to choose reading and writing activities for themselves, thus limiting their experiences.

Perhaps the most dramatic differences were in the students' answers to the questions regarding authorship. It should be noted that, through district-mandated learner objectives, both teachers were required to ensure that each student become acquainted with famous authors, yet only five students in the first classroom could even define "author." District learner objectives also mandated that each kindergarten student should use stories and personal experiences to generate topics about which to write and should learn to write significant information, yet few children from that class wrote anything other than what their teacher directed them to copy.

Clearly, decisions made at the district level are not always implemented in each classroom. Through learner objectives, district administrators agreed with and mandated activities complementary with the philosophies of emergent literacy. Yet the two teachers interpreted the objectives very differently.

While there may be other factors that contribute to the differences in student attitudes about reading and writing in these two classrooms, there are obvious differences in the teachers and the philosophies which guide classroom practices and decisions. Bill Teale and Elizabeth Sulzby believe teacher practices, even the physical set up of the classroom, can promote literacy behaviors in young children (Teale and Sulzby, 1989). Linda Lamme (1989) claims "the classroom atmosphere is a powerful determinant of the amount and kinds of writing attempted there."

While this study involves only two kindergarten classes the results may be dramatic enough to cause more traditional teachers to rethink the priorities they establish in their classrooms. The environment created by each teacher and the value they place on particular activities shape the attitudes and values of students. Teachers must ask themselves what dispositions and feelings they are helping develop within young children.

Making changes

The very nature of change is difficult. In one's personal life, beginning and maintaining a regular exercise regime is a hard change to make. Sticking to a diet is hard. Adjusting to new routines following a geographical move is hard. Just as those personal changes are not easy to make, professional changes are also challenging.

Teachers of young children who are currently using traditional academic instructional methods but want to begin making some changes need to remember that change is not easy. They can expect to feel uncomfortable at times. Changing classroom practice is a process. Teachers can, and probably should, implement changes over a period of time.

One of the easiest — and one of the most important — changes a teacher can make is adding more shared story times during the school day. Reading aloud to young children has a profound influence on children's reading and intellectual development (Lamme, 1985). Children should listen to a wide variety of quality children's literature several times each day.

Another fundamental change a teacher can make is related to the use of worksheets. While there is nothing fundamentally wrong with worksheets, right-wrong worksheets do not teach, they test. Too often, worksheets merely test isolated, unimportant skills (Marzollo, 1988). Teachers could slowly begin substituting shared reading times and large and small group discussions related to whatever skill they would have "taught" with a worksheet. Librarians and book store personnel can be consulted about particular children's books which might be used to teach specific skills. At the very least, these skills would be taught within a context.

Teachers can begin modeling writing in front of the entire class and in small groups so that children begin to view writing as a natural way of recording what is said and communicating important information. A specific time can be set aside every day for the teacher to write language experience stories, to list comments from students, or to record information for the class. A separate time could be set aside for children to write, at whatever writing stage they are capable of (Morrow, 1993, pp. 230-244).

Teachers can also change the physical environment to emphasize reading and writing as integral to daily life. For example, teachers could put a telephone and telephone book or cookbooks and index cards for recipe writing in the home center, art books in the art center, observation logs and factual books about classroom pets in the science center, and books related to shapes, colors, and patterns in the math center. Labels, signs, and teacher- and child-written charts are also ways to incorporate reading and writing into the classroom in ways that are meaningful to young children.

While change of any kind is not easy, there are many resources available to teachers who want their classroom practices to be more developmentally appropriate. Professional organizations for early childhood education, such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Association of Childhood Education International, and for the field of reading, such as the International Reading Association, provide books, journals, and conferences that offer theoretical rationales and practical suggestions for classroom teachers. District administrators in the areas of early childhood and reading may be able to identify local teachers who are already implementing these concepts in their classrooms. Teachers wanting to make changes could visit these classrooms and talk with teachers who have already changed the way they teach reading and writing to young children. Reading about emergent literacy and talking with teachers who are teaching this way can provide important support for teachers who want to make changes of their own.

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Help for the "Fourth-Grade Slump"—SRQ2R Plus Instruction in Text Structure or Main Idea

Michael L. Walker

Elementary school students' ability to comprehend and study expository material begins to be a major concern primarily in the fourth grade. Chall's (1983) characterization of this period as the "fourth grade slump" (p. 67) remains a valid observation, because teachers still report that while children continue to show ability to read narrative material during this period they are unable to completely read and understand their content area textbooks.

The widespread introduction of expository material and the necessity to use reading as a tool for new learning in fourth- and fifth-grades have been identified by Chall (1983) as primary causes of the problems in reading comprehension and retention that are characteristic of this period. Readers of expository material at these early stages of development appear to suffer from an inability to use appropriate strategies and skills in a spontaneous manner for reading and studying. What, specifically, must emergent content area readers learn to do in order to be effective readers of expository text as opposed to narrative text? A wide array of competencies are involved, and of these, the necessity to establish goals and understand purposes for reading expository text, the requirement

to deal with a large vocabulary load, the ability to handle novel textual structures, and the need to develop long-term retention are of major importance.

In addition, there may be differences in the nature of schematic knowledge necessary for narrative and expository processing, and the macrostructures (higher-level semantic or conceptual organizations in text) in narrative and expository text may be quite different in many basic characteristics. Johnston (1983) asserts that emergent content readers may have an inability to find information readily because of lack of knowledge of the structural cues in expository material and a lack of knowledge of where inferences are required and what type these should be.

Studies with children as young as five and six years of age have found that while they usually do not spontaneously employ study strategies when faced with a learning task, these children are able to employ study strategies when directed to do so and shown how to do so by a teacher (Flavell, 1970; Flavell and Wellman, 1977). Flavell labels this a production difficulty as opposed to a deficit problem, because young children do possess the ability to integrate skills and strategies they have been taught to use into their cognitive functioning, and apply them appropriately .

Still, it is true that most young children often fail to use appropriate skills and strategies necessary for successful and efficient learning of various tasks, and fourth- and fifth-graders often lack knowledge about how to coordinate components of study systems needed for the complex demands of academic materials. Unfortunately, it is also true that for fourth- and fifth-graders, their production difficulties in study strategies and their problems in comprehension and retention of expository text are not always ameliorated by instruction.

Durkin's (1978-1979) quantification of the percentage of social studies instruction used to teach fifth- and sixth-grade students how to read and study expository material at no more than 1.3% of class time was an alarming finding that alerted many educators to the need for more instruction in this neglected area. The implementation, however, of thorough, comprehensive classroom study skills programs beginning in fourth- and fifth-grades has been slow, because many classroom teachers simply lack training in the area of study skills, and because the research findings in this area have been inconsistent and difficult to interpret. Although fourth- and fifth-graders could benefit from instruction in study skills and strategies, the acquisition of study strategies and skills by these students is left largely to chance (Adams, 1980; Herber, 1965).

A very promising development in improving the instruction of reading/study strategies has been the work initiated with fourth- and fifth-graders in the use of SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review). (See Stahl, 1983, and Walker, 1991 for reviews of this research). Since Robinson (1946) began his research with college and secondary students in this system of surveying, questioning, reading, reciting, and reviewing expository material, researchers have extended its use to elementary students.

The results of SQ3R research have been inconsistent, however, primarily because there has been little investigation of these basic issues: the amount of instructional time necessary to teach SQ3R; which students benefit the most from using SQ3R; what type of pre-training is necessary; what type of expository material is best-suited for SQ3R use; what minimal levels, if any, of reading ability and prior knowledge are necessary for effective use of SQ3R; among others. The SQ3R studies of basic issues that do exist often differ radically from each other due to the failure of researchers to incorporate into

the design of their studies the significant findings of other SQ3R studies (Anderson and Armbruster, 1982; Caverly and Orlando, 1991; Stahl, 1983; Walker, 1991).

The present study attempted to establish commonalities in goals with SQ3R research that addressed basic concerns in the use of this complex textbook-study system. SQ3R studies were categorized according to whether or not their research design permitted them to consider five basic implementation issues. The elucidation of these issues is important for a thorough understanding of SQ3R, and for extending the use of SQ3R to emergent content readers (Table 1). The wide variety of other issues also addressed in these SQ3R studies was ignored. (In this review, SQ3R research includes SQ3R and variations that maintain the steps of surveying, questioning, reading, reciting, and reviewing expository material).

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the issue of whether or not SRQ2R (a reordering of the questioning step results in Survey, Read, Question, Recite, Review) usage is facilitated by pre-training in text structures or main ideas understanding; the effect of these study strategy paradigms on higher level thinking was also assessed. An additional purpose of this study was to determine if complex textbook-study systems could be used by classroom teachers in the regular school environment. The study, therefore, employed the social studies text that was used in the school district, and the study was conducted during the regular social studies period by the regular classroom teachers.

The study was based on my belief that pre-training in main ideas would be fairly comparable to pre-training in structure of text, and that both of these in combination with SRQ2R would be effective for the development of higher-level thinking skills for fifth-grade students. I hoped that the

design of the study would enable educators to ascertain if either of the combination study paradigms constitutes effective textbook-study systems for elementary school students.

Table 1
Issues Addressed in SQ3R Research

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Studies</u>	<u>Results</u>
Secondary and post-secondary students do not consistently use SQ3R, whereas elementary students do.	Adams, 1980; Ferrante-Alexander, 1983; Donald, 1967; Fisher, 1986; Galloway, 1984; Lant, 1989; Loranger, 1988; Peck, 1986; Slade, 1985; Summerville, 1985; Walker, 1991; Zirkelbach, 1984.	11 studies: 8 showed totally (4) or partially (4) positive results.
Too little time spent in SQ3R	Adams, 1980; Beneke & Harris, 1972; Butler, J., 1982; Butler, T., 1984; Carter, 1985; Courtney, 1965; DeLong, 1949; Diggs, 1973; Donald, 1967; Driskell & Kelly, 1980; Eanet, 1978; Ferrante-Alexander, 1983; Fisher, 1986; Foreman, 1982; Galloway, 1984; Gudan, 1986; Harris & Ream, 1972; Lant, 1989; Loranger, 1988; Martin, 1983; McReynolds & Church, 1973; Niple, 1968; Okey, 1980; Orlando, 1979; Peck, 1986; Robinson, 1961; Slade, 1985; Stoodt & Balbo, 1979; Summerville, 1985; Walker, 1991; Wooster, 1953; Zirkelbach, 1984.	32 studies: 10 totally, 15 partially positive
Tests requiring constructed responses are compatible with SQ3R processing.	Adams, 1980; Ferrante-Alexander, 1983; Donald, 1967; Foreman, 1982; Hickey, 1989; Okey, 1980; Orlando, 1979; Rusch, 1985; Walker, 1991; Wooster, 1953; Zirkelbach, 1984.	11 studies: 10 showed (4) totally, (6) partially positive results.
The questioning step is inappropriately placed in SQ3R.	Okey, 1980; Walker, 1991.	2 studies: 1 totally, 1 partially positive.
Text structures or main idea pre-training improves SQ3R effectiveness.	Walker, 1991.	1 study: 1 totally positive.

The variation, SRQ2R, was selected for use in this study for two reasons. Since Robinson's (1946) promulgation of SQ3R, exciting research into adjunct questioning (Andre, 1979;

Hamaker, 1986; Hamilton, 1985; Rickards, 1979; Rothkopf, 1966) has revealed that pre-question (questions asked before a selection is read to guide the reading of the selection) have a facilitative effect on test performance for those test questions that were also pre-questions (repeated questions), but not on test questions which did not appear among the pre-questions (unrelated questions). Post-questions (questions asked after a selection is read to ascertain and enhance comprehension, and to highlight important information) have facilitative effects on test performance for both repeated and unrelated questions. Facilitative test effects were also found for self-constructed questions (Duell, 1978; Frase and Schwartz, 1975; Schmelzer, 1975).

Several researchers (Okey, 1980; Spache and Spache, 1977; Walker, 1991) have called on investigators in SQ3R research to reorder the questioning step in light of the adjunct questioning findings cited above. Okey (1980) addressed the issue of the placement of the questioning stage by studying the performance of a group of college students taught to use SRQ2R. Walker (1991) extended this research by teaching elementary students to use SRQ2R, and by comparing these results to a group who used SQ3R. Both SRQ2R groups in the Okey and Walker studies performed significantly higher than others in the studies when they were assessed with experimenter-constructed short answer/essay exams.

The second reason for selecting SRQ2R for use in this study has to do with the issue of matching the criterion task with the processing that is characteristic of a study strategy or system. Several researchers previously found that criterion tasks that allow the students to construct responses (essay, short answer, cued verbal response) are more compatible with the cognitive processing characteristic of SQ3R use (Adams, 1980; Rusch, 1985; Stahl, 1984). Stahl went further and

speculated that SRQ2R would be more facilitative for higher-level thinking, and that SQ3R would aid factual recall. Since the encouragement and assessment of higher-level thinking was important in this study, and since the criterion task was performance on short answer/essay exams, SRQ2R's use might shed light on these issues.

Method

The subjects were 104 fifth-grade students drawn from six classrooms from two schools of a midwestern urban school district. Both schools are located in neighborhoods that are similar. Interspersed in these neighborhoods are areas characterized by high density apartment buildings, and single homes in deteriorating or poor condition.

Approximately 45 percent of the students enrolled in both schools receive either free or reduced lunches according to federal guidelines on income levels. In addition, about 25 percent of the student population is placed in categorical Special Education programs in these schools, and approximately 25 percent of the school population receives Chapter I instructional services. Minority representation in the student body is around 25 percent. Students of various reading ability levels were grouped heterogeneously in each classroom. There were 56 girls and 48 boys participating in the study ranging in age from 9.0 years to 10.9 years; 71 of the subjects were white, 29 were African American, and four were of other races. The six intact classes of students were randomly assigned to treatments of: I — SRQ2R Plus Structure of Text (19 students); II — SRQ2R (18 students); III — SRQ2R Plus Main Idea (20 students); IV — Main Idea (14 students); V — Control (16 students); VI — Structure of Text (17 students).

Passages from *America and Its Neighbors* (Cangemi, 1986), a fifth-grade social studies text, were used for instructing

and testing the six groups involved in the study (pages 150-176). The text passage used for the final test consisted of a 624-word passage (pages 178-180). All teachers and researchers believed that the Cangemi (1986) text was considerate, inasmuch as there were well-written introductions and summaries, explanations of terms, stated instructional objectives, and appropriately interspersed bold headings. The structure of the textual organization was descriptive, and the chapters and topics were arranged in chronological sequential order. A readability assessment of the textbook (Raygor, 1977) revealed a reading level of about 4.5.

The two SRQ2R groups which received pre-teaching in structure of text (Group I) and understanding main ideas (Group III) used passages from Unit 3, Chapter 7, pages 138-146 (Cangemi, 1986) for teaching; the other four groups also read and discussed these pages during the pre-teaching period (no instruction was offered to these groups).

The groups that received teaching in SRQ2R were introduced to the system by charts containing the steps, and modeling of the application of the steps of SRQ2R by the classroom teacher. In small groups, students practiced SRQ2R on text material that had been covered previously; each group discussed all aspects of the process until each was thoroughly familiar with all of the steps of the system. The whole class discussed any questions about the steps or the goals of SRQ2R that were raised by class members. Students were reminded daily to review SRQ2R with a buddy, and to repeat the steps before using the system.

Structure of text instructional materials consisted primarily of a series of semantic maps, discussion, and modeling by the teachers detailing the characteristics, use, and key words found in the various text structures (cause/effect,

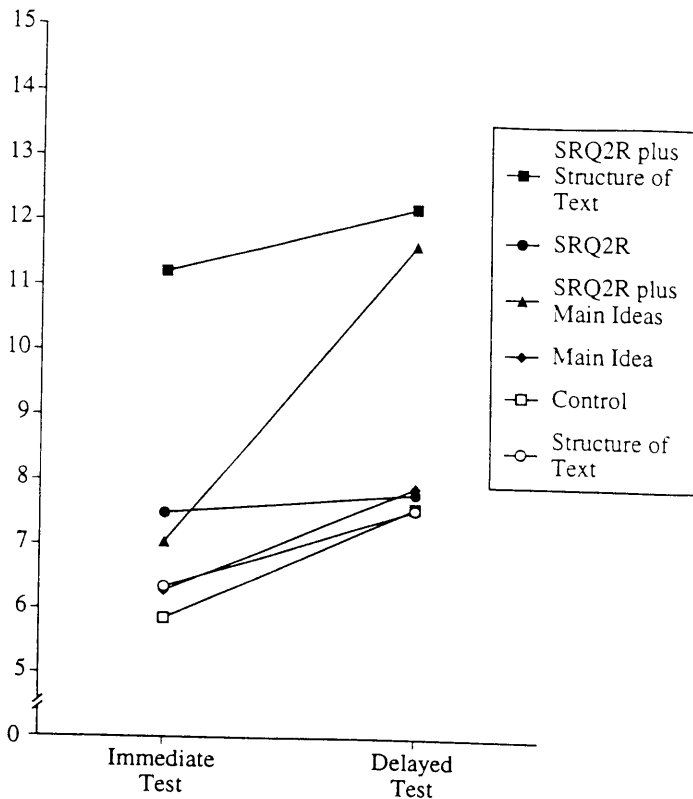
problem/solution, description, chronological sequence, comparison/contrast). Emphasis was placed upon the students' understanding the description text structure in combination with a superordinate chronological sequence organization, because that combination of text structures was employed in *America and Its Neighbors* (Cangemi, 1986). Main ideas instructional materials consisted of a series of semantic maps modeled after the procedures described in the article by Hennings (1991) for main ideas instruction. The teachers used and displayed semantic maps of the anticipated main ideas, details and ideas that help track the main idea and the ultimate main idea.

The two groups which were assigned to training in Main Ideas (IV) and Structure of Text (VI) alone, received the same type of instruction that the two groups receiving combination study paradigms had received initially in the pre-training period. Groups I and III were reminded daily in the main phase of the instructional period to continue to recognize and use structure of text and main ideas understanding, respectively, as they learned and used SRQ2R. The control group received no experimental instruction in study strategies and skills. This group was given conventional instruction consisting of pre-reading discussion of the topic; discussion of important vocabulary; reading the practice chapters; discussion of the important information and the end-of-chapter questions. Control subjects were then administered the same instructional tests that were administered to the experimental groups after each practice passage.

The *Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, Level 5/6, Form K* (MacGinitie and MacGinitie, 1989) was administered to subjects in the six groups to determine the comparability of reading ability among the groups. Results indicated that there were no significant differences in reading ability among the

six groups. A short answer/comparison prior knowledge test on the settling of Oregon and Utah was administered to all students. Analysis of test results revealed that all of the students were "low prior knowledge" subjects (no student scored above 50 percent) and there were no significant differences among the groups.

Figure 1
Group Means of Immediate
and Delayed Test Performance



A short-answer/essay test, Comprehension Test I, was administered to all subjects one day after they read the 624-word test passage from Cangemi (1986), and a parallel form, Comprehension Test II, was administered three weeks later to assess long-term retention. Correlational data between the two forms revealed that $r=.80$. Both Comprehension Test I and II observed the principles of comprehension assessment stressed by Anderson (1972): each test avoided the language of the text and instruction; each was a short-answer/essay exam that required the reader to construct responses. In addition, each test contained equal numbers of textual explicit items (answers can be found on the pages of the passage under study), textual implicit items (answers require integration of textual information, or inferences must be made from textual information), and experience-based items (answers require analysis, synthesis, and inferences based on the reader's prior knowledge and the textual information).

The means of the immediate and the delayed testing results for all six groups are graphically represented in Figure 1. ANOVAs, $p<.05$, and Newman-Keuls post hoc tests, $p<.05$ (Dayton, 1970), revealed that in the immediate results, Group I performed significantly higher than the other groups. In the delayed testing, Groups I and III performed significantly higher than the other four groups. To measure higher-level thinking skills, an analysis of textual explicit versus textual implicit versus experienced based items by group in the immediate and long-term retention testing, and an analysis of textual implicit plus experienced based items, and significantly higher on the combination measure of textual implicit plus experienced based items. In the testing of long-term retention, Groups I and III performed significantly higher than the other four groups on textual implicit, and experienced based items versus textual explicit items, and significantly higher on textual implicit plus experienced based items.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to test the speculation that pre-teaching in understanding structure of text or main ideas is a prerequisite for effective use of a textbook-study system like SRQ2R by elementary school students (Pauk, 1979). Also tested was the effect several study paradigms had on higher-level thinking ability.

The results of the study gave support to the contention that the pre-teaching of students in structure of text or main ideas is a necessary requirement for effective use of SRQ2R. This is an interesting finding, because the group pre-taught in main ideas demonstrated significantly higher performance on the delayed test only. Future studies may want to explore the nature of the differences between the use of SRQ2R with pre-teaching in main ideas and SRQ2R with pre-teaching in structure of text. It is interesting to speculate on the nature of the performance of an SRQ2R group receiving main ideas plus structure of text pre-teaching.

In the immediate testing, only the group that received instruction in SRQ2R plus structure of text pre-teaching performed significantly higher than the other groups of students on Comprehension Test I, and on the measures of higher-level thinking. What are the reasons for the dramatically higher performance of Group I on the immediate testing? In her written comments on the implementation of the SRQ2R Plus Structure of Text training, the teacher of this group noted the sophistication of the questions that students in this group constructed due to their more frequent inclusion of textual implicit- and experienced based-type questions than would normally be expected of fifth-graders. The teacher believed that students' understanding of text structures in combination with their use of SRQ2R contributed not only to their

comprehension of textual material, but also to their question construction and their writing in general.

The observation that the students in Group I wrote better questions, and improved their writing generally, is in consonance with one of the findings by Armbruster et al. (1987) that the structure-taught group in their study wrote better organized summaries than did the traditionally taught group. Since self-constructed questions constitute an important step in SRQ2R, structure teaching may have had a direct positive impact on students' understanding and use of the SRQ2R system of strategies, and, consequently, on comprehension and higher-level thinking. In the delayed testing, the group receiving SRQ2R plus main ideas instruction (Group III) improved its performance so that it was statistically similar to the performance of Group I. What could account for the significantly higher performance of Group III in the delayed testing as opposed to its performance in the immediate testing?

Clues to the understanding of this phenomenon may reside in the comments recorded by the classroom teacher who taught Group III. As students interacted with the SRQ2R Plus Main Ideas study system, the teacher was surprised at the high levels of learning and active involvement by the students as they employed this relatively complex system. She said, "... after we completed the material we were asked to cover, I asked my class if they liked this way of doing Social Studies, and if they felt they learned more, and they unanimously said, 'Yes'. This teacher saw growth in the areas of understanding the reading process, and understanding the importance of getting meaning from what they read on the part of students employing SRQ2R with pre-teaching in main ideas understanding. This new quest for meaning, relationships, and competence in Social Studies by the students in Group III resulted in a dramatic increase in comprehension three weeks

after instruction. Long-term improvement from the use of a textbook-study system like SQ3R has been noted by other researchers (Caverly, & Orlando, 1991; Walker, 1991); the addition of main ideas instruction may have enhanced long-term improvement exponentially.

It seems unlikely, intuitively, that students who do poorly on factual questions would do well on items requiring them to synthesize, analyze, compare, contrast, and make inferences. In the delayed testing, but not in the immediate testing, significantly higher levels of performance on factual (textual explicit) items accompanied significantly higher performance on textual implicit and experienced based items is of more relevance to an understanding of this anomaly than is speculation about the reasons for a high performance of Group I.

Only the groups receiving a combination of SRQ2R and instruction in main ideas or structure of text performed significantly better than the other groups on the items requiring higher-level thinking in both the immediate and delayed testing. What can be learned about the development and assessment of higher-level thinking abilities from these results? First, criterion measures must include roughly equal numbers of textual explicit, textual implicit, and experienced based items if these measures are to assess higher-level thinking in credible fashion. Secondly, students must be given instruction on measures that contain textual explicit, textual implicit and experienced based items, and they must be afforded extensive opportunities to practice and discuss these items. Finally, before readers expend large amounts of cognitive effort on the comprehension of textual material as they do with the SRQ2R system, they must develop the ability to encode that material in a structured or thematic manner as they do with structure of text or main ideas pre-teaching.

Although the performance of the SRQ2R-only group on the immediate test was higher (though not significantly higher) than the Control, Structure of Text, Main Idea, and the SRQ2R Plus Main Ideas groups on Comprehension Test I, this higher performance was not maintained on the delayed test. Unfortunately, the relatively low performance of the SRQ2R-only group in the delayed testing may have been caused by an artifact of the teacher's instructional procedures. The teacher of this group reported that she often let groups of students and sometimes the entire class read the practice expository passages orally in a round-robin style. This practice may have militated against the students' performing at the highest levels they were capable of during the testing. Since the students' performance on all items would have been affected, further study is necessary of SRQ2R-only performance in general and of SRQ2R-only performance on items requiring higher-level thinking.

This study should not be viewed as another measurement of the "best" teaching technique. It should be viewed as a study that attempted to shed light on what happened when a pedagogically appealing system was actually applied to classroom materials, and was taught by classroom teachers. If the research into SQ3R is to be successful in convincing educators that such a complex study system can offer fourth- through ninth-grade students a viable way of dealing with the serious problems that result from the necessity to use reading to learn, and an almost exclusive use of textbooks and other expository material in the content areas, then the research literature must be replete with studies that experimentally test basic issues like the ones addressed in this study.

Areas where studies are needed have been uncovered by this study. How would pre-teaching in structure of text *and* main ideas affect the performance of students trained in

SRQ2R? Would pre-teaching in main ideas or structure of text plus the use of SQ3R be a powerful enough paradigm to overcome the problems inherent in the problematic placement of the questioning step in SQ3R? Is it possible to "jump-start" a group of students receiving pre-training in main ideas plus SRQ2R into a higher performance on an immediate assessment?

The findings of the present study may be useful to fourth-and fifth-grade classroom teachers in their instructional practices. These findings could also serve as the starting point for action research that modifies study systems for specific groups of students, and that charts the short-term and long-term outcomes of such modifications. It is conceivable that variations of the elements investigated in this study will be effective for different groups of students. (There has been very little SQ3R research that has manipulated the variables of reading ability, prior knowledge, and materials, for example.)

SRQ2R plus pre-teaching in either main ideas or structure of text appears to be a system of strategies that upper-elementary and middle-level students can effectively use to improve their comprehension of expository material. Assuming validity in the findings of this study on higher-level thinking ability, performance on criterion task items requiring higher-level thinking will be positively affected by one of the combinations that was effective in this study; writing ability in general will improve with use of either of these successful study paradigms. Most importantly, the introduction of either of the combinations of SRQ2R plus pre-teaching in structure of text or main ideas will fill the void in study skills instruction that is often seen at the early stages in emergent content readers' development. It is sometimes a fruitless task to attempt

to teach these strategies to older students in secondary and post-secondary settings.

Students left to their own devices in finding successful study strategies often adopt inappropriate, inefficient ones. If SRQ2R plus pre-teaching in main ideas or structure of text is taught at the early stages of students' need to read to learn, content area teachers in succeeding years will likely spend more time in maintenance, customization, and individualization of study strategies than in wrestling with their introduction to older, resistant learners.

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Content Reading and Whole Language: An Instructional Approach

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Many teacher education programs offer a course on content area reading which is required for certification by some states (Farrell and Cirrincione, 1984). However, as discussed by authors (e.g., Memory, 1983; Ratekin, Simpson, and Alvermann, Dishner, 1985; Stewart and O'Brien, 1989), pre-service teachers generally do not see a need for content reading instruction. This attitude results from a range of factors, from student perception of limited opportunities for incorporating reading instruction into restricted time blocks at the secondary level (Stewart and O'Brien, 1989) to questions about the philosophy of and rationale behind such a course (Memory, 1983).

As a college content reading instructor, I have met with much resistance related to the latter objection. The idea that all teachers should assume responsibility for ensuring that students can apply literacy skills to better understand content and appreciate reading is difficult for some to grasp. After years of grappling with the design and structure of my content area reading course, I have arrived at an overall approach based on three principles which I believe has successfully aided students in understanding the rationale, and more

importantly, motivated them to apply learned strategies in context.

Content reading and whole language

Kennedy contends, "Teachers need not only to understand ... content deeply, but also to know something about how that content is taught and learned" (1991, p. 17). Preservice teachers' active involvement and immersion in the learning process promotes the development of reflective educators prepared to offer effective instruction.

Since many elements of content reading instruction are based on principles of whole language (Gilles, 1988), both the daily environment and student assignments for the course were developed within this framework. According to Cambourne and Turbill (1988), students in this type of environment are engaged in activities that promote "the literacy learning [they] are grappling with at that particular time. These structures support them while they 'cope' with the learning unrest taking place in their heads as new learning occurs" (p. 8). Furthermore, in this setting, students directly experience the literacy environment that they may be asked to implement as future teachers.

Three basic principles of whole learning (Brozo and Simpson, 1995) provide the framework for course instruction.

Principle 1: Literacy processes are used on a daily basis.

Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are necessary to the type of environment espoused. Thus, lecture became a limited mode of instruction, as students tended to take on a passive role in response. When lecture was combined with demonstration of reading strategies and then students were given the opportunity to discuss and critique the use of these strategies, the students became more actively engaged in

course content. This interaction and give and take of ideas encouraged and supported the learning process. A related activity was student participation in a debate concerning the role of the content area teacher in providing instruction for students with disabilities in their classrooms. Many concerns and different perspectives surfaced during this exercise.

Outside readings were used to supplement information in the text. In small groups, students chose to read and share a piece of literature (fiction or nonfiction) that they could use in their future classrooms to teach particular concepts. They reviewed current articles on literacy and also young adult literature selections.

As students learned about the reading/writing connection and how writing can clarify and extend course content at the secondary level, they participated themselves in various writing activities on a regular basis. They wrote informal reactions to class activities/discussions and more formal essays concerning the application of strategies to their particular area.

Much emphasis was put on the use of portfolios as an alternative assessment technique appropriate in any content area classroom. To familiarize the students with development of portfolios, they created their own literacy portfolio as one course requirement. The purpose of the portfolio was to document understanding of themselves in terms of general literacy development and to reflect on their own growth and goals for enhancement of literacy in their future students. Participation in portfolio assessment in teacher education to document learning provides the opportunity for decision-making and empowerment (Rousculp and Maring, 1990; Wagner, Brock, and Agnew, 1994). In addition, this assignment supported one aim of the teacher education program at

the college: to develop reflective practitioners capable of acting to ensure student learning.

Principle 2: Students are given much opportunity to use and practice what is learned. Simulations gave students the opportunity to practice selecting, adapting, and implementing reading strategies. This was done for example, when students were asked to create graphic organizers (Barron, 1969). After being introduced to various types of graphic organizers (visual diagrams illustrating relationships among concepts) in class, they identified key vocabulary in a unit of instruction they were writing and selected an organizer that would best depict the relationships among these concepts and words. They then taught the concepts in their organizer to two peers, one with the same content area major and one with a different major, and solicited their input about understanding of the relationships of the concepts based on the choice of organizer. Suggestions for improvement of the organizer followed, and students redesigned them according to these suggestions. Before- and after-versions of the organizers were quite different, and many students remarked that peers had seen problems in the original version that they had not seen. These results support the work of Florio-Ruane and Lensmire (1990) regarding the benefits of preservice teachers trying out teaching strategies and reflecting about them with others.

On a larger scale, connecting theory and practice was done through two microteaching assignments. The first, which was videotaped, was one lesson from a two-week thematic unit developed by individual students and taught to a small group of eight or nine peers. Students then reflected on their own videotape, noting strengths and weaknesses and their use of content reading strategies. These reflections were included in the portfolio. The second microteaching was one lesson from an interdisciplinary unit developed by five

students representing different content areas. The challenge that this type of instruction presents at the secondary level was recognized in light of the highly departmentalized nature of most high schools. However, it is vital that students have experience in planning with peers for this type of instruction, as these types of units, according to Pappas, Kiefer, and Levstik (1990), "link together content from many areas of the curriculum, depict the connections that exist across disciplines, and provide children a sense of ownership over their own learning" (cited in Erwin, Hines, and Curtis, 1992).

Principle 3: Learning is a social process. The social nature of the whole language environment integral to this reading course has been partially described above. Regular interaction, dialogue, and feedback among students and instructor promoted and clarified new understandings.

In addition, literature circles (Harste, Short, and Burke, 1988) were used periodically for students with the same content area major to discuss their responses to a book selected by them which could be used to supplement instruction in their future classes. The group analyzed the book for multicultural representations, stereotypes, and vocabulary and comprehension teaching strategies necessary for high school students' understanding. Small groups reported their findings to the whole class after participating in the literature circles for approximately six weeks.

Particular forms of cooperative learning groups were used for purposes suited to the respective strategy. For example, the Jigsaw Method (Aaronson, Blaney, Sikes, Stephan, and Snapp, 1975) was used during the study of the comprehension process. In jigsaw teaching, individual members of a group become expert on one aspect of the material to be learned and then teach the information to the other

members. In this case, group members learned about prediction, inferencing, and metacognition as aspects of comprehension and then explained these processes and instructional strategies that develop them to other members of the group.

Conclusion

Teacher education in content reading has been fraught with challenges posed by a general resistance among preservice teachers to the implementation of these strategies in various curriculum areas. Successful incorporation of this instruction into future classrooms is contingent upon effective education of preservice teachers in the rationale and pedagogy of content reading. When reading/writing strategies are presented to college students in an environment that models that which is being described and promoted for secondary learners, students are more likely to grasp the rationale behind the course and motivated to implement the strategies. These strategies are valuable as preservice teachers prepare to deal with a wide range of students in their future classrooms.

The three principles of whole learning which provide the framework for my content area reading course are not unique. However, they have successfully engaged preservice teachers in using literacy processes, practicing and refining what is learned, and interacting in a social context to gain insight into the role of content reading strategies in the classroom. Most importantly, preservice teachers are reflecting on their responsibility for ensuring that future students can apply literacy skills to better understand content and appreciate reading in all areas.

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Anachronisms: Creating Tools for Thinking

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An anachronism is an error of placing a person, thing, or event into an inappropriate historical period or context.

*Treb. "There is no fear in him. Let him not die;
For he will live, and laugh at this hereafter.*

[The clock strikes.]

Bru. "Peace! Count the clock.

Cass. "The clock hath stricken three."

*(William Shakespeare, The Tragedy of
Julius Caesar, Act II)*

*"... and King Arthur, realizing that he must return
quickly to Camelot, decided to call a taxi..."*

*(A parent to a child in a storytelling
situation.)*

Does it belong? Is it correct? Shakespeare used the striking clock in *Julius Caesar*, an anachronism since clocks did not exist at the time of Caesar's reign, as a convention for impact and drama. The parental story teller challenged the belief and understanding of the young child through an anachronism to create interest and to entertain. However, far from being just a writer's or storyteller's convention, recognition of anachronisms, like recognition of concepts and categories, is in reality a tool of language and thinking that may promote the development of concept formation.

Early but significant work by Carroll (1964) postulated that concept formation was the integration of events and ideas into related classes that represented broad understandings that were used in thinking and responding. Johnson and Pearson (1978) described concepts as being semantic maps consisting of allied classes, properties, and examples. These stored language maps are the essentials of comprehension and thinking. More recently Hirsch (1987) defined cultural literacy as the basic and elemental information needed to respond quickly and accurately to problem solving situations. The more schemas (concepts) a person possesses, and the more inter-relatedness among the schemas, the more quickly the individual responds. Each of these theorists believed that information or ideas are clustered and retrieved in patterns of similarity.

What *isn't* a property or feature of an event may also be essential in helping pupils to create distinct concepts. Sensing what is wrong with text, conversations, or events may be one step to forming useful and expansive categories. For example, note the anachronism in the following sentence.

Columbus' crew was so excited at finally sighting land that they used their VCRs to video tape the entire event.

Recognition of anachronisms or improbabilities may be supportive of schema development or concept formation. Excluding may be as important for concept formation as is including.

Can these relationships among anachronisms, schema theory, and thinking skills be combined to produce useful classroom tools? Can teachers easily construct materials that can be used to enhance thinking skills? We think the answer is *yes*. Detecting anachronisms, creating concept patterns by

heightening recognition of what does *not* fit the schema, can form the basis of interesting and creative instructional activities.

Designing the activities

A summer teaching session gave us a chance to test our theory that the recognition of anachronisms could be developed by teachers into instructional vocabulary activities for classroom use with pupils. We challenged the 24 teachers in our graduate reading activities class, Developing Vocabulary in a Whole Language Environment, to be creative and productive and write their own unique vocabulary materials. The summer quarter class lasted approximately three hours a day for six weeks. Each class period contained lecture and discussion of a classroom technique for teaching or presenting vocabulary that lasted approximately one hour. The remaining class time, about two hours of each day, was devoted to the construction of different types of vocabulary activities that teachers could later use in their classrooms. In all six types of vocabulary development activities were constructed. Anachronisms was the fourth topic presented around which materials were developed.

After lectures and other instructional activities on schema theory and concept development, the concept of anachronisms was presented by example and discussed until all teachers were familiar and at ease with the writing convention. At this point the teachers were grouped into small cooperative working arrangements (five or six per group) and began the planning and writing process. The work time of three class days (six hours) was devoted to developing and writing activities centered around anachronisms.

Prior to the actual writing of the materials in class, it was decided that guidelines needed to be established so format

uniformity among the groups would be maintained and the finished products would be instructionally similar. The general format questions of nature, level, content, and length of the activities were addressed prior to writing. The teachers agreed that the materials produced should be useful as individual and/or small group activities that could be used either as classroom-centered activities or as individual learning center events. To meet these requirements of usefulness, activities that required both reading and writing a short answer and language paraphrasing were selected. Since most of the teachers worked with middle level students, a target of sixth or seventh grade concepts and reading levels was established. However, even with this target, most agreed that the materials must be general enough to satisfy precocious younger learners as well as developing older students.

To ensure that in the activities the students were being challenged to locate anachronisms and not just tested on memory of learned content, it was decided to use historical people or cultural events where the students would have a great deal of individual and collective cultural knowledge. Historical figures such as Christopher Columbus, King Arthur, and George Washington were considered to have enough common schemas to be useful for inclusion. Dinosaurs, sharks, and early air flight were more general topics thought to have enough cultural schemas and common knowledge to be used to present anachronisms. To present anachronisms the content of the material focused on the one or two significant features or properties that defined the concept and were firmly based in common fact or myth.

Two decisions were needed to satisfy the length question — length of the total activity, and length of each constituent paragraph or frame. In consideration of attention and interest spans, total length of each activity was kept to approximately

three pages or ten to fifteen frames or paragraphs — a five to fifteen minute activity. The text of each frame was to be kept to a reading minimum that still presented all the schemas and structure needed to provoke concepts and evoke common memories. Two to four sentences seemed to work best since this amount of text could evoke common associations and schemas without in itself becoming instructional. Pupils would have to detect the improbability or the anachronism in each frame of content within the contrived story. How could they demonstrate their recognition and understanding? It was decided that pupils could underline the out-of-balance part of the frame and then either write a plausible alternate correct scenario based upon fact or convention, or explain in writing the fallacy of the existing frame.

Some dinosaurs, like Plateosaurus, were plant-eaters. These large creatures routinely dined on ferns and plants in the vast swamps that covered the land. However, for a treat, they cooked broccoli and squash in their steamers. These dinosaurs also enjoyed dining on vegetable lasagna and eggplant parmigiana at their local vegetarian restaurant.

Since it was anticipated that each activity would generally be used in a cooperative learning group, speaking, listening, reading, and writing would be used in each instructional episode, which would fit the tenets of whole language reading instruction.

Producing the anachronisms

Our contention had been that teachers using the writing and storytelling convention of anachronisms would easily be able to construct learning materials that could be used to

promote the formation of concepts. With approximately six class hours of our summer quarter graduate reading course devoted to construction of materials involving anachronisms and improbabilities, the six working groups produced three activities each for a total of eighteen. Our goal was realized. Teachers could construct materials involving anachronisms. Topics which focused on anachronisms included the following: Ben Franklin, The Wright Brothers, Christopher Columbus, dinosaurs, sharks (*Jaws*), King Solomon, The Oregon Trail, Robin Hood, George Washington, King Arthur, Abraham Lincoln, Plymouth Rock, *The Right Stuff* (space travel), Henry Ford, and the Alamo.

Figure 1
The voyage of Christopher Columbus

1. Christopher Columbus wanted to discover a new route to the treasures of the East in 1492. In order to determine his route, he consulted his Rand McNally *World Atlas* that he bought at the local B. Dalton book store.
2. In order to pay for the trip, Columbus would have to purchase ships and pay for a crew. He needed money. To raise the needed capital, he borrowed money on his Visa card — he didn't have a preset limit!
3. With the borrowed money Christopher purchased three ships, the *Nina*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria*. Each of the ships had fine fiberglass hulls and powerful diesel engines.
4. Since all the sailors thought the world was flat, they feared that they might fall off the edge of the ocean. Columbus tried to calm the fears of the crew by showing them a globe and satellite navigation charts.
5. After many weeks of sailing, the lookout spotted land. From the high rigging where he was standing the lookout shouted "Sir! I think I see Florida in the distance!! We have reached the New World."
6. Columbus and the crew members were wildly excited. Each man rushed to the side of the ship nearest the land to take a picture with his camera. Some even wanted to record the event on a VCR.
7. When Christopher Columbus arrived back in Spain he was warmly greeted by Queen Isabel and King Ferdinand. The royal couple gave him a Mercedes as a reward. This event was carried on the front page of the National Enquirer.
8. Christopher Columbus was famous!! The year 1492 will always be important. He had proved that the world was not flat! And best of all Christopher was most proud of finding the country of Colombia — a small country that already had his name.

Figure 1 presents examples of the anachronism materials that the working groups produced in the class. These figures are only excerpts — shortened versions — of the actual activities produced by the teachers. For demonstration and brevity, the abbreviated activities are presented without the pupil's writing response box. As planned, each activity was centered around the common schema, cultural literacy, associated with the person or event. Each frame within the story focused on a specific attribute of the larger context and supported the essential concepts. Each activity presented an anachronism that could be corrected or explained. Each activity was approximately three pages and contained 12 to 14 frames.

Using the anachronisms

The test of the usefulness of the anachronism activities came with classroom use with middle grade pupils in instructional situations. Fifteen of the 24 teachers in the summer class who wrote and produced materials communicated back to the authors after the start of the school year. The materials were used successfully in regular and gifted classes in grades five to eight. All comments from the teachers were positive when detailing their perceptions concerning the usefulness of the activities in their classrooms. The original intent of the summer course was to create thinking and vocabulary activities for use in both learning centers and cooperative learning groups. The anachronism materials were successful in those roles. However, the most exciting result of the project was not the planned uses of the thinking activities, but rather, the nontraditional ways in which the teachers used the materials. Teachers expanded the usefulness of the anachronism activities by using them as alternative forms for required book reports, as material for journal writing, as parent/student cooperative homework assignments, and as story-telling formats for younger pupils.

Learning centers. The most common reported classroom use of the developed activities was in the learning center environment. Each learning center for thinking and vocabulary contained an anachronism activity and two other activities composed during the summer course. Students worked independently or in learning pairs to complete the three activities in each center. It took an average of 30 to 45 minutes (2 to 3 sessions) for each group or individual to complete a center. Each center had a classroom life of about two weeks. Centers were typically voluntary, but teachers reported that most children worked eagerly through each center.

Cooperative learning groups. The anachronism activities were used as direct tools for teaching thinking in some classrooms. Both paper and acetate transparencies for the overhead projector were supplied for each group of five in the classroom. Each small cooperative learning group read, discussed, and debated each frame of an activity. When the group members reached consensus through discussion they agreed upon the written solution and wrote their answers on the transparency. Each group then, in turn, shared their answers visually with the class by using the projector. Individual students were then free to complete their working copies with the answers or explanations felt to be most appropriate or creative.

Book reports. Prior to a required reading unit on biographies, one sixth-grade teacher used the anachronism activities in direct instruction in cooperative groups over a three-week period. Then children selected and read a biography of their choosing. Instead of using a traditional format for a book report, the children were guided into creating their own anachronism activities. A procedure was worked out by the teacher to lead the children in writing. The children were encouraged to locate common facts about their character,

support these facts with detail, then include a situation or device for each fact that was out-of-time — an anachronism. The reports were then shared with their classmates as written activities similar to the ones constructed by the teachers.

Journal writing. A seventh-grade teacher used the anachronism activities in her classroom to support creative journal writing. After the children had completed all the reading/thinking anachronisms and were quite familiar with the recognition and explanation format, the teacher reversed the process of anachronisms (from new technology or events into older situations to old events or technology into current situations). Additionally, instead of reading anachronisms the children were instructed to include anachronisms in their personal journal writing attempts. In their writings, children were cleverly creating and developing their own out-of-time events. Expressions such as *drawing water, adding wood to the stove, buttoning shoes, and erasing slates* often appeared in descriptions of the current classrooms. Contemporary children wrote of *coming to school in wagons, or on the trolley*. Clearly, children were thinking creatively and independently as they created anachronisms.

Parent/student cooperative homework. To create a bond between parents and children and to establish homework routines at home, one enterprising teacher used her created supply of activities as "Thursday homework" — homework that was completed jointly by parents and children on Thursday and discussed in class on Friday. On Friday in class, parent and child responses were read aloud and compared by the class members. The child-parent team with the most appropriate or creative answers, as judged by the members of the class, was awarded a certificate by the class.

Storytelling (where it all began). When asked to present a seminar at a parent teacher program, one teacher chose the topic of storytelling with anachronisms as her presentation. Her target audience was parents with young preschool children. The instructional session began with each set of attending parents completing a brief anachronism activity then listening as she told a story similar to the activity. The parents enjoyed this, and afterwards, the concepts of *schema*, *categorization*, and *relevant details* were presented to the parents. The session concluded by asking volunteer parents to tell a story, including anachronisms, to the group. Parents of young children were strongly encouraged to challenge their at-home children to think and respond while listening.

Using anachronisms successfully requires strong storytelling orientation, a good mastery of basic cultural knowledge, and the time to devote to writing. Teachers can add the use of anachronisms to their collection of learning/thinking materials.

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What do Response Journals Reveal about Children's Understandings of the Workings of Literary Texts?

Sylvia Pantaleo

Children's literature has become a central component of many elementary reading programs. The multiple benefits of using children's literature in classrooms have been well documented (Cullinan, 1989a, 1989b; Fuhler, 1990; Galda and Cullinan, 1991; Huck, 1987). Reading programs using literature as their core content vary in organization and structure (Hiebert and Colt, 1989; Tunnel and Jacobs, 1989; Zarrillo, 1989; Zarrillo and Cox, 1992). Publications, workshops and university courses abound as educators continue to explore the use of literature and literary response in elementary and middle school classrooms.

Reader-response theorists have influenced the teaching and use of literature and literary response in classrooms (Fish, 1980; Iser, 1980; Rosenblatt, 1976, 1978). Although varying in their specific theoretical explanations of the reading process, all reader-response theorists contend that a text cannot "be understood apart from its results. Its effects, psychological and otherwise, are essential to any accurate description of its meaning, since that meaning has no effective existence outside of its realization in the mind of the reader" (Tompkins, 1980, p. ix).

Wolfgang Iser's reception theory (1980) and Rosenblatt's transactional theory (1976, 1978) both acknowledge the active role of the reader in the reading event. Iser argues for the existence of an interactive and interdependent relationship between reader and text as he believes a reader actively participates in the meaning-making process. Rosenblatt adopted Dewey's term *transaction*, (Dewey, 1949) to denote the reciprocal relationship between reader and text, and states that the literary work exists "in the live circuit set up between reader and text" (1976, p. 25). Both theorists contend that texts are simultaneously open and constraining as the words in the text provoke thoughts, awaken memories, arouse feelings and conjure images in the reader's reservoir of literary and life experiences (Iser, 1980; Rosenblatt, 1981). Through a continual process of modification of meaning, individuals experience and interpret texts differently as a result of their particular life and language experiences. Rosenblatt asserts that during the transaction between the text and the reader, a new experience the poem is evoked. This "lived-through 'work,' this 'evocation' is what the reader 'responds to' as it is being called forth during the transaction, and as it is reflected on, interpreted, evaluated, analyzed, criticized afterward" (Rosenblatt, 1986, p. 124).

Rosenblatt (1978) views aesthetic and efferent reading as forming poles of a continuum. In aesthetic reading, the reader "adopts an attitude of readiness to attend to what is being lived through during the reading event" (Rosenblatt, 1988, p. 74) and focuses on both the private and public aspects of meaning. In efferent reading, "the process of making meaning out of a text involves attention to what is to be retained" after the reading as 'residue' (Rosenblatt, 1981, p. 6). She asserts that literature should be read and responded to aesthetically (1991a). Research has demonstrated that aesthetic responses are associated with higher levels of

interpretations and understanding of texts (Beach, 1990; Cox and Many, 1992b, 1992c; Many, 1991; Marshall, 1987; Newell, Suszynski and Weingart, 1989; Squire, 1964).

Rosenblatt (1978) states that readers respond to texts both during and after the reading transaction. Purves and Rippere (1968) explain response to literature as, "mental, emotional, intellectual, sensory, physical. It encompasses the cognitive, affective, perceptual and psychomotor activities that the reader... performs as he reads or after he has read. Yet most teachers know that, in the classroom, a student's response will be like an iceberg; only a small part will become apparent to the teacher or even to the student himself." (p. xiii) More recently, Purves (1990) describes response as the meeting of mind and book. To Margaret Meek (1990), response "can never be singular; it is always multiple, layered, combining understanding and affect, involving mental images as gestures for which surface features of words always seem inadequate" (p. 101).

Literature response journals

Journals are one popular medium used by teachers to capture a view of students' responses to literature. The written responses of readers will be unique as they reflect upon reading. The written response, like the reading process, is a way for readers to work through their understandings and interpretations of texts in personally significant ways where the uniqueness of their responses is accepted. According to Petrosky (1982), writing about reading "is one of the best ways to get students to unravel their transactions so that we can see how they understand and in the process, help them learn to elaborate, clarify, and illustrate their responses by reference to the associations and prior knowledge that inform them." (p. 24).

The content of students' responses has been analyzed into various categorization schemes (Cooper and Michalak, 1981; Cox and Many, 1992a; Hancock, 1992, 1993a, 1993b; Protherough, 1983; Purves, 1975; Purves and Rippere, 1968; Squire, 1964; Vandergrift, 1990; Wollman-Bonilla, 1989). Further, some researchers have examined qualitative differences among students' responses to literature and endeavored to investigate characteristics which constitute a quality response (Blunt, 1977; Bogdan, 1990; Hancock, 1993a; Langer, 1990a, 1990b; Many, 1992; Protherough, 1983; Squire, 1964; Thomson, 1987; Vandergrift, 1990). Researchers have also examined how characteristics of readers, contextual factors, and textual factors influence students' responses to literature (Beach and Hynds, 1991; Martinez and Roser, 1991).

An unexplored area of response is what students' responses reveal about their understandings and knowledge of the workings of literary texts. Meek (1988) discusses the private lessons readers learn from literature without formal instruction. She states that readers become involved with texts, learning to "become both the teller (picking up the author's view and voice) and the told (the recipient of the story, the interpreter)" and that "this symbolic interaction is learned early" (p. 10). Among the many lessons texts teach, Meek (1988) writes, "the most important lesson that children learn is the nature and variety of written discourse, the different ways that language lets a writer tell, and the many different ways a reader reads" (p. 21). Through interactions with literature, children give themselves lessons about "authorship, audience, illustration, iconic interpretation and intertextuality " (p. 10).

Structuralists, text-oriented reader-response theorists (Rosenblatt, 1991b), view texts as having meaning as a result of readers actively applying socially acceptable internalized

literary conventions. Culler (1980), a structuralist, contends that literary works have structure and meaning because they are read "in a particular way, because these potential properties, latent in the object itself, are actualized by the theory of discourse applied in the act of reading" (p. 102). Culler (1980) labels the understanding that good readers have which enable them to make literature texts have meaning as literary competences (Thomson, 1987, p. 101). He describes literary competences as "an implicit understanding of the operations of literary discourse which tells one what to look for... an internalized grammar of literature" which allows readers "to convert linguistic sequences into literary structures and meanings" (p. 102). Culler maintains that this implicit knowledge of publicly accepted conventions is possessed by both readers and authors. Application of this internalized grammar determines construction of meaning and thus interpretation of text is limited by a reader's literary competence as the structure of text is a creation of the reader (Mailloux, 1977).

Students' written responses

But what do students' written responses demonstrate about the private lessons they have learned from texts or their internalized grammar of literature or literary competences? Several students' written responses have been included below and they will be examined and discussed in terms of what each reveals about the writer's knowledge and understandings of how literary texts work. These responses are windows into the children's knowledge as one response provides only a glimpse, not a panoramic view. The children who wrote the responses were in a combined fifth/sixth grade classroom where literature was the central component of the reading program. The students engaged in real reading behaviors as they selected their own books to read (from approximately 185 different novels with multiple copies of each title), set their

own reading goals, and talked and wrote about what they read. A substantial amount of time was scheduled for the students to read during class (approximately 350 minutes/week). The classroom teacher had read every book of the multiple copies selection as she believed this to be integral to the program's success. Knowing the books was central to her program and her approach with the children. This knowledge was important in dialoguing with the students about the novels, writing literature responses, recommending books, giving book talks, and being cognizant of the breadth and depth of material available to the children. The spelling of the responses has been conventionalized to assist with reading.

Response #1

The first response (see Figure 1) was written by Cathy, a fifth grade student who was usually ranked as an average language learner by her teacher. *The Castle in the Attic*, written by Elizabeth Winthrop (1985), is a fantasy about a boy named William who receives a wooden model of a castle, complete with a miniature knight guarding the gate, from his nanny, Mrs. Phillips. Once the knight comes alive in William's hand, a series of adventures follow, including William shrinking Mrs. Phillips and battling a wizard and a dragon.

Figure 1
The Castle in the Attic

I thought that the crooked old man was Alastor in disguise and there was a spell on him that if he picked the apple he would turn to lead. I am glad it wasn't because if both William and Sir Simon were turned to lead, who would save the land?

William was brave to fight the dragon, wizard and mirror by himself. It must have been hard to fight the wizard on his own because he is just a ten year old boy.

In this response, Cathy has shown an understanding of the need to use previous information about characters and actions to make predictions, and that the latter may not always be verified or actualized. She has articulated her

awareness that particular events in texts lead to other events, and that the path of the story may be narrowed or widened as a result of specific events. Cathy has also indicated her knowledge of the author's crafting of the plot as she stated that one good character (i.e. William or Sir Simon) needed to remain unchanged in order to defeat the evil wizard (and save the land). She has thus made reference to her knowledge of recurring structures in texts and the universal theme in literature of good vs. evil. In this response, Cathy has demonstrated an understanding that it is acceptable for readers to become emotionally involved with characters in literature. She has also communicated her knowledge that authors develop characters through description of their actions which can then serve as a basis for character evaluation.

Response #2

The second response (see Figure 2) was written by Kari, an above average sixth grade student in language arts. *The Crossing*, by Gary Paulsen (1987), tells the story of an orphaned Mexican boy's struggle to live in the streets, his efforts to escape to America and his friendship with an alcoholic Vietnam war veteran.

Figure 2
The Crossing

This book has made me realize how lucky I am. I thought I had it hard because I have to clean my room and do chores in the house and yard. When I read about how Manny has to beg for money, hardly eats and has no parents, I thought and realized that I really actually am very, very lucky to have what I do. I have a house and a bed and blankets. Manny sleeps in a cardboard box. I have food and money to spend. Manny doesn't have either of those. I have several pairs of clothing but Manny has a torn T-shirt and an old pair of jeans. In Manny's country (Mexico) he has hardly any rights. In my country (Canada) we have many rights and privileges. I hardly ever have nothing to eat. Manny hardly ever has something to eat. I do not have to cross a river to a free country for I am in a free country. I do not have to wander the streets although I am conscious nothing happens to me as it would to Manny. Now that I have realized how lucky I am, I think I will have a better attitude about it.

As a result of reading the text, *The Crossing*, Kari has examined herself, the text and the human condition. This piece of literature has facilitated her reflection of her personal state compared to that of the main character. Kari has realized that literature can provide insights into the breadth and depth of human experiences and thought. This text allowed her to gain an appreciation of her current living conditions as she developed an empathetic understanding and appreciation of another person's life and culture. In addition she has experienced the power of literature--to convey the effects of social and economic problems on human lives, to influence a reader's point of view and to create profound lasting impressions.

Response #3

The third response (see Figure 3) was written by Susan, an above average language learner in grade five. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* by Avi (1990) is Charlotte's account of her voyage across the Atlantic in 1832 as a passenger on a ship captained by the nefarious Captain Jaggery and manned by a mutinous crew.

Figure 3 *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*

I find Captain Jaggery to be hiding his true identity. When he and Charlotte had tea together he always acted so gentlemanly but in fact, he was a tiger waiting to pounce. The reason I say this is because when Charlotte joined the crew, he worked them even worse and was always on deck for Charlotte's shift to watch her every move. Another happening was when Charlotte told him that when they found land she was going to take him to court, he turned pale and got a look of murder in his eyes. I knew something was wrong with his brain, like he was half crazy or something.

This response demonstrates an understanding of the techniques authors use to reveal characters. Susan has displayed an awareness that she must pick up the clues and fill in the gaps in the text (Iser, 1980). She has engaged in several inferential walks (Eco, 1978) as she has put together pieces

of the text in order to make her evaluative statements regarding Captain Jaggery.

Response #4

The fourth response (see Figure 4) was written by Carla, an average sixth grade language arts student. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis (1950), is a fantasy about four children who discover a magical land called Narnia through the doors of a wardrobe. Together with Aslan, the lion King, the children must defeat the evil White Witch, who in her attempts to be Queen of Narnia, has cast an evil spell of eternal winter on the land.

Figure 4
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

I really think the end was really disappointing how they all followed the white stag out into the wardrobe because they didn't really need a wish at all. I think that C.S. Lewis could have ended the book by going home because they had missed their country so much and wanted to see the professor (to tell him what happened).

I also think that Aslan is the professor because he had told the children they should go through the wardrobe but other adults might just say, "Oh, there's no such thing as another world in a wardrobe. The girl must be going crazy!" Also the beaver said that Aslan has many worlds to visit.

In this response, Carla has revealed an awareness that texts are crafted by authors. She has articulated an understanding that as a reader, she can question or criticize the text. Carla has used explicit and implicit events in the text to construct logical and sensible alternatives and explanations. As a reader of literature, she has demonstrated an understanding of the necessity for readers to use the textual blueprint (e.g. characters' actions, comments by other characters) to make inferences.

Response #5

The fifth response (see Figure 5) was written by Jeremy, an average fifth grade student in language arts. Gary

Paulsen's (1983) novel, *Popcorn Days and Buttermilk Nights*, tells the story of Carley, a teenager who has broken the law and been sent to his uncle's farm to escape the negative influences of the city. Carley learns to respect the values of his relatives and experiences satisfaction and pride in working in his Uncle's blacksmith forge.

Figure 5
Popcorn Days and Buttermilk Nights

I enjoyed reading this book because Carley is trying to change his life and he eventually does. For example when Carley lived in the city he used to burn things down and throw rocks at windows or churches, laundromats and other places. Now Carley works at a blacksmith shop and is fixing and building things instead of destroying them.

Another reason I really enjoyed reading this book was because there were a couple of funny parts too. One of them is when Tinker and Carley are riding calves. When Carley tries, he gets dragged in the pasture behind the barn. I can just imagine being dragged through the manure because Gary Paulsen is very good at describing what is going on and how it is happening.

In this response, Jeremy has articulated an understanding of how readers use characters' actions to discern personalities and goals. He has recognized how the character's actions were symptomatic of his inner conflicts as well as how the character's development was revealed through his solving the conflicts. Jeremy has expressed enjoyment of the piece of literature, demonstrating also an appreciation of the power of literature to entertain. He has commented on the author's language style and recognized that the latter helped him to imagine himself in a character's position. As a reader of literature, Jeremy has communicated his knowledge that he is to assume an active role in reading and read literature from an aesthetic stance.

Response #6

The sixth response (see Figure 6) was written by Richard, an above average language arts student in grade six. *The Dragon Children*, by Bryan Buchan (1975), tells the story of the

attempts of a group of children to catch a thief who is cheating elderly people. The children receive assistance from a mysterious boy named Steven.

Figure 6
The Dragon Children

I really liked this book because there were two mysteries in the whole book. One of the mysteries was if the crook would make it out of town in time and if John, Scott, Cathy and Steven would get the crook or not. The other mystery was to find out who or what Steven really was. I figured out what Steven was by putting all the clues together. At the end of the book I found out who Steven was. At first I thought that Steven was a ghost (even though he was) that the crook had drowned in the river. I was half right about that.

It was a surprise to me when John, Scott and Cathy found out that the crook wasn't who they thought it was. It surprised me because when Steven told John that the crook was driving a green car with license plate number 5K-206 it wasn't the crook driving it. Instead it was a man who had come with his family for their vacation. The man did seem like a crook though because when he was walking through the woods with his son, it looked like he had kidnapped the child.

My favorite part though was when Scott sneaked up behind the real crook and poked the needle in his back end. I liked it because it really made me laugh.

Richard has communicated an understanding that two stories may be occurring simultaneously within one piece of literature and that the reader is to follow the individual story lines, as well as to relate them. He has displayed his knowledge that authors provide clues in mysteries and readers are to connect or unravel the clues in order to solve the puzzles. In this journal entry, Richard has communicated an understanding that readers need to engage in both anticipation and retrospection (Iser, 1980) as hypotheses may be abrogated, validated or modified (i.e. readers maintain a wandering viewpoint during their reading). In addition, this response revealed Richard's awareness that events in literature, as in life, are not always as they appear. Further, Richard has communicated his understanding that literature provides aesthetic experiences as he has described his enjoyment of solving the mysteries and his amusement at textual events.

Response #7

The seventh response (see Figure 7) was written by Corey, a below average sixth grade language arts student. In *The Foxman*, Gary Paulsen (1977), tells the story of Carl, a teenager who is sent to his Uncle's farm because his parents are alcoholics. While lost in the woods, Carl and his cousin meet the Foxman, an individual who has chosen to live in the wilderness because of his mutilated face. Carl returns to the Foxman's cabin and he and the recluse develop a deep friendship.

Canyon Winter, a Walt Morey (1972) book, is about fifteen-year-old Peter who is stranded alone in the Montana wilderness after a plane crash. Peter, a complete tenderfoot, follows a deer out of the canyon and meets Omar Pickett, an old canyon rat, and his many animal companions. As a result of his developing friendship with Omar, Peter learns much about nature and becomes involved in a fight to save the forests from logging industries.

Figure 7
The Foxman

The Foxman was a lot like Omar Pickett from *Canyon Winter*. A reason to explain that is that the Foxman and Omar were both very old. Also they both didn't want a boy staying with them very much but they both decided that it would be nice if he did. Also both men chose to live in the wilderness. Omar and the Foxman both died of pneumonia after saving someone from freezing to death.

Some ways that they were different were that Omar saved a deer from dying and the Foxman saved a boy from drowning. Also Omar was unlike the Foxman because Omar's physical appearance was fine but the Foxman's face had been burnt and mutilated from the World War One. That is why the Foxman had moved from where he used to live to a different spot because he didn't want people to feel sorry for him. Another difference they had was that when Omar died he wanted to be buried but when the Foxman died he wanted to be burned with his shack.

Corey has displayed an intertextual understanding as he has compared two characters from two pieces of literature. He has demonstrated an appreciation of the unity of literature by

examining the similarities and differences of two characters. Although this response may be considered more efferent in nature than previous responses, Corey has shown an understanding of the links which exist amongst pieces of literature.

Response #8

The last response (see Figure 8) is written by Jane, an average sixth grade language arts student. *Sing Down the Moon*, by Scott O'Dell (1970), tells the story of the forced resettlement of the Navajo, an actual historical event. Bright Morning, a brave Navajo woman, longs to escape from Fort Summer, New Mexico and return to her peaceful home in the Canyon de Chelly.

Figure 8
Sing Down the Moon

Bright Morning always was wondering, dreaming and thinking about her sheep. Before she was driven from her home, she would always take care of them and watch over them, herding them in if they wandered. When she was stolen by the Spaniards, she thought of how she hadn't herded them in and completed her work even though she had no choice. When the Long Knives drove her people from Canyon de Chelly, she thought of her 30 sheep, what they were doing and if they were all right. Even after a very long time (when most people would have given up hope), she still believed she would some day see some of her sheep again. When Tall Boy and Bright Morning returned to Canyon de Chelly she actually saw one of her sheep. She was glad to see it (even though it looked like a buffalo). When she saw the other sheep with a lamb her heart jumped for joy because then she knew that someday she would have 30 sheep again and that was the beginning of her home getting back to normal.

Jane has discussed the actions, thoughts, feelings, and dreams of Bright Morning--techniques authors employ to develop characters. She has also made reference to the universal theme of hope--a belief that unites humans. Jane appeared to recognize that the sheep symbolized Bright Morning's hope of her life returning to its previous state and encouraged her to continue in her dismal circumstances. As well, Jane has demonstrated an understanding that characters can be involved in journeys. Characters embark on journeys (either of

their volition or by some means of persuasion), encounter a number of obstacles which must be overcome or tasks which must be completed, and then return home, changed as a result of their experiences.

Discussion

Writing responses to literature in journals has been shown to have many benefits (Cox and Many, 1992a; Crowhurst and Kooy, 1985; Fulps and Young, 1991; Kelly, 1990; Marshall, 1987; Petrosky, 1982; and Wollman-Bonilla, 1989). Through journal writing, students are able to engage and participate personally with text, reflect on evoked emotions and ideas, and imagine the perspectives and experiences of others. Students can take ownership of their reading as they write about their personal interpretations and connect and associate their prior knowledge and experiences with text. They can express, reflect upon and clarify their thoughts and understandings, gaining self-confidence and motivation as they realize different interpretations of text are acceptable. Students can improve their comprehension, discussion and writing skills. They can become emotionally involved with literature, developing an appreciation of literature and becoming cognizant of how meaning is constructed during reading when attention is directed to the thought processes revealed in the journal entries. Further, response journals facilitate the expression of individual interests, needs and concerns as the students decide on the content of their entries. In varying degrees, the journal entries in this article demonstrated all of the aforementioned benefits. Further, the written responses revealed substantial information about the children's understandings of the workings of literary texts.

The content of children's written responses to literature can be a rich repository of information, allowing teachers to see what children understand, their level of understanding,

how they are learning, and their growth in communicating ideas (Crowhurst and Kooy, 1985; Wollman-Bonilla, 1989). In order to discern what children's written responses reveal about their transactions with literature and their understandings of the workings of literary texts, teachers must read the literature their students read. Students' written responses to literature can provide invaluable pedagogical information for teachers as they develop their reading programs and support and encourage children in their growth as life-long readers.

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Professional Materials

Unequal Opportunity: Learning to Read in the U.S.A.
Written by Jill Sunday Bartoli. Teachers College Press,
Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027.
1995. ISBN: 0-8077-3384-9. 226 pp. US\$19.95.

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In *Unequal Opportunity: Learning to Read in the U.S.A.*, Jill Bartoli sounds a loud and passionate alarm. She asserts that the United States' public education system is an institution in crisis, that traditional forms of reading instruction are characterized by decontextualization and developmental inappropriateness, and that American schools are places that have traditionally facilitated the systematic disenfranchisement of significant portions of the nation's population. Bartoli strengthens her position by drawing on two case studies. In the first, she presents a ten year history of James, an African-American male in the midst of a predominantly white school system. Bartoli's data reveals an ongoing progression of tracking, labeling, and learned alienation that begins in the primary grades and culminates in James' dropping out of high school. James believes that the school system has abandoned him and so, finally, he abandons the system. In the second case study, the author describes a year long staff development project conducted at an inner-city elementary school. Bartoli's data indicates a sharp incongruity between the perceptions of school personnel and the families of

students within the system. A disturbing cycle is revealed in which disproportionate numbers of children from minority and low socioeconomic backgrounds first experience failure in literacy and learning, and then find that their families are blamed for this failure, by school personnel. In her detailing of both studies, Bartoli shows the devastating ramifications that often occur when there is a cultural mismatch between schools and families.

Bartoli does more than simply outline the many problems that plague American literacy instruction. Rather, she guides readers toward a better understanding of the nature and scope of these problems by grounding them within a broader ecology, one in which learning to read is viewed as part of the larger context of school, family, and society; in which students are understood, first, as unique human beings who are influenced by a range of historical, cultural, and economic factors; and in which the problems of literacy education are viewed as inseparable parts of the larger problems that come with living in a complex society such as our own. At the heart of Bartoli's argument is the concern that life and literacy learning have both become stratified ventures in the United States, and that the principles of democracy, freedom, and equality, cherished by our citizenry and espoused by our school systems, are in reality, more available to some members of our society than to others. She describes an 'ecology of inequity' that permeates reading instruction. A narrow, positivist-based theory of reading achievement has dominated the field, resulting first in the testing, sorting, and labeling of students, and ultimately in the creation of a caste system, in which those who are labeled generally find themselves relegated to a school literacy experience hallmarked by low expectations, special placements, repeated failures, and the implicit message that they are not worthy of membership in the learning community.

Bartoli's work provides a strong critique of many of the assumptions that have undergirded the theory and practice of reading instruction. To her credit, the author clearly states that there are no easy solutions to the complex problems that characterize our field; no "quick-fixes" for current social dilemmas that have long sociohistorical roots. However, Bartoli does not leave readers without a sense of hope. She believes that change is possible, and invites teachers, administrators, parents, and researchers to work collaboratively towards this end. The book includes broad recommendations for facilitating change, as well as detailed descriptions of two models for reforming schools. The first model focuses on change within the parameters of a school building. The second presents a more inclusive example of change within a community model.

Unequal Opportunity: Learning to Read in the U.S.A. is a provocative text that is both relevant and timely. Grounded in theory and with direct applications for practice, this book bids readers to re-envision literacy education and to reconsider the relationships that exist among schools, families, and communities. At once a critique and a call for action, Bartoli's text invites readers to come and participate in the transformational work that is necessary to insure that all children will truly have equal opportunity to learn to read in the U.S.A.

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